

“Singing Duvalier”, Singing the Nation: Masculinity in the  
Discourse of Nation Formation in Haiti

by

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B.A., The University of Alberta, 1995

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of History)

We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

August 1999

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## *Abstract*

This thesis argues that no discussion of nationalism is possible without addressing the subject of masculinity. In the case of Haiti, masculinity is the privileged category of an oppositional national discourse, or “*discent*” narrative, and, therefore, orders and ranks constructions of race, class, language, colour, religion and sexuality. With the election of François Duvalier in September of 1957, the Black urban middle-classes expressed their interest in changing a national discourse that excluded them both literally and metaphorically, primarily on the basis of their colour. One year after his election as President of Haiti, the Musical Institute of Haiti held a song competition in honour of the new “Father” of the nation. A compilation of the songs was printed and released to the public. It is through a critical analysis of this booklet, as a site of discursive deployment of power and the national discourse, that the depth of the masculine narrative can be seen. Indeed, I argue that the songs of the competition reveal how in “singing Duvalier” they are in fact singing an oppositional, or “*discenting*” masculinity. This idea of competing masculinities is traceable to the origins of Haitian Independence and the establishment of a national, Black inclusive masculinity lasting until the U.S. occupation in 1915. The invasion imposed a “marine masculinity” which excluded Black Haitians and destroyed colour and power sharing etiquettes. Duvalier’s election in 1957 was the articulation of the Black middle-classes’ opposition to this new national discourse which had been perpetuated by the Mulâtre elites after the marine’s departure in 1934. Indeed, in “Singing Duvalier”, the songs express a new, inclusionary national discourse by articulating race, class, colour, religion, and sexuality through a rubric of masculinity.

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## *Acknowledgments*

My earliest memories are of hearth, home and the books that had residence there. My mother's encouraging insistence that I read everyday, combined with my father's ritualistic devouring of the daily newspaper, or a new novel, instilled in me at an early age a respect and love of books. More importantly, I learned from them the importance of, and love for, reading. My interest in Haiti, its history and its people, is deeply personal and informed by my experiences in the diaspora communities of Miami and Nassau, and Haiti itself.

My primary research was an adventurous affair. In Miami I must thank Schillene and Henry Bigelow for giving me shelter from the heat and humidity as well as a good dose of healthy skepticism. In Haiti my debts are large and numerous. I must thank Edith Nicolas for her help in tracking down contacts and for providing valuable insight into the importance of the song in Haitian culture. I would also like to thank Wilhelm and Raynald Trouillot for their invaluable reflections on Haitian culture and for introducing me to cremas. Moreover, I would like to thank Guy Maximilien and Father Jean Claude Despinas for their patience in helping the "ti blan". Special mention should go to Jeff Bazile, Carla and Scooter, Brian Macadams, David "Jedediah" Lyall, Harry and the people of Gros Jean, Ramses and Gary, Juliette and Eddy, and of course, Lucia. I also need to thank Gage Averill for his generosity in time and attention and for breaking trail.

On a lighter note I'd like to thank Imani Coppola, Andrea Boccelli, Billy Bragg, Sade, Glenn Gould, Frank Sinatra, Duke Ellington, Stan Getz, John Coltrane, and Sir Robert Marley, the prophet, for singing me through the writing of this thesis.

I would also like to thank the reference Librarians at Koerner Library at UBC for their patience and help, as well as the generous support of the UBC History Department Faculty, Staff, and students, some of whom I now count among my closest friends.

I am indebted to Dr. Roderick Barman and Dr. Bill French, not only for their invaluable help in critiquing and discussing this paper, but also for their encouragement and support as one of their students. Their insight and dedication to both their research and their students is exemplary and inspiring. I am grateful because they have challenged me to think critically and to find my own voice amidst the noise of it all. I consider myself among the privileged few.

To my friends I owe a tremendous debt of encouragement and patience. Special mention to Darren and Jennifer Dahl who were with me all the way. Alicia Ali and Lance Chalmers provided invaluable insight into finer points of real life and the necessity of enjoying it before it passes you by. Colin, David, Arn, Melinda, Jason, Claire, Nicole, Vanessa, and Cheri provided particular insight into the complexities life and the reminder that while the journey is important, it's really about who you are travelling with. As for my travelling companions, I have been blessed.

My largest debt is, of course, to my family. To encapsulate the meaning of their love and support in a few paltry sentences is impossible, but I've always known I could go home, come what may. And that has made all the difference.

*To my parents, Dutch and Patricia, for their unfailing support,  
my sisters, Kimmy, KathyJoe and Susie, and their respective broods,  
my close friends,  
my grandfathers, Ron and Scotty, who I did not know,  
my many Haitian friends who inspire me  
And my Uncle Bill.....gone, but not forgotten.*

## Introduction: "Singing Duvalier", Singing the Nation

*Président Duvalier Chef d'Etat  
Cé seul mouné qui pa pé ban'n coute ba  
Pays ya ap dévlopé san traca  
Toute Peuple a Rinmmi'n tan cou ou papa*

*President Duvalier, Chief of State  
The only person not afraid to hit us [ to keep us in line]  
The country will develop without problems  
All the people love a man like you, papa*

### *Refrain*

*Duvalier avec Estimé  
Cé deux hommes qui con'n gouverné  
Ti mouné cou grand mouné tête colé  
Décidé pou collaboré  
Avec Duvalier  
Fô'n capab maché*

*Duvalier with Estime  
These two men know how to govern  
Children and adults put their heads together  
And decided to collaborate  
With Duvalier  
We have to be able to get going*

*Haïti ap Evolué  
Ac Unité National  
Pays ya guin Pou'l maché  
Paceque'n guin ou chef sans égal  
N'rélé Vive Duvalier  
Paceque cé ou nom'm total  
Toute mouné épaulé  
Les ames de la Liberté<sup>1</sup>*

*Haiti will evolve  
With National Unity  
The country is about to really get going  
Because we have you, a chief without equal  
We cry out Live Duvalier  
Because it's you we called [totally named]  
Everyone contributing  
The weapons of freedom<sup>2</sup>*

By electing Francois Duvalier President of Haiti in 1957, his supporters were asserting a radically different interpretation of both the nation and of masculinity than those imposed and perpetuated by previous regimes, especially those of the U.S. occupation and *Mulâtre* elites. In the initial stages of Duvalier's rule, the overwhelming feeling of the Haitian public who voted Duvalier into power—in particular the Black, urban, middle-classes—centered on the necessity to change the colour dynamics of power. For them, the new regime represented a re-establishment of the promising, but unsuccessful, *noiriste* revolution of 1946 begun under newly

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<sup>1</sup>"*Duvalier Sans Egal*", by Joe Trouillot. Institut Musical D'Haiti, p.33.

<sup>2</sup> Burnham translation. I have decided to leave the songs in their original orthography rather than update the language. This is so that others can see the original and my translations. Any errors are solely the responsibility of the author.

elected President Dumarsais Estimé.<sup>3</sup> Thus, a large part of Duvalier's appeal as a leader was the perception he was capable of implementing this dissenting version of the nation, and in the process, of *manjé Mulâtre*, or "screwing" the elites.<sup>4</sup> This sexualized description of the class conflict points to some of the ways that the new, and opposing interpretation of the nation, focused on people's interpretation of Duvalier, or the man himself.

An analysis of a song competition held to commemorate the first anniversary of Duvalier's election, and in which some of the most popular musical artists of the period participated, helps reveal the links between race, class, colour, gender, sexuality, religion, language and nation at the beginning of Duvalier's rule as well as the specific role that masculinity plays in constituting and ordering these hierarchies. Later published in a small book compiled by the Institut Musical d'Haiti, these songs generally extolled the new president of the Haitian republic, singing praises to the new "father" of the patria and the "new" nation.<sup>5</sup> By "singing Duvalier" these songs expressed a submerged national masculinity aimed at dislodging and replacing formerly dominant conceptions of exactly which members of the state qualified for membership in the "imagined nation".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the intricacies of *indiginisme*, *nègritude*, and *noirisme* in the Haitian context see Michel Rolph-Trouillot. Haiti: State Against Nation. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990. p. 130. On the complexities of the Estimé Revolution see Ibid. p.134.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the sexualized conflict between classes see Gage Averill. A Day for the Hunter, A Day for the Prey: Popular Music and Power In Haiti. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1997 p. 76. This will be discussed in detail later in the study.

<sup>5</sup> Barman explains "patria" to mean, in its best translation from Portuguese, homeland. The word "signified the visible, physical community in which an individual was born, brought up, married, pursued a living, and raised a family." See Barman, Roderick J., Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798-1852. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988. p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the articulation of differentiated masculinities in the changing of political regimes see A.M. Liddle, "State Masculinities and Law: Some Comments on Gender and English State-Formation", *British*

In the song with which this thesis begins, entitled “*Duvalier Sans Egal*” [Duvalier is without Equal], for example, the second line of the first verse speaks to violence and popular sanctioning of its use to keep Duvalier’s national project on course. The use of the word “papa” invests state authority in the patriarchal hierarchies of the family. Historically equating Duvalier and former president Dumarsais Estimé in line five is an attempt to legitimize his leadership, real and symbolic, of the national project. Furthermore, key words such as “unity” and “evolve” are attempts to create the imaginary or mythic nation as one in a state of progress in which Duvalier is continuing the work of Estimé. Finally, the fact that the song is written in Haitian, as opposed to French, speaks volumes of what this song is really asserting: the legitimacy of a Black, Haitian masculinity.

