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## Men in the Yard and On the Street: Cricket and Calypso in *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* and *Miguel Street*

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If you told Man-man you were going to the cricket, he would write CRICK and then concentrate on the E's until he saw you again.

V.S. Naipaul, *Miguel Street*

## Introduction

Based on a fabled Port of Spain resident whose Messianic tale is captured by The Mighty Wonder's calypso "Follow Me Children," Man-man is the "mad-man" of *Miguel Street* whose descent into religious fantasy results in a mock (and failed) crucifixion and, thereafter, permanent incarceration. Man-man's identity, his very name, expresses the dialectic of "Man"—capitalized and universal—a supposedly homogenous collective, and "man"—uncapitalized and singular—a sometimes lonely and socially isolated being. In *The Crucifixion* (1987) Ismith Khan also employs the story of the preacher's self crucifixion while Lovelace recreates the motif of Christ-like sacrifice in Taffy and then Bolo, and even resurrects Man Man (no hyphen) as the martyred leader of a secret African society in the opening lines of *Salt* (1997). In all these cases the heroic and/or mock heroic martyr is part of the ongoing and concurrent construction and interrogation of the self sacrificing leader—the *man* whose "man-ness" will lead the people to freedom, liberty and, crucially, Nationhood. In attempting to write CRICKET into the dust of Miguel Street, Man-man reaches CRICK before his inscription and his story stutters at the letter E; a letter that obviously evokes England and his surprisingly English accent. Man-man repeatedly carves E's into the landscape of Trinidad, into the poverty of Port of Spain, until Naipaul's young narrator returns from his out-of-sight cricket game. Only then can Man-man mark the final letter T. Much like Alford's repetition of A's and his eventual arrival at C in Lovelace's *Salt*, Man-man's linguistic stutter is part of a wider concern with literacy and mimicry that reflects a coming into language, an obsession with the word and a faltering relationship with the old colonial master whose imposition of English and cricket coincide in his inscription. It is in the context of Man-man's story that this discussion proceeds as the seemingly mad, suspiciously astute double-man of *Miguel Street* embodies calypso, inscribes cricket into the landscape of his island with a stick—a miniature version of the phallic implements used by both stick fighters and cricketers—and eventually refuses to become the heroic savior of his fellow men, and, Man.

In "Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values," Gordon Rohlehr establishes the aesthetic, cultural, political and economic intersections between cricket, calypso and the Caribbean literary imagination. Further, in "I Lawa: Masculinity in Trinidad and Tobago Calypso," Rohlehr examines the tradition of the warrior-hero of the stickfight, his evolution into the heroes of calypso and cricket (among others) and calypso's ability, ironic and humorous, to "elevate and deflate the ideal of phallogocentric masculinity" (Reddock 345). Building on these insights, this paper considers the place and purpose of cricket and calypso in Errol John's yard

play *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* (1958) and V.S. Naipaul's collection of interwoven short stories *Miguel Street* (1959). By reviewing the cricketing narratives provided by the men in the yard and on the street, this paper suggests how and to what consequence John and Naipaul reflect upon and interrogate the models of masculinity and heroism laid before them as young Caribbean men in postwar Trinidad.

