

BLACK BODIES AND THE MARKET SYSTEM

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by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
<b>Chapter</b>	
<b>1. INTRODUCTION: THE SUBALTERN BLACK ROLE IN THE MARKET SYSTEM .</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Methodology.....	7
1.2. Theoretical approach.....	9
1.3. Manufacturing a colonial black ontology .....	13
1.4. The economics of colonial black ontology.....	21
1.5. The organization of this dissertation.....	24
<b>2. ON THE POLITICS OF EXTRACTION: MANUFACTURING MARGINAL BODIES IN THE MARKET SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>26</b>
2.1. The function of sovereigns in the market economy.....	28
2.2. Postcolonial sovereign violence in Haiti.....	29
2.3. Sovereign violence in francophone Africa.....	35
2.4. The Function of sovereign violence .....	46
<b>3. ON EXTRACTION AND THE GOVERNING OF THE “LIVING DEATHS .....</b>	<b>51</b>
3.1. Theorizing colonial and postcolonial coercion.....	52
3.2. The function of sovereign ruling of black bodies and Spaces.....	57

3.3. Sovereignty in <i>Johnny Chien Méchant</i> .....	57
3.4. Sovereignty in <i>La vie et demie</i> .....	70
3.5. Sovereignty in <i>Les Arbres Musiciens</i> .....	77
<b>4. ON THE SUBSIDIZING FUNCTION OF BLACK BODIES IN THE MARKET SYSTEM</b> .....	86
4.1. The Function of Black bodies and spaces .....	88
4.2. the subsidizing function of black bodies in Haiti.....	89
4.3. the subsidizing function of black bodies in Africa .....	93
<b>5. CONCLUSION: ON ONTOLOGICAL ERASURE</b> .....	103
5.1. Defying colonial ontology.....	104
5.2. Redefining the black function in the global market system.....	108
Works Cited.....	122
VITA .....	129

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
JCM	<i>Johnny Chien Méchant</i>
VD	<i>La vie et demie</i>
AM	<i>Les Arbres Musicien</i>

# BLACK BODIES AND THE MARKET SYSTEM

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation posits that regardless of the current market system's nature and structure, the black body has an already defined and fixed colonial ontological function: a subsidizing entity. In the postcolonial era, three processes are put into place to perpetuate this order: The first is the control of a preferential political black elite. The second is the entertainment of anomy generated by the inability of the market system and preferred subservient elites to create economic development for their ontologized people. The third is the perpetuation of extraction, the goal of prominent market players that derives from the two previous conditions. My study analyses three twentieth-century Afro-Caribbean books. As this work shows, these books represent colonialism and slavery and their socio-economic structures and epistemologies not as history and not even as ghosts that haunt the present but as persistent and continuing in contemporary neoliberal market capitalism structures. The books are Haitian writer Jacques Stephen Alexis's *Les Arbres musiciens* (1957) [The Musician Trees], two Congolese novels, *La Vie et demie* (1979) [Life and a Half] by Sony Labou Tansy; *Johnny chien Méchant* (2002) [Johnny Mad Dog] by Emmanuel Dongala. Despite the religiosity of neoliberal ideologies and market principles, African and Caribbean narratives often reject the dogma of western imposed extractive market principles. Thus, the non-western big market players with significant economic and military influence are beginning to demand and invent a revamped global system.

## CHAPTER 1-Introduction: The Subaltern Black Role in the Market System

« La nature a fait (...) une race de travailleur de la terre : c'est le nègre (...), une race de maîtres et de Soldats, c'est la race européenne. »

Ernest Renan, *Le Discours sur la nation*, 1862.

« Le drame de l'Afrique, c'est que l'homme africain n'est pas assez entré dans l'Histoire. »

Nicolas Sarkozy, Dakar, July 26, 2007.

The transition from the feudal economic system to capitalist democracies rooted in the unquenchable quest for profit occurred with the same rationality: the exploitation of some bodies for the benefit of the classes and individuals with political and economic power. This lucrative system benefitting the west's ruling classes went through a marked transition when the Europeans began subjugating non-westerners according to the same exploitative principles that had created Europe's class-based system. In the west's new market capitalist mode, black people defined by skin color replaced feudal subjects in what became the capitalist system of slavery. The black man's most significant misfortune, then, as Aimé Césaire points out in *Discours sur le Colonialisme*, was to have come into contact with the west when individuals driven by greed – “financiers” and “capitaines industries” -- took over economic power in Europe:

Le grand drame historique de l'Afrique a moins été sa mise en contact trop tardive avec le reste du monde, que la manière dont ce contact a été opéré ; que c'est au moment où l'Europe est tombée entre les mains des financiers et des capitaines d'industrie les plus

dénués de scrupules que l'Europe s'est 'propagée' ; que notre malchance a voulu que ce soit cette Europe-là que nous ayons rencontrée sur notre route (14).