Endowing national origin with sacred significance is one of the means used to create the mythic nation in opposition to dominant definitions of national membership. In his work, Prasenjit Duara talks of *discent*, a word he coins by combining the terms dissent and descent. Dissent describes a narrative of opposition used against the contemporary nation and its rulers, while descent describes the origins of the nation. Thus, a master narrative of “*discent*” describes the process by which a dissenting narrative of national descent is mobilized against the dominant national discourse, and in so doing it becomes the rubric under which a community becomes imagined.

When a master narrative of discent—a discursive meaning—seeks to define and mobilize a community, it usually does so by privileging a particular symbolic meaning (or set of cultural practices) as the constitutive principle of the community—such as language, religion, or common historical experience—thereby heightening the self-consciousness of this community in relation to those around it.<sup>7</sup>

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*Journal of Criminology [Special Issue]* 1996.36(3).

<sup>7</sup> Duara, Prasenjit, “Historicizing National Identity”, *Becoming National*. Eley, Geoff and Suny, Ronald Grigor, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. p. 168.

Although not included by Duara, in Haiti it is the category of masculinity that serves as the master narrative of *discent*, the category through which constructions of race, class, colour, sexuality, and religion are ranked, ordered, and articulated.

A narrative of *discent* works by differentiating the community in question from an “Other”. In the case of the competition songs from Haiti, it is the differentiation of one narrative of masculinity from another, a *discenting* national narrative of Africa, slavery and Vodou against the perpetuation of a White western masculinity that favoured French and Christianity. Thus, in “singing Duvalier” the various artists are singing the masculinity that they want to define and control Haitian society.<sup>8</sup> The competition songs then, are not only gendered, but this gendered discourse is expressed through a narrative of *discent* that privileges masculinity. That the songs are gendered is evident in four important ways: the gendering of national time; the treatment of women in the songs; and, finally, the prevalence of the rhetoric of violence.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, I argue that it is through the articulation of this new national masculinity that the boundaries of class, colour, race, language, religion, sexuality and the body are re-defined, re-mapped, and re-expressed.

Despite the relative transparency of the gendered national discourse contained in the competition songs, delineating their intersection at the site of masculinity is problematic. For

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<sup>8</sup>Barbara Spackman argues that, with respect to Italian Fascism, it was the rhetoric of virility (masculinity) that carried and “condensated” other constructions such as race, class, and sexuality. See Spackman *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

<sup>9</sup>Anne McClintock argues that violence is one aspect of the gendered nation. See McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven: Gender Race, and Nationalism” in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, & Postcolonial Perspectives*. Eds., McClintock, Anne & Mufti, Aamir & Shohat, Ella. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. p.91

example, the ability to sharply define where race, colour, and class begin, separate, combine and contradict each other is difficult because they are concomitant constructions that react to and play off each other. However, I would argue that political songs are one of the discursive sites of deployment where these complexities rise to the surface and become readily identifiable. In many respects then, the categories I use here are artificial, but are nonetheless necessary in order to effectively engage with the respective constructions. Indeed, these constructions are overlapping, intertwined, interdependent, intersubjective, conditional and are constantly in stages of flux or transition.<sup>10</sup>

### **Section I: Religion at the Crossroads: *Pwens* and *Betiz***

Given that the fight for Haitian independence forged the national ideology of the state apparatus, it should be no surprise that the competing religious cosmologies of Christianity and Vodou are implicated in the masculine narrative of *discent* as expressed in the competition songs. Not only does the military have a long tradition of involvement with various elements of Vodou practitioners, but the religion formed the backbone of the impetus behind the national movement for independence at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Since that time, Haitians continue to proudly remember the secret religious ceremony held at *Bois Caiman* in August 1791 where Boukman, a priest, and an African born Priestess presided over a Vodou ceremony to

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the tenuous nature of masculine identities and race see Stecopoulos, Harry and Uebel, Michael, eds., Race and the Subject of Masculinities. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> For more on the longstanding relationship between the military, military personnel and Vodou see Laguerre, Michel. The Military in Haiti and Society in Haiti. Berkeley: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1993. p 57.

pledge defiance of their colonial oppressors and slavery. Only days later the Haitian Revolution began. Not to be forgotten is Duvalier's own intimate involvement with Vodou societies and its practitioners both in his bid for power and during his political regime. Indeed, the complexities of the religious and racial components of the *discenting* masculinity begins to surface when the intricate involvement of these other constructions are considered.

Further demonstrating a competing religious masculinity is that, in many of the songs, the lyrics are accompanied by a description of the music. Indeed, 11 of the songs are identified with specific Vodou dances and rites, or nations: *ibo*, *yanvalou*, *pétro*, and *congo*. Of the 11, five are described as being *pétro*, whose deities are considered to be hot and militaristic.<sup>12</sup> This is significant in several respects. First, it means that the songs represent not just the lyrical component of the music, but the music itself and, as McAlister has argued, the playing of a particular form of music in Haiti is a political statement of its own. The Vodou drums are not only semiotic carriers of meaning, but they are aural carriers, since the songs and music are heard long before the bands are seen.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, the specific use of Vodou rhythms, in particular *Pétro*, signifies the legitimation not only of the religion, but everything associated with its African origins: language, sexuality, race, colour, and class. This is a stark contrast to the attempted, and partially successful, religious assimilation by Catholic Christianity, its accompanying discourse of sexual morality, and the race, colour, and class implications of the previously dominant White/ *Mulâtre* class.

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<sup>12</sup> Averill, Gage. A Day for the Hunter. p. 243.

<sup>13</sup> McAlister, Elizabeth A. "Me Moun Yo"[Here are the People]:Rara Festivals and Transnational Popular Culture in Haiti and New York. Ph.D dissertation. Yale University, 1995. p. 210. She also explains the complex relationship between a particular riff or melody and its accompanying lyrics. When the riff is played, the associated lyrics are immediately recalled and associated.

That songs should be used as a medium for nationalist rhetoric should not be surprising given the cultural depth and importance of singing in Haiti. One of the obvious means by which to judge the importance of the songs from the competition is to examine the role of singing in Haiti generally. Early historians, travel writers, and academics have described Haiti as a “sung” culture because of the ubiquitousness of singing and its tremendous social importance and impact.<sup>14</sup> When the Saint Domingue revolution began in 1789, it was an illiterate population of slaves that constituted the bulk of the new state, two thirds of whom had been born in Africa. Despite the revolution’s “successful” conclusion in 1804, the internal development necessary to provide any type of western education for these newly freed people, for various reasons, did not occur. Because of this, the “Pan-Africanness” of the new members of the Haitian state remained essentially intact. Echoes of their oral traditions persisted and found voice in the syncretive aggregations of African religion, Catholicism, and peasant culture.<sup>15</sup> This means that Haitian culture has been, and continues to be, reliant on singing as a primary form of social communication as well as a social signifier of profound import.

Indeed, singing has played an integral part in Haitian communication and identity formation at many levels of society: local, regional, public, private, personal, political, and socio-economic. In his article *Profane Songs of the Haitian People*, Harold Courlander explains the wide range of topics covered by secular folk-songs: gossip, ridicule, love-making, scandal, reproach, misfortune, mistreatment, deprivation, hunger, sickness, and death.<sup>16</sup> The song as an

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<sup>14</sup>Courlander, Harold. *Haiti's Political Folksongs*. Opportunity, 19(4), April 1941, pages 114-118.

<sup>15</sup>Bellegarde-Smith, Patrick. *Haiti: The Breached Citadel*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990. p. 9.

<sup>16</sup>Courlander, Harold. *The Drum and The Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People*. Berkeley:UCLA Press, 1960.

instrument of politics, in particular personal politics, and social criticism, owns a vaunted past in Haiti. Complicating this cultural praxis is its rootedness in Vodou ritual which centers on the medium of song.<sup>17</sup> As a result, singing permeates the socio-cultural practice of the politically personal, and by extension, spills into the informal and formal arenas of local, regional, and state politics. Its widespread use demonstrates its elasticity, its malleability by all classes, politics, and religions, as well as its use in articulating the masculinities of the nation.

With respect to popular culture, the competition songs, and religion there are two particular types of songs that merit close attention: the point song (*chan pwen*) and songs of obscenity and vulgarity (*betiz*). *Chan pwen* are songs used to indirectly cast aspersions, censures, and/or recriminations at people, about them, or to speak to a related situation. They share overlapping origins in secular and sacred contexts (Vodou) and are “sent” at other people, groups, or leaders. *Betiz*, which focuses on the vulgar and the obscene, can be a *pwen* that is directed at someone or some group. The song “Doc Duvalier”, winner of second place in the competition, contains an interesting promise in regard to *betiz* and Duvalier.

*Duvalier ap travail  
Pou nous capab aisé  
Groupe li pa’p bétisé  
Pou nou sôti nan trail*

*Duvalier is working  
So that we can be comfortable[rich]  
His group[people] won’t joke around[mock him]  
So we can leave behind betrayal.<sup>18</sup>*

The meanings for *bétizé* vary, but I would argue that this statement is an acting promise not to resort to the oft times lewd behaviour that political and public figures face during festivals. Very often the popular festivals are seen as a means to even the score against unpopular politicians or

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<sup>17</sup>McAlister, Elizabeth. A. ed. 1997. Angels in the Mirror: Vodou Music in Haiti. Roslyn, NY: Ellipsis Arts. CD and Book.