*Moon* and *Miguel Street* were both composed in London in 1955 and represent something of a literary re-crossing of the Atlantic as each author recalls and recreates the postwar Trinidad they left behind and fictionalizes, if not rationalizes, their own departure to England. Both pieces exhibit similarly cutting and unromanticized visions of poverty in Port of Spain and bear the marks of the 1930s barrack tradition of Alfred Mendes, C. L. R. James and others. In doing so, John and Naipaul rely heavily upon the sounds, styles and humor of calypso to localize, unify and animate their writing. Calypso also enables them to clear a cultural and psychic space for Caribbean identities, particularly working class male identities, in-between (though very much affected by) the competing economic and social influences of England and America during the transitional period before the Federation, and thereafter, Independence. Calypso is a dominant feature of *Moon's* soundscape, it is the local sound and the sound of the *locale* inserted and asserted in between "Land of Hope and Glory" and Frank Sinatra, and is personified onstage by Ketch, the calypsonian forced to "chase the yankee dollar" (50). Calypso is also the principle intertextual resource of *Miguel Street* as Naipaul uses at least fourteen calypso songs from the 1930s and 40s (Thieme 19).<sup>1</sup> More importantly, Naipaul and his characters operate almost entirely within the ironic idiom of calypso and, as in *Moon*, the picong, machismo and gender-battle of calypso remain omnipresent. Against Lamming's condemnation of "castrated satire," Rohlehr argues that the employment of ironic and satirical strategies, as found in calypso, actually enables Naipaul to "examine the past without sentimental self-indulgence" ("The Ironic Approach" 139). The same can be said of John. Moreover, Thieme's rightly suggests that Naipaul imaginatively returns from England through calypso to express, perhaps for the only time, a "genuine concern for" and "degree of sympathy" for "the ordinary West Indian", specifically the black male (Thieme 19). In examining the past, and the men or examples of masculinity from their past, John and Naipaul employ calypso to probe the "Big man" complex—the problem of how "[t]o be a man, among we men" (*Miguel Street* 14). They do this by presenting calypso and cricket as spaces in which men and male identities are at once established and undermined, performed and revealed as performance, remembered and exposed as false re-membering.

In the yard and on the street, cricket exists as a boy's game and a manly topic of discussion that serves to distract from the reality of male boredom and, quite often, a physical sense of stasis or paralysis. For many Caribbean men, the sport appears to be a means of escape but it is portrayed by John and Naipaul as a Janus-faced illusion whose dreamlike promise of success and prosperity (obtained by an exceptional few) exists alongside defeat, exclusion, drinking and jail (for a wider majority) as experienced by Charlie and Hat. The works have, at

their core, narratives of cricketing remembrance that illustrate the dialectic of cricket, its connection with calypso and the problems these fields of masculinity present for the leading male figures. In both texts, surrogate father-son relationships are created between the generationally separated male characters—Charlie and Ephraim in *Moon* and Hat and Naipaul’s narrator in *Miguel Street*—which are clearly tied to their cricketing exchanges. In *Moon*, Charlie Adams shares the memory of his “broken” career as a fast bowler with Ephraim. In *Miguel Street*, Naipaul’s anonymous boy narrator tells of his first trip to the Oval with Hat, relays the details of his uncle’s cricket related wife beating and describes the above-cited example of Man-man. In each case the act of memory functions to recall and re-member (to imaginatively put back together) the older men and their previous masculine performances but also serves to expose the instability of those past performances and the disjuncture between them and their present emasculation; a disjuncture which pushes the younger men, Eph and the narrator (read John and Naipaul), to flee to the Mother Country. In addition, these stories of cricket, and cricket’s relationship to masculinity, are read through calypso and calypso in fact influences the very style of cricket on display. Like numerous other commentators, Richard Burton has pointed out that the “street values” of calypso—reputation, aggression, bravado, etc.—inform or mould the type of cricket played in the Caribbean whether on the beach, on the street or in the international arena. Mobilizing the works of Roger Abrahams and Peter Wilson, he believes that because of the two traditions found in West Indies cricket, those of Englishness and “Caribbeanness,” the game must be read through the dialectic of inside/respectability/yard/women and outside/reputation/street/man that structures carnival.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the following sections first address the men of John’s yard and then move to consider those of Naipaul’s street. While Burton’s understanding of cricket, its two traditions and the values association with the yard and street is useful, this paper ultimately suggests that the battle to establish and maintain a coherent and stable masculine identity is one that takes place in both these socio-cultural places/spaces because it is central to the pattern of gender relations that characterizes the picaroon society portrayed.