Césaire alludes to a moment when the capitalist institution of slavery erased the black man's being. From then on, the black body became a mere commodity. Césaire uses the word « chosification » ('thingification') to indicate how western ideologues constructed an ontologized colonial identity of the black man. Using brute force and *discourse*, the black man became an object, a marketable tool, a profit-making thing (Césaire 42).

The main argument in this dissertation is that the colonial conception of the black body and space as extractive domains engenders their forced incorporation into the western capitalist market system as a subsidizing entity, i.e., a subjugated body whose exploitation fuels the economic development of the west through the market system. This conception of the black body, then, pre-determines its subaltern function regardless of the historical form and structure of the market system, which Europeans have always dominated. Thus, the persistent conception of black bodies and spaces as extractive domains has permitted twentieth-century financiers to revamp colonial mechanisms of domination to condemn the black man (African, Haitian) and his space to ongoing exclusion and exploitation. In the twentieth century, this is achieved through manufacturing despots, proxy wars, and implementing neo-colonial economic mechanisms. These structural conditions, in turn, create chaos and instability that western economic elites take advantage of to generate more surpluses (because chaos creates business opportunities for military-industrial complexes and extractive corporations). In other words, the market system as it has been designed and practiced through slavery, colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, postcolonialism, and

Empire assures the upholding of black bodies and spaces to a frozen conceptual state at the bottom of the global economic pyramid.

The relationship between the exploitation of black bodies and spaces through slavery, colonialism, and later Empire and their confinement to the bottom of the global economic pyramid constitutes the key theme of the novels that this dissertation analyzes. The historical function of black colonial ontology is especially relevant to my discussion of *Johnny Chien Méchant* (2002), by Emmanuel Dongala, *La vie et demie* (1979) by Sony Lab'ou Tansi and *Les Arbres Musiciens* (1957) by Jacques Stephen Alexis.

*Johnny Chien Méchant* is about the violent civil war in the Congo that began in the nineties. This conflict starts with insurgents moving into the capital to overthrow the government, fanning tribal tensions. Two teenagers narrate the novel: Laokolé, a sixteen-year-old girl about to sit for her final exams, and Johnny Mad Dog (Johnny Chien Méchant), a young rebel with an elementary education. As they cross paths, they describe events through their different viewpoints. Like millions of civilians, Laokolé is caught up in the battle between rebel groups and government officials who all fight to secure political and economic power. A respite from the violence comes when she and others find refuge in a UN compound. Still, despite a few heroic workers, the organization is impotent and cowardly: the foreigners are evacuated, but the local population is abandoned. Foreign troops strike at the rebels but only to save the foreigners. In this novel, my focus is on Necropolitics and the relationship between sovereign violence exercised by brutal potentates and the market profiteers who back both the dictator and the war machine. This move guarantees the subjugation of black bodies whose destitution generates profit for big market profiteers.

*La vie et demie* is a magical realist and science fiction novel set in the imaginary African country of Katamalanasia, where successive dictators called *les guides providentiels* reign with absolute violence. The novel is written in a grotesque language and an Afro-futurist style and portrays the governing of marginalized economic bodies through sovereign violence. The novel is Tansi's response to the death of his close friends during one of the many bloody military and political crackdowns in the Congo. Writing during a period in which censorship was the norm in the Congo, Tansi "insisted that his book was a fable and that if he were ever allowed to write about real events, he would be much more direct rather than follow the torturous paths of a novel (Tansi, Sony Lab'ou, et al. *Life and a Half: A Novel* 3). Set in 1979 in a fictive city that Congo Brazzaville or Kinshasa likely inspires, the novel portrays the state of sovereign power that emerged in the wake of francophone Africa's independence. This era saw the emergence of strong political men, the most ruthless of whom was the Congolese Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga, a military officer who ruled over the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1965 to 1971, and later Zaire from 1971 to 1997. In his introduction, Tansi writes that the book critiques African autocrats and their European facilitators. An important aspect of the novel is the endless stream of foreign political figures who direct the State's affairs in their interests. Propped up by these foreign actors are dozens of Providential Guides, whose grip and brute exercise of power remind the reader of Mobutu. Just like Mobutu, the Providential Guides rule with absolute brutality and fear: to hold onto power, they eliminate populations of whole cities that oppose them. The opening scene of *La vie et demie*, depicts the first providential guide attempting to kill Martial, an opposition leader. But the latter refuses to die and declares: "I do not want to die this death." No matter what the Providential Guide does to Martial, he continues to intone the above line. In his introduction, Tansi writes, "where do you expect me to talk from if