<sup>18</sup> “*Doc Duvalier*”[Doctor Duvalier], by Milfrand Henry. Institut Musical d’Haiti.p. 53.

the rich and powerful, as nothing is sacred or unspeakable.<sup>19</sup> More than this, however, is that this promise not to *betiz* is a promise not to betray the national masculinity being articulated through Duvalier's political victory. So significant is the ability of these songs to undermine a leader's manhood, and thus his leadership, that their performance at a public festival could have devastating effects, especially if the *betiz* is particularly poignant and catchy.<sup>20</sup>

For example, a performance by the well known popular singer Sweet Micky, during carnival 1999 in Port-au-Prince, demonstrated how the rhetoric of masculinity carried and helped articulate other constructions. As the carnival *cha*[float] passed by a group of spectators the band sang a challenge to another performer: "*Men president, Men president*" "*President Caca*". ["Here is the president, Here is the president" , "President shit"]. The performer being called President "shit" was King Kino, the lead singer of the musical group the Phantoms and a mayoral candidate in upcoming elections. Sweet Micky then proceeded to challenge Kino's power and verbally attacked his manhood by feminizing Kino and alluding to his "probable" homosexuality. As one spectator reported:

'For instance, there was a running challenge going on between Sweet Micky and King Kino, the lead singer of the Phantoms. Kino is openly *lavalas*<sup>21</sup> and currently preparing to run for mayor of Port-au-Prince. He's also been managing to piss people off by running around with a heavy security entourage, lots of arms and generally acting as though he is already "chef." On Sunday night

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<sup>19</sup> Burnham recording of Father Jean Claude Despinas. He argues that private misdeeds become public through *betiz*. Recording Date. April, 1999, Port-au-Prince, Haiti. This is confirmed by McAlister in "Me Moun Yo", p. 207. She argues that in many ways lewd songs, or the airing of the private in public, is a form of popular laughter.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the power of lewd songs in the politics of Haiti see Gage Averill. "Anraje to Angaje: Carnival Politics and Music in Haiti". *Ethnomusicology*. 38(2): 217-47.

<sup>21</sup> Means a partisan of the 1990 political movement of Jean Bertrand Aristide.

we saw the Sweet Micky *cha* [carnival float] go by and I had to laugh at Micky's *betiz*, as homophobic and anti-*lavalas* as they were. They stopped the Micky *cha* and the music so that Micky could tell this ridiculous story about his recent sexual encounter with Kino, including the moment when Kino is about to come and then Micky starts singing, as though he were Kino at the moment of climax: "don't you know I love you, I want to make love to you, I'll be by your side, never, ever leave you."<sup>22</sup>

This lewd and bawdy exchange, described by an anonymous carnival spectator, reveals the complex and oft times contradictory issues of race, colour, sex, sexuality, class, language, and religion articulated within and through the rhetoric of masculinity. Of particular interest in this public exchange are the ways in which masculinity is produced and re-produced, and how the boundaries of the masculine are set, defined and stated. Sweet Mickey—arguably the king of lewdness in contemporary Haitian popular music—quickly makes the attack on King Kino an issue of the masculine. His homophobia, portrayed in this instance with a referral to anal penetration, and the allusion to a feminine discourse of sexual intimacy, dominates the singing, the speech, and the action. This verbal competition of the popular quickly descends into the sexual and masculine. Win, and you get to metaphorically 'screw', or "fuck" people; lose, and you get "fucked", or symbolically lose your manhood. While this overt example of masculine re-production tends to the extreme, the more sexually vague songs that will be discussed here carry the same messages, albeit in a more subtle form. And, with regards to the competition songs, the articulation of a new gendered national discourse implies some of the same results: the winners get to metaphorically "screw" or "fuck" the losers.<sup>23</sup> In the song about Duvalier, his opponents are warned not to *betiz* him, or engage in such behaviour.

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<sup>22</sup> Anonymous Posting, by request, on Corbettlist serve. March 6, 1999. This was a portion of an eyewitness account written by a carnival attendee.

<sup>23</sup> For more on the sexualized nature of class conflict see Gage Averill in *A Day for the Hunter*. p. 76 and

Both *chan pwen* and *betiz* tend to be most powerful at festivals such as *rara* and carnival and form the basis of the lewd carnival songs.<sup>24</sup> Thus, Sweet Micky's song would certainly be classified as *betiz*: sent out to the crowds of carnival for effect, directed at King Kino as a challenge to his claims of power and status as a potential leader, but primarily as a "real" man. And, in the case of "*Duvalier Sans Egal*", its potential as a *pwen* can not be dismissed. Therefore, this understanding of the political potential of popular songs and their history in all contexts of Haitian discourse becomes crucial in analyzing the songs of the competition. It means that the songs, as a cultural product, must be taken seriously and recognized for their ability to reveal the extent of the gendered nature of Haitian nationalism and the most important cultural medium for articulating a national discourse of Black Haitian *discent*.

## Section II: "Nation-Time"

A crucial aspect of gendered national discourses, then, and one that is manifested repeatedly in the competition songs, is the contradictory nature of "nation-time".<sup>25</sup> The discourse is contradictory because it looks forward and back simultaneously, reaching back into the history of the nation to achieve a legitimacy in the present. This permits the national project to "march" into the future, a concession that is ultimately made at the price of placing women outside of time.<sup>26</sup> The first song in the competition booklet, simply titled "*Hymne Populaire*"

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Liza McAlister in "Me Moun Yo". p 205.

<sup>24</sup> Averill, Gage. A Day For The Hunter, p.75-78.

<sup>25</sup> Tom Nairn describes this as the Janus faced characteristic of nationalism and its looking two directions at the same time. See Nairn, Tom. Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited. London: Verso, 1997.p 71.

<sup>26</sup> McClintock argues that all nationalisms are invented and all national discourses are gendered, and a

[Popular hymn or anthem], captures this historical connection by equating President François Duvalier's political victory of 1957 with the Estimé revolution of 1946.

*Dumarsais Estimé est mort  
Mais sa pensée revit.  
Avec François Duvalier  
Qui va changer notre sort.*

*Refrain*

*Duvalier Estimé  
Estimé Duvalier  
Na pé voté Duvalier  
Na pra'l voté Duvalier*

*En avant Haïtien conscient  
N'ap voté Duvalier  
Cé ou seul citoyen Honnête  
Cap travail pou pays nou.*

*Dumarsais Estime is dead.  
But his thinking [ideas] is seen again.  
With Francois Duvalier  
Who will change our fate.*

*Duvalier Estime  
Estime Duvalier  
We're not afraid to vote for Duvalier.  
We're going to vote for Duvalier.*

*Go forward awakened Haitians.  
We will vote for Duvalier.  
You're the only honest citizen  
Who can work for our country.<sup>27</sup>*

Placed at the beginning of the collection, this song links the 1946 Estimé “revolution” to Duvalier's political victory and highlights the competing nationalisms being articulated through the rubric of masculinity. Estimé's election voiced the issue of class and colour in direct opposition to the long term after-effects of the American occupation(1915-1934), and the extension of the Marine's systemic discrimination by a willing *Mulâtre* elite, whose collaboration perpetuated the changes made to the historical social dynamics of power sharing. This song also voices the argument that the Estimé revolution, having been halted by the pro-occupation government of Paul Magloire (1950-1956), had been taken up again by Duvalier.<sup>28</sup> In Jean Legros' composition, the association between the two *noiriste* Presidents is again made clear and definite.

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crucial aspect of this is the manipulation, or gendering of time. See McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven”, p. 92.

<sup>27</sup> “*Hymne Populaire*”[Popular Anthem], Institut Musical d’Haiti, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> For more on the Estimé/Duvalier connection see Michel Rolph-Trouillot *Haiti: State Against Nation*.

*Refrain*

*Docteur Duvalier cé ou nou vlé  
Pays d'Haïti Pou ou gouverné  
Et surtout Pour l'Union Nationale  
Toute moun cé mète'n ac Duvalier  
Parceque cé ti Frè Estimé  
A la Présidence, cé Duvalier  
Dans la capitale ou très loyal  
Crié avec moin vive Duvalier*

*Doctor Duvalier it's you we want  
The country of Haiti is yours to govern  
And above all for national unity  
Everyone is with Duvalier.  
Because he's the little brother of Estime  
For the presidency, it's Duvalier  
In the capital you are very loyal  
Yell with me, long live Duvalier.<sup>29</sup>*

Of particular interest here is the representation of Duvalier as the little brother of Estimé, a phrase that not only describes his place as the new beacon of revolutionary change, but confirms the domesticating imposition of the national discourse. This is one of several examples whereby Duvalier's designation as "Father", "Papa" and "Little Brother of Estimé" serves to impose the "naturally occurring" hierarchies of the family into the state, through the historical connections to Estimé's regime. In short, the *discent* narrative that legitimized "Father Estimé" has been symbolically passed to his "little brother", Papa Doc, thereby using the historical legitimacy of the first *noiriste* regime, wrapped in a familial trope, to validate Duvalier's literal and symbolic place as the new father of the nation. This represents, however, the historical links between men, sung by men, and about men, to the near total exclusion of women. Indeed, this domestication of time, symbolically represents the differences between the symbolic and literal spaces of the nation. Men, as represented by Duvalier in the songs, occupy both the real and symbolic space of the nation, especially since the privileged category of the *discent* narrative is masculinity. Women, in contrast, inhabit the private and silent space of home, and are therefore silent in the expression of the nation and its discourse. And because women are used to set the boundaries of

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p. 176,177.