### **In the Yard**

*Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* won the 1957 Observer play competition and went on to become a seminal piece of Caribbean theater which, though dated, continues to be reproduced around the world. Although *Moon* was first published in 1958, John’s revised 1962 version (published in 1963), set in the East Dry River District, home of the pan, emphasizes and expands the play’s cricketing and calypso aspects and consequently is used herein.<sup>3</sup> The play’s rainbow shawl is an obvious metaphor for the colors and “texture” of Trinidad’s racially mixed population which is physically presented onstage as a bedcover and security blanket upon which the light, promise and hope of the moon shines. The play depicts a small yard in which all of the characters feel trapped and dream of escaping to a bigger, fuller, happier life whether this is through cricket (Charlie), marriage (Rosa, Mavis) or departure (Sophia, Esther, Ephraim). The

yard itself is a female, even feminine space dominated by Sophia Adams, matriarch, “bully” and “moral centre” of the play. Nevertheless, in this womb-like retreat from the street, it is the men, Charlie Adams and Ephraim, and their desperate actions that drive the piece forward. The play circles around Charlie’s theft from Ole Mack’s café and reaches its dramatic climax when Ephraim (Eph), the disillusioned young trolley bus driver, storms out of the yard to head for Liverpool, England, regardless of his girlfriend Rosa or their unborn baby. The struggles and relationship of Charlie and Eph is the key to the play’s investigation of masculine identities and is principally negotiated through Charlie’s cricketing story.

Charlie Adams is the “ruined cricketer” Naipaul identifies as a recurring figure in “Trinidad lore” (*Middle Passage* 42). Beckles notes that even his name evokes “a regular, common kind of being—if not the first man in terms of biblical text” (*Development of West Indies Cricket* 105). This first-everyman is the representative of all failed cricketers and, more specifically, the tradition of West Indies fast bowling. In his youth, Charlie attempts to “grow to his full stature” through cricket; he is “slim and handsome,” real “spit and polish,” a man too good for Sophia [41]. He was, in fact, the young attractive male body Eph presents to the audience. However, on stage we see the once powerful sporting performer reduced to a rum drinking thief who steals to provide for his daughter’s education. “Broken” by his cricketing past, Charlie’s fall from masculine self assertion, achieved through “real quick” bowling, is written onto his “big, bloated, brown skinned” (39) body which is soft, fat and effeminized by its similarity to his wife’s own “plump” (23) figure. Eph reads Charlie and his body as a warning, as vision of his own future if he does not leave the island. Indeed, Charlie’s body, especially in comparison to the sexual appeal of Eph, speaks of the older man’s social, economic and, perhaps, sexual impotence.<sup>4</sup> Yet, Charlie is never violent or abusive (as men are ordinarily in *Miguel Street*) and his character is marked by his kindness and the single affection everyone has for him. When in the yard, his loosely worn mask of drunken happiness, that of a man of the street celebrating the heroes returning from war, quickly evaporates. In this feminine/homely space, he breaks down crying as he confesses his crime to Sophia. When she comforts him in her maternal fashion Charlie becomes a boy in her arms reliant upon his wife for any solution or help. He is a far cry from the man he re-members.

In the 1920s, Charlie had been a fast bowler of international promise until he protested against the unfair boarding conditions for colored players while on an intercolonial tour of Jamaica. The “stink” got into the papers, ending his career and his chance to escape the clutches of poverty by moving to an English league side. Remembering himself, approaching thirty, “strong as a bull—and at the height of his power of as bowler” (61), he tells Eph:

... my big talent was with the ball. I used to trundle down to that wicket—an’ send them down red hot! ... in my time, John, Old Constantine, Francis, them fellas was fast! Fast! Up in England them so help put the Indies on the map ... But for the West Indian tour to England that year—I didn’t even get an invite to

the trials ... In them days, boy—The Savannah Club crowd was running most everything ... They broke me (61-2).