<sup>29</sup> "Docteur Duvalier Cé ou Nou Vlè"[Dr. Duvalier it's You We Want], Institut Musical d'Haïti, Jean Legros, p. 21

masculinity, they will reside outside the discursive realms of the nation if it is the privileged category of expressing that nation.

Without an explanation of the events leading to the election of François Duvalier in September of 1957 and their articulation of a Black African masculinity, little of the content of the competition songs will be understandable. What cannot be overemphasized is the importance that the Haitian revolution of 1791 had, and continues to have, on the construction of the national identity, or imagined community in Haiti.<sup>30</sup> The declaration of Haitian independence on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1804, after the defeat of the French, English, and Spanish armies, stands as one of the great democratic movements in history, and represents the first, and only successful American slave revolt in recorded history. Its outcomes have haunted and upheld the republic since that time. For, not only does it stand as an accomplishment of the highest degree, but it stands as the empirical nadir of Haitian national consciousness.<sup>31</sup> This theme is revealed in the song “Duvalier L’Armée et le Peuple” [Duvalier, the Army, and the People], where Duvalier’s political legitimacy is closely linked to three of the great leaders of the Haitian revolution: Dessallines, Pétion, and Christophe.

I

*En Avant peuple Haïtien  
L’heure ya sonné ou nou sôti.  
An’n formé ou fort Lien  
Pou’n capab sauvé Haïti  
Songé Dessallines Pétion  
Christophe, yo té di en avant  
Si’n mète la main dans la main  
Na fait l’Union tancou longtemp.*

*Go forward people of Haiti.  
The hour has already come for us to emerge  
Let’s make a strong link  
So that we can save[salvage] Haiti  
Remember Dessallines, Petion  
and Christophe, they said go forward  
If we take each other’s hand  
We will make a Union like long ago.*

<sup>30</sup> See Benedict Anderson . *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1991. Although I disagree with his argument of print cultures since this can not be used to describe the Haitian experience, his idea of the “imagined community” is powerful. I would argue in the Haitian context that much of the imagined community is created by, among other things, the socio-cultural practice of singing.

<sup>31</sup> Rolph-Trouillot. *Haiti: State Against Nation*. p. 130.

## II

*Si'n vlé pou'n guin Liberté  
 Fô'm Fait l'Union pou'n guin la Paix  
 Si'n vlé guin Fraternité  
 Laissé la Haine pou'n cab vainquer  
 Nou oué Docteur Duvalier  
 Bon Chef suprême de la nation  
 Fé l'apel pou'n colaboré  
 Ac ça qui vlé pou'n resté nation.*

*If we want to have freedom  
 We must have unity to have peace  
 If we want to have Brotherhood  
 Let go of hatred for victory.  
 We see Doctor Duvalier  
 The good supreme leader of the nation  
 Makes the call for us to collaborate  
 With those who want to remain a nation.<sup>32</sup>*

This song, winner of an honorable mention in the competition, clearly articulates the notion that Duvalier's revolution is a return to the glory of the nation that followed Haitian Independence in 1804.<sup>33</sup> The connection of three of the great leaders of the revolutionary struggle, Christophe, Dessallines, and Pétion, not only imbues Duvalier with their revolutionary legitimacy but also the historic responsibility to put the nation back on its promising, albeit mythical, course. Furthermore, like much of the discourse of masculinity, the historical links carry and convey much that is not said or clearly stated: the continuation of the patriarchy, the continued submission of women, and the larger assumptions of masculine ideology regarding race, class, colour, language and sexuality. Moreover, the historical linkages in the songs between Duvalier, Estimé, and Haitian Independence re-establish the legacies of a free Haitian state and the masculinities created, contested and re-produced since that time. In many ways, the colonial legacies of French imperialism have been competing with the national discourse of a free Haiti since the beginning of the revolution in 1791.

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<sup>32</sup> Gerard Dupervil. "Duvalier L'Armée et le Peuple" [Duvalier, the Army and the People]. Institut Musical d'Haiti. p. 50.

<sup>33</sup> For more on the Haitian revolution see C.L.R. James The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Vintage Books, 1963. and Carolyn Fick, The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990.

The origins of the master narrative against which the Duvalier revolution was competing can be traced to the decision to send U.S. troops to occupy Haiti and take over the controls on state power. The arrival of 300 marines on July 28, 1915, in the midst of a political crisis, removed the traditional connections and checks on state power, and imposed an exclusionary masculinity through force.<sup>34</sup> The Marines stayed until 1934, but left an unmitigated disaster in their wake. First, they disbanded the Haitian army, the national avatar of the struggle against slavery and colonialism, and replaced it with the *Garde*, an entity created primarily to suppress other Haitians and which became dominated by *Mulâtre* officers.<sup>35</sup> Once laden with Black military officers, their imposed exclusion from the higher ranks exacerbated many of the problems of the fragile state, especially that of colour prejudice.<sup>36</sup> This problem reached its peak during the presidency of Stenio Vincent (1930-'41), but it wasn't until the end of Elie Lescot's term in 1946 that the Black middle classes and intellectuals took to the streets in a series of strikes and riots, not only rejecting a national discourse that excluded them, but to mobilize a narrative of *discent*. When the situation came to a head, General Paul Magloire, a U.S. trained *Mulâtre*, forced L'Escot to resign and called elections. Dumarsais Estimé, a *noiriste*, was elected and took on the political mantle as the leader of the revolution of 1946. Estimé did not deliver on the anticipated changes that the urban Black middle classes desired and the "marine masculinity" remained in power. After unsuccessfully attempting to extend his mandate, fixed at 1 term for 5

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<sup>34</sup> Rolph-Trouillot argues that the Marine occupation upset long standing arrangements of power sharing, as well as centralizing power in Port-au-Prince, essentially removing any and all institutional checks and balances on power. See *Haiti: State Against Nation*. p. 105.

<sup>35</sup> For the specifics of the U.S. occupation and its effects see Corvington, Georges. *Port-au-Prince au cours des ans: La capitale d'Haiti sous l'occupation, 1922-1934*. Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Henri Deschamps.

<sup>36</sup> Rolph-Trouillot. *Haiti: State Against Nation* p. 107.

years by the Haitian constitution, Estimé was ousted by the military in 1950. General Paul Magloire, an American trained *Mulâtre* general, won the “election”, thereby maintaining the national discourse of “marine masculinity”.

The occupation replaced a conflictual, quasi-inclusionary, and oft times flexible *Noir/Mulâtre* masculinity, that had developed since independence, with a much more rigidly defined ‘white’ masculinity. The marines destroyed the historical racial/colour etiquette and imposed their masculinity into the state apparatus, thereby shutting out the middle class *Noirs* and intellectuals. This exclusionary “marine masculinity”, as I call it, not only erased the cultural colour etiquette peculiar to the Haitian state, in which *Noirs* and *Mulâtres* shared power, but it magnified the problems intensely. Combined with the cultural rhetoric of *indigenisme*, *noirisme*, and *nègritude*, but primarily *noirisme*, that coalesced at this time, the contested arena of the nation was really about differentiations of masculinity. These revolutionary ideologies that emerged during and after the occupation spoke to the perceived betrayal of the *Mulâtres* for accepting this white, western, “marine masculinity” that denied access to the middle-class *Noirs*. And, because the *Mulâtre* power structure did not relinquish the exclusionary master narrative after the Marines left in 1934, the *Noirs* turned against them and embraced an extreme rhetoric that excluded whites and *Mulâtres*. It is, therefore, in this context that Duvalier came to power in September of 1957. He was viewed as the continuation of the Estimé revolution of 1946, the heir to the *noiriste* ideology and its narrative of *discent*, and the man who could put the *Mulâtre* elites in place and keep them there.

### **Section III: The Gendered Nation: Women and the Discourse of Nationalism**

It is within this independence/occupation/Estimé rubric, as seen in the above example, that the gendered nature of national time becomes apparent, and women are seen to be placed outside the national discourse, and outside of time. Because time is both conveniently and paradoxically expressed in the competition songs, the link between historical nostalgia and the gendered nature of time becomes important in understanding how women are marginalized in the national discourse. The most obvious indication that this is an exclusionary gendered nationalism is the fact that the songs are about one man and his ability to save the nation from failure and lead it to peace and prosperity. He is revered, praised, idolized, lauded, and called the complete man and ideal leader.

*Toute Peuple là mandé ou Duvalier vini comandé  
Palais national à la capitale d'l cé nèg total.*

*Everyone wants Duvalier to be in charge.  
From the national palace to the capital they say  
he's the perfect[complete] man.<sup>37</sup>*

This description of Duvalier is important as it reflects the exclusionary nature of this masculinity. It takes a man like Duvalier to lead the nation, and a woman like Simone, his wife, to support him, the symbolic position given to her in the national discourse. This idea is supported by McClintock, who argues that discourses of the nation often represent women and men in a Manichean fashion.

Women are represented as the atavistic and authentic body of national tradition (inert, backward looking and natural) embodying nationalism's conservative principle of continuity. Men, by contrast, represent the progressive agent of

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<sup>37</sup> "Docteur Duvalier Ce ou Nou Vle"[Dr. Duvalier It is You We Want]. Institut Musical d'Haiti. Jean Legros, p. 21.

national modernity (forward thrusting, potent, historic), embodying nationalism's progressive, or revolutionary, principle of discontinuity.<sup>38</sup>

This is evidenced clearly in the second song titled "*Hymne du Faisceau Feminin D'Haiti*" [Anthem of the Women's Group of Haiti]. The first six lines are the same as the first song, wherein they nostalgically tie Duvalier to Estimé, but the last five lines merit attention because of the gender implications, showing the link between gender and time, or indeed, how time is gendered.

*Signifie justice Sociale(bis)*  
*En avant Haïtien conscient*  
*Dans les rangs du Parti*  
*Faisceau Féminin D'Haïti*  
*Travaillant Pour le Pays.*

*signifies social justice(repeat)*  
*Those aware are out in front.*  
*In the ranks of the party*  
*the [women's branch, or group] of Haiti<sup>39</sup>*  
*Is working for the country.<sup>40</sup>*

At the end of this song, women are in one sense implicated as working for the nation. This is important because none of the other songs specifically states that men will work for the nation, it is assumed. And, in reference to Duvalier's "exalted" position as the ideal man, it reveals that men lead and women work for them; the national project is formulated and expressed by men and supported by women. As well, women have to be specifically mentioned since it is otherwise assumed the discussion of nation concerns men. Indeed, this is the strength and proof of the patriarchal ideology. The ideology creates unchallenged assumptions that are rendered 'obvious', assumptions such as the physical, sexual, social, and political inferiority of women to men.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> McClintock, Anne. "No Longer in a Future Heaven". p. 92.

<sup>39</sup> The translation for this particular phrase is difficult as the French vs. Creole meanings are significant.

<sup>40</sup> "*Hymne du Faisceau Feminin D'Haiti*" [Anthem of the Women's Group of Haiti], Insitut Musical d'Haiti, p. 16

An even more stark example of gendered time, which demonstrates the historical exclusion and marginalization of women from the national discourse, is the all important third song of the competition booklet titled simply, “*Madam Duvalier*”.

*Madame Duvalier Première dame d'Haïti  
La Population ap di ou, ou grand merci  
Madam Duvalier ou cé ou manman Pou nou  
Na'p méte tete ensemble Pou'n Prié Dieu Pou ou.*

*Mrs. Duvalier, First Lady of Haiti  
The people will tell you, thank you very much  
Mrs. Duvalier, you are the mother for us  
We'll put our heads together and pray to God  
for you.*

*Docteur Duvalier et Madam Duvalier  
Formé ou Faisceau Pou Pays ya maché  
  
You grande dame conçà oui cé rare pou trouvé  
Cé ou cadeau du ciel merci Papa Bon Dieu*

*Doctor Duvalier and Mrs. Duvalier  
You form the light [beacon] to make the country  
work  
A great lady like that is indeed rare to find  
You are a gift from heaven, thank you God.*

#### *Refrain*

*Vive Madam Duvalier  
Bienfaitrice do la Nation  
Vive Madam Duvalier  
Protectrice des Affligés  
Vive Madam Duvalier  
Douce Mère de la nation  
Vive Madam Duvalier  
Vierge Ste-Rose à Veillé ou  
Pou nou.*

*Long live Mrs. Duvalier  
Benefactress of the Nation.  
Long live Mrs. Duvalier  
Protector of the Afflicted  
Long live Mrs. Duvalier  
Sweet Mother of the Nation  
Long live Mrs. Duvalier  
The virgin Saint Rose will  
Watch over you for us.<sup>42</sup>*

In this example, much of the rhetoric is obvious. “Mother of the nation” is used to naturalise the hierarchies of the family into the national power structure, legitimising the hierarchies of the state as “natural”. Not only is Simone Duvalier sung as the mother of the nation, but she is also represented as the saintly wife of the president, who is the ‘father’ of the nation. This also signifies her subordinate position of mother, wife and first lady as being representative of the nation, but not part of the political process. She is in fact portrayed as the standard bearer of the Haitian state: the benefactress, the protector, and sweet mother who will be watched over by the

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<sup>41</sup> For more on the ideological underpinnings of patriarchal ideology see David Buchbinder *Performance Anxieties: Re-Producing Masculinity*. New South Wales: Allen and Unwin, 1998. p.5,

virgin Saint Rose; in other words, inert and politically inactive. Indeed, this rhetoric serves to place her, and women in general, as outside the actual arena of politics and political independence. This gendered metaphor can be extended to some of the other songs wherein President Duvalier is portrayed as the captain of a ship—the ship being Haiti—and the ship being feminised. This is the case in the song “*Haiti ce ou Belle Voilie*”[Haiti you are a beautiful sailing ship]. Duvalier is in charge, and the nation is his to guide.

*Haïiti cé ou belle voilié  
Capitaine ni cé Duvalier*

*Haiti you are a beautiful sailing ship  
And your captain is Duvalier.*<sup>43</sup>

This feminisation of the nation-state again serves to portray women as the avatar of the nation. As in the previous song, where Duvalier is the active subject and Simone Duvalier is the inert and inactive object, Haiti’s representation here as a sailing ship mirrors this objectification. In other words, women are seen as object to men as subject; Haiti is viewed as feminine, and in accordance with patriarchal ideology, is therefore capable of being possessed, controlled, and submitted to the will of a heroic, forward looking male leader like Duvalier.

The only other song of the thirty six that speaks of women directly only serves to reify the gendered pattern of national exclusion and objectification through metaphor and symbol. Taken from Joe Trouillot’s composition “*Haiti Notre Fierté*”[Haiti our Pride], a song which is rich with masculine rhetoric, and will be revisited later, shows that women are sexualised in the national discourse. In the second verse, particularly line seven and eight, Trouillot expounds on the sexual availability of Haitian women through the intricacies of race and colour.

*Créole avec Francé  
Cé ça toute mouné palé  
Belle négresse bien nuancé*

*Creole and French  
That’s what everyone speaks  
The beautiful negress is finely shaded.*

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<sup>42</sup>“*Madam Duvalier*”. by Shiller Payne, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> “*Haiti cé ou Belle Voilié*”[Haiti you are a beautiful sailing ship]. Institut Musical d’Haiti, p. 30.

*Mulatresse bien moulé*

*The mulatre women are well-shaped.*<sup>44</sup>

Once again the discourse of nation is accompanied by a marginalized, or spectator reference, to women. In other words, and with respect to the rest of the song, the nation, as object, is for men, and like the nation itself, women are sung as objects to be possessed and controlled by them.

Complicating the fact that women are objectified, marginalized, and sexualised in the national discourse of the songs is the historical context of Haitian women's involvement in the political process, and their omission from written histories. With respect to the discourse of nationality, subsumed by the ideological matrices of patriarchy and masculinity, it is apparent that women's 'place' is considerably different than that of men's.<sup>45</sup> The sad irony is that Duvalier's election was the first at full suffrage. However, this positive change in gender inclusiveness was accompanied by the sad realities of political participation. The case has been made that Duvalier's induction into politics was accompanied by a level of violence rarely seen, but more particularly a political violence that affected women at an unprecedented level. Not only excluded from the political arena, but also from the consequences of that participation, women became the targets of political violence as never before, a violence almost exclusively committed against them by men.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> "*Haiti Notre Fierté*" [Haiti our Pride], Joe Trouillot, Institut Musical d'Haiti. P. 41.

<sup>45</sup> Myriam J. Chancy argues that the discussion of Haitian nationalism and national identity among scholars was completely dominated by men, a fact mirrored in the virtually complete omission of women's role in the nation and its histories. For more on the exclusions of women by the Haitian patriarchy, see, Chancy, *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

<sup>46</sup> For more on Duvalier's use of political violence see Rotberg, Robert I. with Christopher K. Clague. *Haiti and the Politics of Squalor*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1971, Rolph-Trouillot, *Haiti*

### Section IV: Violence and Masculinity

The relationship between Haitian national identity and violence is, like much of masculine ideology, obvious.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, it is through violence that competing masculinities have become dominant and exclusionary, and ultimately how *discent* narratives overtake dominant discourses of the imaginary nation. Indeed, the birth of the Haitian state came as a result of the military victories, through force, over the French colonial violence of slavery, a struggle that centred specifically on who was, and who was not, a man. Independence did not signal the end of political violence in Haitian society as it related to national identity, so the imposition of a “marine masculinity” by force in 1915 is entirely consistent with the historical record. It would be expected then that violence should be a central aspect of how the *discent* narrative of black masculinity would be implemented. It should not be a surprise that the competition songs contain serious violent overtones, subtle hints, and outright threats. One of the most overt is Schiller Payne’s “*Duvalier ou Pi Du*” [Duvalier you are the Hardest, or toughest].

<i>Pa touché Duvlier</i>	<i>Don't Touch Duvalier</i>
<i>Pou Piquant Pa Piqué 'ou</i>	<i>Or the thorn will prick you</i>
<i>Duvalier cé ou Poteau Planté</i>	<i>Duvalier you are the planted post</i>
<i>Pa Proché</i>	<i>Don't come near.</i>
<i>Min Si'n cé haïtien</i>	<i>But if you are Haitian</i>
<i>Foc nou Pa Fé tintin</i>	<i>We better not be foolish</i>
<i>Bon Dieu qui Fé'n cadeau ou papa ou Pi du</i>	<i>God made you a gift for us, Papa you are the hardest.</i> <sup>48</sup>

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State Against Nation, Bellegarde-Smith, Haiti: The Breached Citadel.

<sup>47</sup> For more on the relationship between masculinities and violence see Bowker, Lee H. ed. Masculinities and Violence. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998. I do however, disagree with some of Bowker's assertions concerning violence and men. I would maintain that the relationship is complex, especially in patriarchies where women socialize boys on how to be men.