Speed, aggression and “red hot” bowling were the qualities that used to anchor Charlie’s sense of “manliness” and his position in the world. He had a local “reputation” and was considered a hero-in-waiting who would become one of the “selected individuals [who] played representative roles which were charged with social significance” (James 66). He stands as one of a long line of similar black fast bowlers. Initially employed by plantation owners for batting practice, they gradually entered the ideologically protected space of cricket—of Englishness, imperialism and white racial supremacy—in the nineteenth century as they were allowed to perform cricket’s most physically demanding task; bowling.<sup>5</sup> Frank Birbalsingh summarizes the situation: “[b]y the last decade of the [nineteenth] century, the plantation origins of West Indian society had produced a situation in which the best batsmen were generally white and the best bowlers were black *and fast*” (Birbalsingh 16). In his canonical *Beyond A Boundary* (1963), C.L.R. James clearly relates the West Indies tradition of quick bowling to the region’s complex colonial history and the consequences of that history (72-81). Maurice St. Pierre asserts that the frustrations caused by colonialism were sublimated into the socially accepted channel of cricket and made visible in fast bowling. In literary terms, George Lamming captures the ferocity of the “bloodthirsty fast bowler” with Crim (as in criminal), in *Season of Adventure* (1960), who uses speed as his “weapon” against the racial and class distinctions in which he lives.<sup>6</sup> Through carnival and play, Burton claims that such bowling, where there is “always the same emphasis on speed and aggression” (Burton 181), is intrinsically bound to the reputation-based values of the street and of calypso. In this context, fast bowling is a route to masculinity, to an understanding of one’s self as the warrior-hero and such a sporting warrior could propel himself and his weapon—the ball—at those above and beyond his immediate social and economic reach. He could use his physical and mental strength to challenge and endanger the system that excluded him on the very field that was supposed to protect and reproduce imperial Englishness and white superiority.

Charlie Adams is based on Errol John’s fast bowling father, George John, whom James describes as the “knight-errant of fast bowling” (73), “the fast bowlers’ bowler” (81), “not hostile but hostility itself” (81). He “incarnated the plebs of his time” and he and the white gentleman batsman George Challenor embodied their cricketing generation (79). John’s career was interrupted by the First World War but he toured England in 1924, aged at least 39, when his bowling and that of Learie Constantine and George Francis (the “fellas” Charlie recalls) made them all heroes and helped the West Indies gain Test status in 1928, to “put them on the map.” Also, in playing their part in a mixed racial and regional team, these men planted the seeds of what Beckles, in his book of the same name, calls “A Nation Imagined.” It is this moment, this historic and collective entrance onto the world stage as potential sporting equals to England, still the colonial and cricketing Massa, from which Charlie is excluded in the second edition. As a cricketer, he is not only denied the chance “to be measured against international standards”

(Naipaul, *Middle Passage* 42) but he is even refused the opportunity to prove himself worthy to compete, that is, he is denied the right to a “trial.” Consequently, he haunts the yard, and Eph specifically, as a reminder of the racial and class injustices that structure Caribbean cricket and society generally preventing such black working class men from making their way in the world. However, as a fictional member of this “generation of black men bowling fast [which] was more sure of itself” (James 79), it was Charlie’s position of confidence that caused his downfall. When he acted outside of the field of play as a man confident or defiant enough to confront the realities of racial discrimination he became another tragic hero, another fallen figure at the feet of the Savannah crowd and their cricketing/colonial power. By not knowing his place he loses everything he hoped to become. Charlie’s story tells us that for the men of his generation fast, aggressive bowling was a physical and ideological weapon they could throw, or bowl, at the colonial power base represented by the (white) batsman. It was a means by which these men could build a sense of importance, a sense of achievement and masculinity. On the other hand, and especially before Frank Worrell’s transformative arrival as captain of the West Indies in 1960, the black bowler was not only tortured by his physical duties but also by the obvious and life determining power of the cricketing/colonial authority under whom he bowled. Such a black bowler stood, like the calypsonian “chasing the yankee dollar,” in between agency and subjection, resistance and complicity, masculinity and emasculation. Thus, in *Moon* Charlie’s bowling can be read as both his means of self expression and masculinity-in-action and the self alienating labor white men (as batsmen and captains, etc.) control.