<sup>48</sup> “*Duvalier ou pi Du*”, by Schiller Payne, p. 24.

The transparent threat here is that violence against Duvalier will most certainly get you “pricked”, or stabbed, or end in death. It was specifically aimed at the new President’s opponents, detractors, and any other potential threats, and how they could expect to be responded to, particularly the dominant elites and *Mulâtres* in power. Some of the songs contain elements of Vodou *pwens*, discussed above, wherein threats and hints of violence or recriminations are contained in the song. The intended audience is not specifically named, but they will understand the meaning nonetheless.<sup>49</sup> An example of this is “*Doc Duvalier*” [Doctor Duvalier], the third place winner of the competition. The first verse, like the other *pwens* is directed at non-specific opponents, who remain anonymous in the song, but are known to everyone.

<i>Docteur Duvalier ou Sôti nan ou gros combat</i>	<i>Doctor Duvalier you just came from a big battle</i>
<i>Dépi longtemp ouap travail pou ou ça rivé ça</i>	<i>For a long time you were working to arrive at this point</i>
<i>Nou té quimbé avè-ou nou pat pè prend traca</i>	<i>We stood behind you], we weren't afraid to get in trouble.</i>
<i>Ou jodi ya oua la tête nou comme chef d'Etat</i>	<i>Today you are at the head as our chief of state.<sup>50</sup></i>

The first line recognizes Duvalier the successful warrior, a strong allusion to his symbolic representation as the ideal leader and ideal man. Line three again demonstrates the overtones of violence, combined with a warning to those who would oppose Duvalier, that his supporters are not afraid to use violence to maintain the presidency.

Not only is the violence in the songs of a suggestive nature, but it also refers to Duvalier’s well known penchant for using force in achieving political ends, which ultimately became the means to overthrow the opposing masculinity in power. As well, his pre-election machinations to be the only Black candidate in the election, like the maintenance of his regime, relied on the ability of his supporters to physically coerce opponents. This pre-disposition for

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<sup>49</sup> Averill, Gage. *A Day for the Hunter*. p. 15-17.

the use of force, while not novel in Haitian politics, did reach new heights with Duvalier, particularly, as already discussed, with regards to his political violence against women.<sup>51</sup> Aurele Rousseau's song "*Haiti Reci Sauve*" [Haiti Receives its Savior] alludes to both the real and imagined violence associated with Duvalier before and after his election.

*3eme. Couplet*

*Pè'p la fait serment sacré pou yapuyé'ou  
Cé parceque lan ou yo oué la liberté  
Pèp la bouqué parcequé ya'p chaudé tro longtemps  
Cé pou té't ça yo mété ou Président*

*The people made a sacred oath to support you  
It's because in you they see freedom  
The people are tired because they've been  
"burning" for too long  
That's why they made you President*

*4eme. Couplet*

*François Duvalier lideur de la Nation  
Parcequé ou cé garçon nous connin ou poté canson  
Ou pra'l travail pou ou fait coeur tou't moun content  
Parce que oué ou cé nous qui fè ou Président*

*.....Duvalier leader of the nation  
because you're a real man, we know you wear  
the pants  
You're going to make everyone's heart content  
Because you see that we made you President<sup>52</sup>*

The critical lines are in the 4<sup>th</sup> verse where Rousseau equates masculinity and violence. Because Duvalier is a real man, he wears the pants. This allusion, I argue, refers to General Paul Magloire's 1954 comment, in a rare public use of Haitian Creole: "Today, I am putting my iron pants back on to deal with the rascals."<sup>53</sup> This statement was in reference to a political crisis that was careening out of control. This statement was Magloire's promise to use extreme force to quell opposition to his regime. As used in the above song, it reveals Duvalier's known use of violence and the fact he would be a hard liner when dealing with opponents as any "real" man would.

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<sup>50</sup> "*Doc Duvalier* [Doctor Duvalier]. by D'Alfred Dorlette, Institut Musical d'Haiti. p 32.

<sup>51</sup> For more on Duvalier's political maneuverings before and during the campaign see Rotberg, Deiderich, Bellegarde-Smith, and for an analysis of Duvalier's violence see Rolph-Trouillot

<sup>52</sup> "*Haiti Reci Sauvé*" [Haiti Receives its Savior]. By Aurele Rousseau, Institut Musical d'Haiti. p. 47

<sup>53</sup> As quoted in Rolph-Trouillot *State Against Nation*, p. 143.

The competition songs also demonstrate the link between masculinity, the Haitian national project and violence through numerous references to the army. This is important since the military is, historically, the primary tool by which the state enforces its authority. And, from a gendered perspective, the importance of the Haitian military can not be overstated. The extremes of masculinity and patriarchy are exemplified in the hierarchical power structures of the military apparatus. At the time of the songs, the military remained an almost exclusively male enclave with little or no input from women, either as soldiers or in auxiliary positions. The song “*Reactionnaire*”[Reactionaire], illustrates the connection between the state, the army, and the people.

*Réactionnaire yo compren'n doc ta'p dormi  
L'armée et le Peuple té la ta'p veillé Doc*

*The reactionaries thought Doc was sleeping.  
The army and the people were there watching  
over Doc.*

*Réactionnaire yo compren'n Doc ta'p dormi  
Peuple la ac l'armée t la ta'ap veillé Doc*

*The reactionaries thought Doc was sleeping  
The army and the people were there watching  
over Doc.*

*Refrain*

*(choeur)*

*Veillé Doc Veillé Doc L'armée Veillé Doc  
Veillé Doc Veillé Doc Peuple la Veillé Doc  
Veillé Doc veillé Doc L'armée Veillé Doc  
Veillé Doc Veillé Doc L'armée Veillé Doc*

*Watch over Doc The army is watching out for Doc  
Watch over Doc The people are watching out for Doc.  
Watch over Doc The army is watching out for Doc.  
Watch over Doc The army's watching out for Doc<sup>54</sup>*

As Michel Laguerre points out, the army had been seen as playing a guardian role with respect to the constitution. It intervened in 1946 to allow Estimé to be elected, in 50' to prevent Estimé from trying to extend his term, and again in '56 to prevent Magloire from extending his mandate. Given this history of involvement, with the effects of the U.S. occupation never far from the picture, the military's influence on Haitian society was crucial to the attempt to articulate differentiations in masculinity. This is particularly true with the coloured hierarchy of the army

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<sup>54</sup> “*Reactionnaire*”[Reactionaries].Les Freres Unis. Insitut Musical d'Haiti.,p. 28.

during and following the American occupation of 1915-1934. *Mulâtre* officers became the leaders of choice for the Americans, and noir officers and soldiers became unable to advance in the military hierarchy. The argument can be made then, that the versions of masculinity being contested in the larger society also existed in the hierarchies of the military. And, in response, Duvalier manipulated these elements for his own advantage to gain power and then to maintain his regime. Indeed, the above song shows not only the responsibility the army has in watching over Duvalier, but also its potential to take away the momentum of the new revolution. As well, it shows that it is ultimately the army that is the arbiter of the competing national discourses; its support determines which masculinity will rule and subsequently articulate the boundaries of race, class, colour, sexuality, language and religion.

### **Section V: Race, Colour and Class: Marking the Boundaries of the Nation**

As the privileged category of the *discent* narrative, masculinity also uses the constructions of race, colour, and class in complex and contradictory ways, thereby defining and marking who is included or excluded from the nation. The three issues are very much inter-related, interdependent, and impossible to discuss separately in the Haitian context. Primarily composed by “Black” middle-class urbanites who are voicing both the continuation of Estimé’s revolution, and the new nation that will be forged by Duvalier, the songs in their entirety, and the whole book, articulate the three constructions. And, since much of the national discourse contained in the songs is in opposition to exclusionary masculinities, in which elite *Mulâtres* are implicated, the class standing of the authors, and the communities they represent are important. That this is a document expounding the merits of the middle class is clearly driven home in the

introductory poem at the beginning of the booklet. The poem, similar to many of the songs, tends to the messianic, but is important in that it declares the “*Emancipation des classes meprisees*.” [The emancipation of the despised classes]. Furthermore, the author declares “it has been one year since the middle classes voted in Duvalier.”<sup>55</sup> As well, many of the competition songs talk of the waiting, wondering and suffering of the middle-classes as a result of the masculine exclusions of the *Mulâtre* controlled regimes. In the second verse of “*Haiti cé ou Belle Voilie*” [Haiti you are a Beautiful Sailing Ship], Duvalier is celebrated because he will not make class and colour distinctions, or at least not against the middle-classes.

*Gouvernement Cila  
Ac Doc Chef D'Etat  
Pa nan distinction  
La'p ba'n Protection*

*This government  
With Doc as the Chief of State  
Doesn't Distinguish[between people]  
He[it] will give us protection.*<sup>56</sup>

The connection made here between state resources, or protection, and an inclusive masculinity are important.<sup>57</sup> It is a recognition that the colour, class, and racial distinctions do exist and subsequently find their way both into the national discourse and the state apparatus. And it is the expressed belief of the song's author that Duvalier will transcend these historic inequities.

Another indication that the articulation of race, class, colour, and sexuality occurs in the *discent* narrative of Black Haitian masculinity is the reference to Duvalier himself. As previously explained, his near deification in the songs demonstrates the gendered nature of the national discourse, but it also reveals the extent to which the expression of manhood is wrapped

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<sup>55</sup> Lucien Daumec. “*Reminiscence*” [Reminiscence]. Institut Musical d’Haiti. p. 11

<sup>56</sup> “*Haiti ce ou Belle Voilie*” [Haiti you are a Beautiful Sailing Ship] by Gerard Dupervil. Institut Musical d’Haiti. p.30.

<sup>57</sup> McClintock argues that the gendered nationalisms essentially become centered on who has access to state resources, and that they are ultimately defined through gender. In McClintock, “No Longer a Future Heaven”, p. 89.

in the three constructions. Duvalier is described as a “*nèg total*”[a complete, total ‘Black’ man]<sup>58</sup>, “*garçon sérieux*”[a solemn, serious, man]<sup>59</sup>, and a “*nèg qui fô*”[a strong black man]<sup>60</sup>. Positively describing Duvalier as a strong and complete man by the use of the word “*nèg*”, which describes a man who is Black, directly challenges the exclusionary state practices of the previous national discourse. Moreover, it challenges the colour and racial barriers and seeks to erase and eliminate the class barriers associated with them. In other words, singing Duvalier as the perfect Black man is the narrative of *discent*.

Further complicating this masculine narrative of *discent* is the presence of the intellectual ideas of *noirisme*, *indiginisme*, and *nègritude*.<sup>61</sup> These three pro-African discourses found voice and support in Haiti at different times, but all came together leading up to Duvalier’s election. Indeed, many of the artists and bands whose music and lyrics appear in the book actually played important politico-cultural roles in support of the *noiriste/indiginiste* movements both prior to and after Estimé’s election. Importantly, Duvalier’s own politics prior to his election placed him squarely within these movements, not to mention his political involvement in the Estimé government.<sup>62</sup> Thus, in many ways, the political ambitions of the pro African and pro Black movements are reflected in the musicians’ songs from the competition.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Institut Musical d’Haiti. p. 21., and p. 29.

<sup>59</sup> Institut Muscal d’Haiti. p. 22.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p 29.

<sup>61</sup> For more on the specifics of the three movements and their relation to Duvalier see Michel Rolph-Trouillot. Haiti: State Against Nation, p. 130.

<sup>62</sup> For more on Duvalier’s political and cultural involvement prior to his election see Rolph-Trouillot, Haiti: State Against Nation, p. 145.

### **Section VI: Sexualizing the Class Conflict**

Unlike race, class, and colour, the articulation of sexuality through the *discent* narrative of black Haitian masculinity is, in some ways, more veiled and subtle, or at least more dependent on an understanding of the larger issues of masculine and patriarchal ideology. This is not to say, however, that the allusions to sexuality are absent, but rather that they must be read against the grain and under the rubric of masculinity to see them. With respect to sexuality there are several key points that merit attention, some of which overlap into other constructions such as the class/colour conflict. One of the songs, as previously mentioned, speaks to the objectification and sexualization of women in the national discourse.

*Belle négresse bien nuancé  
Mulatresse bien moulé.*

*The beautiful negresse is finely shaded  
The mulatta women are well-shaped.<sup>64</sup>*

Not only does this song demonstrate that women are politically marginalized in the national discourse and that men set the boundaries on women's bodies, but it also reveals the ideological assumptions of a heterosexual hegemony.<sup>65</sup> In contradistinction to some of the other competing masculine articulations, the underlying assumption of heterosexuality remains consistent. The change from one national masculinity to another assumes the sexual homogeneity of the nation. In the case of Haiti, this is a heterosexual hegemony, wherein homosexuality, lesbianism, and

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<sup>63</sup> For more on the political activities of some of the more prominent musicians such as Jean Legros, Troupe Folklorique National, and Jazz de Jeunes, see Gage Averill. A Day for the Hunter, a Day for the Prey.

<sup>64</sup> "*Haiti Notre Fierté*", by Joe Trouillot. Institut Musical d'Haiti. p. 41.

<sup>65</sup> For more on the assumptions of the ideology of patriarchy and masculinity see David Buchbinder. Performance Anxieties: Re-producing Masculinities. He argues that the obvious assumptions are what reveals the presence of ideologies.

other identities are used to define and maintain the dominant narrative and construct its boundaries. In a somewhat contradictory manner, this song is also inclusive in its sexuality because it declares both Black and *Mulâtre* women of the nation as sexually desirable to black men. Under the rubric of an exclusionary masculinity, particularly with the influences of the U.S. marines and Western European racial masculinities, this statement is indeed revolutionary. It declares, in particular, Black women to be equally attractive to *Mulâtre* women, and in so doing asserts the masculinity of Black men through their sexuality. On a more sinister note, it may be a reflection that *Mulâtre* women, due to Duvalier's ascendance to power, no longer enjoyed the exclusive protection of the state, but would have to depend on the niceties of the new regime.<sup>66</sup> The point here is that a change in masculine regimes, particularly when considering the importance of colour and class, will inevitably affect sexual dynamics. Furthermore, given the immense amount of lavish praise directed at Duvalier, and the intersubjectivity of the constructions of race, colour, class, and sexuality, I would argue that in "singing Duvalier", the songs are also singing a legitimized Black sexuality, especially since it is impossible to disconnect or ignore the influence the other constructions have on each other.<sup>67</sup> And, because the *discent* narrative centers on a Black Haitian masculinity, the connection between "singing Duvalier" and sexuality becomes evident.

The second key aspect of the articulation of sexuality in the competition songs, and implicated in race and colour constructions, rests in the sexualization of the class conflict at the level of the nation. Duvalier was openly regarded as a *manjé Mulâtre*, or as someone who could

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<sup>66</sup> This goes back to the new gendered violence under Duvalier as previously explained.

<sup>67</sup> This idea is explored more fully in Barbara Spackman's examination of the rhetoric of virility in Fascist Virilities

control the elites. However, the expression also alludes to a sexual relationship between the classes. It also means that he can “screw” or “fuck” the controlling elites, in the same way the middle and lower classes feel that they have been treated by the class in power.<sup>68</sup> As a result, the exaltation of Duvalier in the songs, the *pwens* sung as warnings to the elites, and the giving of the country to Duvalier all attest to the perception that he could screw the elites and that they, the people, would make sure that they didn’t oust him from power. “*Quimbé Pays ya Duvalier*” [Hold on to the Country Duvalier], written by the very popular and influential group Jazz de Jeunes, exemplifies the *pwens* contained in the competition songs.

<i>Péto</i>	
<i>Président Duvalier ouay oh</i>	<i>President Duvalier, ouay oh</i>
<i>Président Duvalier ouay oh</i>	<i>President Duvalier, ouay oh</i>
<i>Oua quimbé Pays ya a pa Lagué</i>	<i>You'll hold on to the country, don't let go of it</i>
<i>Président Duvalier ouay oh</i>	<i>President Duvalier, ouay oh</i>
<i>Président Duvalier ouay oh</i>	<i>President Duvalier, ouay oh</i>
<i>Oua quimbé Pays ya a pa Lagué</i>	<i>You'll hold on to the country, don't let go of it.</i>
<i>Refrain</i>	
<i>Docteur Duvalier ou connin ça ouap Fè</i>	<i>Dr. Duvalier, ou know what you are doing</i>
<i>François Duvalier ou connin gouverné</i>	<i>Francois Duvalier, ou know how to govern</i>
<i>Oua quimbé pays ya pa lagué'l oh</i>	<i>You'll hold on to the country, don't let go of it</i>
<i>Haïti chéri Fô ou ka vini bel oh ac Doc oh</i>	<i>Beloved Haiti you must become beautiful with Doc oh<sup>69</sup></i>

Hermann Petihommes’ “*Rete Tranquil*” [Don’t Worry, Stay Calm], like the above song, is to be performed in a *Péto* Vodou rhythm, significant in its Afro-religious overtones. As well, it contains some of the veiled threats to those, in particular the *Mulâtre* elites, who might want to “sink the ship” or derail the revolutionary train conducted by Duvalier.

<i>Péto</i>	
<i>Président Duvalier ouay oh</i>	<i>President Duvalier ouay oh</i>

<sup>68</sup> Averill, *A Day for The Hunter*. p. 75-77.

<sup>69</sup> “*Quimbé Pays Ya Duvalier*” [Hold on to the Country Duvalier]. Jazz des Jeunes, Institut Musical d’Haiti. p. 37. This translation matches Averill’s in *A day for the Hunter*. p. 76.

*Pa couté chien ca'p japé ouay oh*  
*President Duvalier ouay oh*  
*Pa couté chien ca'p japé ouay oh*  
*Pa viré gadé deyè ouay oh*  
*Ouay oh ouay oh*  
*Jeu Garçon rété tranqui oh é o*  
*Ti garçon rété tranqui ou é oua*

*Don't listen to the dogs that are barking, oh*  
*President Duvalier ouay oh*  
*Don't listen to the dogs that are barking, oh*  
*Don't turn and look behind you, oh*  
*Ouay oh ouay oh*  
*Young man don't worry oh e o*  
*Little man don't worry oh e o*<sup>70</sup>

The first song admonishes Duvalier to remain strong, hold on to power, and see the changes to the nation through to the end. The second song is an indication that, despite the detractors who are barking their protests, Duvalier's supporters "have his back" and he won't need to worry about them. What these two songs demonstrate is that in order to carry through, Duvalier needs to hold onto power, and only then will the *noiriste* agenda be realized, at the expense of the traditional power structures. Finally, it must be remembered that there is a literal aspect to the sexualization of the class conflict, as Duvalier's violence against women has shown. In other words, the ideas of protection, and holding the state are reflections of a *discent* narrative that demarcates the boundaries of sexual availability. If the masculinities of the nation change, then so will the availability of the people implicated by those demarcations.