While his previous life and self was tied to bowling, in the yard Charlie is reduced to a bat mender reliant on the patronage of the wealthy cricketing elite who expelled him. In fact, he is working when he tells Eph of his past and the bats onstage stand as physical references to the phallic power of the white batsman, hegemonic masculinity and the colonial order; all of which structure their lives and their exchange. Eph comforts Charlie with the knowledge that he was “class” but he blames Trinidad, as a nation, for what happens to him. Eph, like Charlie and others before him, wants to make it “big,” to be a “big man” and no “small boy” but in his desire to achieve this size-based masculine sense of self he rejects what he knows and loves (his grandmother and Rosa) only to end up predicting his own future collapse, reminiscent of Charlie in Sophia’s arms, by labeling himself a “big boy” (54). When Eph takes up the cricket bat to play some “air shots” he reconnects with the game, with Charlie and the island whilst simultaneously seeking to move away from Charlie’s position as black bowler and failed hero. His handling of the bat points to his attempt to grab, acquire and perform the phallic power he thinks he will be able to obtain in England even though England is the source of the colonial imagination that destroyed Charlie and, with a depressing irony, Liverpool—Eph’s exact destination—was a key port for the slave trade. At the end of the play Young Murray arrives to collect these bats and reclaim these symbols of power. Charlie and Eph had discussed his talent and his father’s wealth as they believed him to be a future international player. When Sophia returns from visiting Charlie in jail, Murray explains that he has arranged for Charlie to coach the “juniors” at Queen’s Royal College. This last painfully ironic blow could have provided Charlie with a road

out of the yard and with such a job he could have re-established his sense of masculinity by being husband-father-provider. Yet, it would have resituated him in the position of black bowler, employed by the white colonial and cricketing elite and only able to perform *at* them if it is also *for* them. Instead, he resides in jail. It seems that the power of the bat has not yet become available to the men of the yard, though it is used/abused on the street.

### On the Street

*Miguel Street* is a collection of seventeen short stories told from the point of view of a nameless and seemingly fatherless boy narrator; all depict the residents of Naipaul's fictional Port of Spain street. Only one of the sketches, "The Maternal Instinct," concentrates on a woman, Laura, and Naipaul uses her to humiliate her partner Nathaniel whom she beats in a reversal of the calypso message of "Knock Dem Down". The other sketches present the men of the area and the narrator's examination of them where his role models and examples of masculinity are found outside the domestic sphere on the street. The young narrator and his friends, Errol and Boyee, learn from and attempt to imitate Eddoes, Bogart and Hat, the street's dominant males, the men who present "life lived ... on the pavement" (Walsh 11). The narrator tells of the performances of masculinity offered on the street but also explores the depths, problems and insecurities of these characters. Although the narrator journeys through his adolescence with varying heroes or male icons, he enjoys a special bond with Hat—the street's "smartman," a version of the hero of calypso. Hat is the man that boys and men aspire to be, who sets the street's standards of behavior and the limits of laughter, who, more than anyone else, perceives "the pain beneath the pose" (Feder 165). In the penultimate story, simply entitled "Hat," the narrator tells of his first encounter with Hat when Hat took him and eleven other children to the Oval for the last day of Trinidad versus Jamaica. This memory is placed alongside the narrator's outgrowing of Hat and the calypso culture of the street and Hat's fall from his previous, seemingly heroic, position. The last story is the narrator's own and tells of his parting with Hat and his departure to England.