## **Section VII: Languages of the Nation**

The languages of the competing national discourses, voiced in the songs and articulated through masculinity, play an important role in how the nation is imagined, and more particularly what language real men of the nation speak. Historically, French has been the language of power in Haiti, essentially shutting out the vast majority of non-urban and illiterate Haitians. Of course, this delineation also tends to fall along race, class, and colour lines. Educated in French

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<sup>70</sup> "Rété Tranquil" [Don't Worry]. Hermann Petihomme. Institut Musical d'haiti. p. 36.

language schools, the primarily *Mulâtre* elite made French the language of power and forbade the teaching or speaking of Haitian in schools or any official institutions.<sup>71</sup> But more importantly, as a symbol of the nation's independence and the means by which to articulate the nation, the use of Haitian in, and for, the national discourse is crucial. The booklet's publication as songs written in Haitian, although termed "Creole" at the time, celebrating Duvalier and the nation can not be overemphasized. Indeed, it would appear that the combination of French and Haitian in the booklet is a statement that both languages are important and equal in the *noiriste* articulation of the nation. For the issue of masculinity, the language one speaks in Haiti is crucial. A person's inability to speak French immediately branded them lower class or a lesser man, regardless of colour. In fact, religion and language may be the two most important aspects of national identity.<sup>72</sup> Thus, the competition's use of Haitian is a public legitimization of the language, of those who speak it, and the culture that resides within its sphere of explanation. Moreover, as a national symbol, Haitian is inextricably linked to the other constructions of race, class, colour, sexuality, gender, and religion, since this is how they are articulated, and more particularly, how the *discent* narrative is expressed.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> For more on the history of language and the suppression of Haitian Creole see Bellegarde-Smith, The Breached Citadel, p.9.

<sup>72</sup> For more on Vodou cosmology and nationalism see Bellegarde-Smith, The Breached Citadel, and Joan Dayan, Haiti, History and The Gods. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.

<sup>73</sup> Cohen argues that in Eighteenth century England women's conversation, using French, could make men into effeminate "others". Thus the French language was inextricably linked to the manly national character of the nation. For more on the relationship between language, national character, and masculinity see Michele Cohen, Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century. London: Routledge, 1996.

### Section VIII: The Bodies of the Nation: Geography and Nationalism

Despite the temptation to rank order the aforementioned constructions, the *discent* narrative articulated in the constructions of race, class, colour, religion, language, and sexuality ultimately rests in how the body is theorized, defined, and marked. Throughout the songs there are both literal and metaphoric references to the physical body, its relationship to the political body, and how the nation is physically imagined and articulated through the body and bodies.

*An'n Fè corp: Unité ap Sèvi nou gadien Let's make a body [join forces]: Unity will make us guardians*<sup>74</sup>

<i>Ti moun cou grand moun tête colé</i>	<i>Children and Adults cheek to cheek[in solidarity]</i>
<i>Toute moun épaulé</i>	<i>Everyone shoulder to shoulder[to help out, assist]</i> <sup>75</sup>

<i>Cé Fouré Pied ou Papa</i>	<i>Interfere [stick your foot in the fight] Papa</i>
<i>Ou pa guin enyin pou ou Peur</i>	<i>You have nothing to fear</i>
<i>Cé Fouré Pied ou docteur</i>	<i>Interfere in the fight Papa</i>
<i>Na'p poté colé avec ou</i>	<i>We'll work together with you</i> <sup>76</sup>

<i>François Duvalier ou pa oué Pays ya nan main ou</i>	<i>Don't you see that the country is in your hands</i>
<i>Hh! Li nan main ou vré</i>	<i>It's really in your hands.</i> <sup>77</sup>

<i>Travail Sou Pied</i>	<i>The work is under way</i>
<i>Toute Haïtien pralé mangé</i>	<i>All Haitians are going to eat.</i> <sup>78</sup>

In all these examples, then, the connection between the physical body and the nation is proximate. This is because the national discourse is about the exclusion and/or inclusion of bodies. Without bodies, there is no nation. When a narrative of *discent* is used, it is not summoning imaginations, but bodies that contain that imagination in a physical being; the body

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<sup>74</sup> "Unité Nationale"[National Unity]. Alfred Dorlette. p. 27.

<sup>75</sup> "Duvalier Sans Egal"[Duvalier is without Equal]. Joe Trouillot. p. 33.

<sup>76</sup> "Papa Duvalier Foure Pied ou Pi Rede"[Papa your interference is the hardest]. Luc Mondesir. p. 34

<sup>77</sup> "Bonjou Duvalier Papa Moin"[Good Day Duvalier, My Father]. Inovia Simon. p.38

is the physical representation of the imagined community. Furthermore, in each of the constructions discussed, the site where power is enacted is the body. Indeed, it is through the gendering of time as a function of women's bodies that they are excluded from the national discourse. Violence is threatened and performed against bodies by other bodies. Sexuality is both the description of the desires of the body and the means by which the class conflict is expressed. Race and colour are semiotic carriers mapped onto the body. Their absence or presence determines how that body will be treated or if, as in the above song, it will eat. Language is generated by the body and is the means by which identity is expressed, and how the body will worship.

In many respects the geography of the body closely resembles the geography of the nation-state and its national discourse. In other words, bodies are separated, valued, defined, marked, and excluded based on how they are mapped or articulated in relation to the nation. The more closely a body resembles the national discourse, the more likely it is that the particular body will literally and metaphorically reside close to the center of power. In Haiti, the geography of the exclusionary nation as articulated by "marine masculinity" literally affected bodies in many ways. The poor and predominantly black peasantry that comprised the bulk of the nation not only resided physically outside of Port-au-Prince, the center of the Haitian universe, they also lived discursively outside the nation discourse. As Black, Haitian speaking, Vodou worshippers, their physical separation from the state and its resources mirrored their exclusion from the national discourse of power. The Black urban middle-classes faced a similar fate, but in a different way. Their exclusion from power, based primarily on skin colour, marked them as ineligible to enter physically, discursively, or metaphorically into the imagined

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<sup>78</sup> "*Travail Sou Pied*" [The work is under way]. Schiller Payne. p. 52.

community of the nation. Geographically, their bodies remained physically separated from the wealthy mansions in the elite neighbourhoods of Port-au-Prince and mountain chalets in Pétionville, and from the physical institutions of power that housed the bodies of the state. Thus, using the geography of the body to sing Duvalier was not only a means to articulate a narrative of *discent*, but a means to mobilize the bodies of the nation. Articulating masculinity is in effect, an articulation of the boundaries of the body, both physical and social. Indeed, singing Duvalier through a discourse of masculinity was ultimately a means to change the ways bodies were marked, defined, separated, and excluded, and a means to change the geographies that defined the political body of the Haitian state.

### **Conclusion: “Singing Duvalier”, “Singing Aristide”**

As illustrated in the competition songs, it is the rhetoric of masculinity that acts as the privileged category in the *discent* narrative, the category mobilized by black Haitians to tear down exclusionary social boundaries and to assert for themselves membership in the imaginary nation. This rhetoric of masculinity, like competing definitions of Haitian national masculinities found during the Haitian revolution, the U.S. occupation, and the Estimé regime, mediates the expression, definition, and boundaries of constructions of race, class, colour, language, religion, and sexuality. Moreover, these songs demonstrate that the changing of political regimes is accompanied by an interrogation, rejection, and expression of definitions of masculinity.<sup>79</sup> By “singing Duvalier’s” class, colour, race, sexuality, religion and body through the language of Haitian, the musicians validated and legitimised Haitian men previously

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excluded from the national discourse because they weren't quite "men enough". The competition songs then, point to the close link between the expression of masculinity and membership in the nation.

In the case of Haiti it is evident from a plethora of public cultural texts—whatever their form—that the production and re-production of masculinities from past to present contains many consistencies and similarities, if not outright duplications. It seems little has changed in the cultural practice and production of a gendered nation since Duvalier took power in 1957. The cultural texts from the beginnings of the Lavalas movement—Jean Bertrand Aristide's political movement—through to Aristide's election as President in 1990, did little to break from the extreme masculine discourses of the Duvalier dictatorships.<sup>80</sup> For example, Aristide's symbolic representation as a *Kok kalité*, or first class fighting rooster, speaks for itself.<sup>81</sup> In many popular mural depictions, Aristide's "*kok*" was portrayed as besting a guinea hen, the well known symbol of the Duvalier family. Not only does this symbolism reflect the changing political regimes of men by force, but the subtle references to sexuality demonstrates that much of the discourse that genders the nation, remains intact.<sup>82</sup> Thus, in "singing Aristide", the words have changed, but the song has stayed the same.

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<sup>79</sup> Liddle, A. M., "State Masculinities and Law".

<sup>80</sup> For more on Aristide's rise to power see Alex Dupuy . Haiti in the New World Order; The Limits of the Democratic Revolution. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997. p.86. Lavalas translates roughly to deluge or cleansing torrent. It formed part of Aristide's political slogan: "Yon sel nou fèb: ansanm nou fô; ansanm, ansanm nou sé Lavalas"[Alone we are weak: United we are strong; Altogether we are a cleansing torrent.]

<sup>81</sup> Averill, Gage. A Day For The Hunter. p. 187. It is important to note that the rooster is a symbol in Haitian folksongs associated with virility.

<sup>82</sup> Averill, Gage. "*Anrage to Engage*". p.242

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