Throughout *Miguel Street* cricket is played by the young boys and their games exhibit not only the make shift nature of street cricket from which so much of West Indies cricket is said to derive, but as their ball regularly gets wet "in the stinking gutter" (22) their game is quite literally tainted with the "stink" of the poverty in which they live. The men of the street discuss, bet on and observe cricket. It is a part of the supposed "leisure" of street life and a space in which they can invest their hopes, dreams and emotions whilst escaping the realities of their lives. The trip to the Oval provides the event in which Hat's personality, his persona, is most clearly revealed. He takes twelve of the street's children to the game not as a kindness but as a joke, as a trick. His mock-fatherhood grants him attention, importance and respect among the crowd of interested eyes as the children appear to attest to his manliness, to his fertility, to his phallic credentials. However, the validity of such an idea has already been undercut by the tale of Mr. Morgan, the

Pyrotechnist, whose ten children did not prevent his public emasculation at the hands of his wife. Whilst watching the game, the two sides of Hat's persona are revealed. On one hand, Hat shouts, gesticulates, places "impossible bets" (156) and acts in accordance with the values of the street. His exuberance and excitement are very much part of the game's action and are examples of the close spectator-player relationship that characterizes West Indies cricket. At the same time, he conveys cricket's traditions of gentility and honor to the narrator by teaching him about the beauty of the game, the cricketer's names, the scoreboard and that a batsman can be said to have "finished batting" (155) rather than just being "out." Here Hat embodies the two traditions of West Indies cricket that Burton categorizes as the white elite and its colored imitators versus the black masses or the Anglo-creole "play up, play up, and play the game" versus the Afro-creole "play." Burton's position seems to accurately reflect Hat's behavior when he explains that:

West Indian men, it seems to me, watch and play cricket with minds, hearts, values and expectations shaped by the street culture of boyhood, adolescence and early manhood. Concerned as they are with the enhancing of individual and group reputation, those values are potentially—though rarely in fact—at odds with the values of respectability, seriousness, moderation and obedience associated with the home, the church and the ethos of the dominant white and coloured elites.  
(*Liberation Cricket* 98)

Burton's point is made when Gerry Gomez reaches 150 runs and Hat cries out, without a hint of irony, "White people is God" (155). Whilst Hat's support for Trinidad's captain is entirely understandable in the context of an intercolonial game he does not praise Gomez individually but white people collectively. His shout proclaims the complexity of his own identity, of his identification with and alienation from both his own people and the "whites." In this situation Gomez the "white," Cambridge blue, captain stands in for the traditions of England and Englishness that continue to dominate cricket and colonial hierarchies on and off the field: he is one of the "Savannah crowd." Hat's "crazy bets" also set Gomez against George Headley of Jamaica, who, in 1948, became the first black man to lead the West Indies team on the field and whose presence therefore gestures forward to a black regional collectivity and leadership within and beyond cricket. As the first black, working class batsman hero Headley was a hero to the entire region. He was a great batsman, if not the greatest that the West Indies ever produced and James writes about him as such in *Beyond A Boundary*.<sup>7</sup> Headley carried the batting of the West Indies throughout the 1930s, and was largely responsible for the team's innings and, too often, the majority of their runs. Consequently, he earned the name "Atlas." He was also nicknamed the Black Bradman in reference to the most famous of Australian batsman—Sir Donald Bradman. As such, Headley is the cricketing counterpart to Black Wordsworth, *Miguel Street's* struggling poet and calypsonian who claims that he and his brother, the White Wordsworth, are two halves of a single poetic whole. In counterpoising Gomez and Headley, and, Headley and Wordsworth, Naipaul lays bare the two sides of Hat's identification with cricket and the pressure it exerts on

his own sense of self. Hat's calypsonian persona of masculine bravado and self-assurance is unsustainable when faced with the supremacy of and his admiration for "white people." Hence, it is in the same penultimate sketch that we learn of how, through marriage, domestic violence and jail, Hat becomes another aged calypsonian whose mask shatters under its own weight causing Naipaul's narrator to distance himself from his last and most significant masculine hero. Like Eph in *Moon*, the narrator continues to feel affection and sympathy for the older, now fallen man but he, again like Eph, fears for his own future and leaves in search of a bigger life outside of the calypso-island.

The act of wife beating that sends Hat to jail is a repeated feature of *Miguel Street* and Naipaul's works more generally. Both John and Naipaul situate their concern with men and masculine identities within male-female relationships and both show the cricket bat as a phallic weapon used in domestic violence where wife-beating is accepted as commonplace, performed in a kind of calypso comedy and supposedly undercut by the emasculating tongues of the women. In *Moon*, Prince takes up one of the bats Charlie mends and makes as if to strike Mavis, his new fiancée. When she rebukes him declaring that they "aren't married yet" he retreats to become "the patsy" again (55). In *Miguel Street*, Mr Bhakcu, "The Mechanic" and narrator's uncle, beats his wife with a cricket bat and the narrator describes the situation:

For a long time I think Bhakcu experimented with rods for beating his wife, and I wouldn't swear that it wasn't Hat who suggested a cricket bat. But whosoever suggested it, a second-hand cricket bat was bought from the Queen's Park Oval, and oiled, and used on Mrs. Bhakcu.

Hat said, "Is the only thing she really could feel, I think."

The strangest thing about this was that Mrs. Bhakcu kept the bat clean and well-oiled. Boyee tried many times to borrow the bat, but Mrs. Bhakcu never lent it. (119)

[Bhakcu] hated his wife, and he beat her regularly with the cricket bat. But she was beating him too, with her tongue, and I think Bhakcu was really the loser in these quarrels. (123)

Whilst the humor of the scene is undeniable it only adds to the seriousness with which one views these ritualistic acts. These examples point, quite obviously, to the emasculating effects of the colonial system, microcosmically contained within cricket, being re-directed into the physical domination of women. One can argue that the cricket bat is used to suppress, control and emasculate men of color before they re-direct it against their women folk. In this sense, one should appreciate that when the traditional battle was between white batsman and black bowlers a colored man taking up the bat is an attempt to offer some kind of anti-colonial stroke, a move to seize power from the grip of the white (bats)man. This is why black batsman like Headley, Sobers, Richards and Lara are crucial in offering a symbolic reversion of the traditional colonial order. However, Bhacku's situation disrupts this black/white dynamic and draws in Trinidad's

wider racial picture. A probable descendent of indentured Indian labor, Bhakcu's seizure of the bat symbolizes his struggle against white hegemonic masculinity and with its black opposition. His performance follows Reddock's explanation of Niels Sampath's depiction of:

Indo-Caribbean masculinity as a difficult and sometimes confusing struggle against creolization, on the one hand seeking acceptance within this paradigm, but at the same time seeking to maintain Indian domestic patriarchal power. This is a struggle, following Wilson (1969), between the values of honour (Indian) and reputation (Creole). (xxii)

Still, even if the effeminized Prince and Indian Bhakcu are contesting hegemonic and black calypso-related masculinities, they reinforce the point that masculinities are typically united by their oppression, or attempted oppression, of women. Although Mrs. Bhakcu appears complicit in this oppression, the power of her tongue may recall the relatively strong position of Indian women during indentureship and male attempts to regain control over them post-indentureship. Importantly, in both instances the female tongue—standing in for the female voice and sexuality—defeats the men but does not improve their condition. This only happens when the men decide to do something else, in Bhakcu's case to become a pundit. Mavis and Mrs. Bhakcu are only able to “emasculate” their partners by destroying the mask of masculinity they wear because the men are afraid of losing this mask but are constantly doing so; a feature that may actually cause the violence. I suggest that in the same way that the objectifying gaze of the women in *Moon* may be a displacement of the white male gaze, one suspects that the verbal attacks of the women are really the verbalization of the cricket bat's white hegemonic voice speaking back to the man of color who uses it and that the women are on the receiving end of both.

### **Conclusion**

The examples of Charlie, Hat and Bhakcu are united by the Queen's Park Oval that is, as James puts it, the “boss of the island's cricket relations” (49). The Oval is the socio-political force that Charlie describes as “pushing yer out of the stream—and on to the bank—So that yer rot in the sun” (63). As a bastion of white power and prejudice, the Oval embodies the corrupting pressures white hegemonic masculinity places on the other male identities seen in *Moon* and *Miguel Street*, particularly those based on the street values of calypso and its popular expression within cricket. Eph and Naipaul's narrator blame Trinidad itself for the situation they see before them and bemoan that “It ent much different” (*Moon* 62) for them than it was their elder counterparts and their point is supported by the two decades that pass between Charlie's cricketing career and the trip to the Oval. Consequently, these young men run away from Trinidad and the men they think they will become if they remain. Unfortunately, they are running toward the very epicenter of the colonial imagination which will not provide them with

any easy solutions, as the Windrush generation discovered. In contrast, Charlie and Sophia believe that Trinidad is changing and that it has and will continue to improve for men like Charlie and Eph. In cricketing terms, black men have risen since Frank Worrell and a black man has lead the West Indies cricket team from 1960 onwards. West Indies cricket has become a vehicle for the history and future of the Caribbean region. Over the course of the twentieth century it has increasingly become a means of the Caribbean expressing itself and its desires to the world. Yet, the continuing dominance of white hegemonic masculinity remains. Situated within the Oval and white cricket playing nations like England and Australia its residual influence means that West Indies cricket still exists within a system of white, predominantly colonial, masculine and cricketing signification. For the men and nation of Trinidad, the historically situated performances of masculinity demonstrated by Charlie, Hat and Bhakcu, operating as they do within the traditions of cricket, calypso and calypso-cricket, seem to only entrench their identities within typical and accepted masculine domains of achievement via control and defeat over other men and gender identities. One suspects that they must engage with, learn from and ultimately unite with the very gender identities they seek to dominate or exclude. Finally, the disintegration of the heroes of calypso and cricket seen in *Moon* and *Miguel Street* seems to steer us away from an investment in the individual male as hero and towards a common collective based on something other than phallic power.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>See John Thieme for a full account of the calypsos alluded to by Naipaul and their individual uses. Like many of us, myself included, Thieme draws heavily upon the knowledge, writing and insight of Professor Rohlehr.

<sup>2</sup>This paper does not support Burton's argument that one can use these two positions to explain the crowd trouble and rioting during the MCC tours of 1953-5, 1960 and 1968. James' *Beyond A Boundary* offers a more insightful reading of that behavior and those incidents.

<sup>3</sup>The 1958 first edition employs the same examples of cricket and calypso and they are invested with the same symbolic significance. However, the 1963 version sharpens the attack made by John on the cricketing authorities and expands the discussion of cricket by and about Charlie whilst also increasing its calypso references. All citations are taken from the 1963 edition. There are some notable differences between the two versions, including John's decision to move the action from Woodbrook, the residential area in which he grew up, in the first edition to the East Dry River District in the second. Also, in the first edition Charlie is said to have missed the 1924 tour to England but this is moved forward to the 1928 tour in the second version. This discussion addresses the second case. Whilst the historical detail shifts, and these movements have been a notable part of my consideration of the play elsewhere, the arguments attached to Charlie's role and his exclusion from the international trials remains consistent.

<sup>4</sup>In both editions it is strongly suggested that Charlie is not the biological father of Esther.

<sup>5</sup>For a fuller discussion of the emergence of black bowlers see Hilary Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket* Vol 1. 41-57.

<sup>6</sup>Gordon Rohlehr also makes this observation about Crim in "Music, Literature and West Indian Cricket Values" (72). However, where Rohlehr suggests that the reference to cricket is "a mere detail," I would posit that cricket is used by Lamming as a significant structural device at the start and end of the novel and one that deserves critical investigation.

<sup>7</sup>See James full and eloquent depiction of Headley in *Beyond A Boundary*, particularly, 139-148.

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