not from the outside? ... I have cruelly chosen to appear as a second version of the human.” (9) Critic Syrotinski argues that this ghost-like “second version of the human” is a “post-colonial agency ‘shadowing’ or haunting colonial Westernized Man” (4). Haitian author Jacques Stephen Alexis’s *Les Arbres musiciens* [*The Musician Trees*] is set in Haiti in the 1940s. The characters in Alexis’ novel are impacted by the lingering effects of slavery and colonialism reproduced by the imposed rules of the market system. The rules are set by multi-national corporations whose approach to the modern-day Haitian bodies and spaces is still overdetermined by colonialist ontological conceptions. Alexis’s novel, in conformity with Haiti’s early independence from French colonialism (1804), shows the early advent of neocolonialism in Haiti, which began in 1919 with the invasion and nineteen-year occupation of the island by the US military. The novel narrates the role of submissive politicians who support the Americans’ economic exploitation of Haiti’s agricultural and human resources in a plantation-style economy. Written several decades before the novels of Dongala and Tansi, *Les Arbres Musiciens* takes place when the US, its military, and the corporations it protects became the new Masters of Haiti. In his narrative, Alexis mixes essay, history, and fiction to describe the conditions of deprivation to which Haiti has been forcibly subjected for ages by market forces. *Les Arbres Musiciens* thus allows me to analyze the persistence of colonialism and the beginnings of neocolonialism.

All three authors come from former French colonies, with two, Dongala and Lab’ou Tansi, hailing from The Republic of Congo, a Central African country, and one, Alexis, coming from Haiti, a Caribbean nation. Though these authors come from different geographical regions, Africa and the Caribbean, they are linked by the themes of their works, which represent, critique, and reject western models of market capitalism. In their works, the colony gives substance to subjectivity in the present because it represents a memorial, the assemblage of past experiences

from which the black writer dives in to express his/her existence because it continues to exert presence in the minds and experiences long after its formal disappearance

“dans les écritures africaines de soi, la colonie apparaît comme une scène originaire qui ne remplit pas seulement l’espace du souvenir, à la manière d’un miroir. Elle est également représentée comme l’une des matrices signifiantes du langage sur le passé et le présent, l’identité et la mort. Elle est le corps qui donne chair et poids à la subjectivité, quelque chose dont on ne se souvient pas seulement, mais dont on continue de faire l’expérience, viscéralement, longtemps après sa disparition formelle” (Mbembe 1).

Past and contemporary oppression, alongside memories of the colony, constitute the thematic ground of the work of my chosen authors. Put another way, for Dongala, Tansi and Alexis; literature is more than just an act of writing. Their narratives are socio-politically motivated. Literature for these writers operates along the lines described by Chinua Achebe: “Literature works to exorcise the ghosts of colonialism” (Franklin 1). As an influential tool, these authors' writing attempts to purge the lingering manifestations of colonialism that haunts the presence of black existence within the webs of a global system to which black bodies were forced with one single function. All three authors are known to be political activists, and their writings reflect their political engagements and constitute socio-political tools through which their engagements are voiced. This activist predisposition is the crucial element in my approach to the literature of these writers. Throughout this dissertation, the focus will be on political and economic textual references. While I will resort to narration, characters, and setting elements, less attention will be devoted to literary aspects of genre, diction, tone, symbolism, and imagery.

## 1.1. Methodology

Rather than perform close readings of my chosen novels, I will show how these works represent the entrapment of Haiti and francophone African countries within the economic, political, and societal webs produced from colonialism and slavery. These exploitative systems' socioeconomic structures and epistemologies are neither merely history nor ghosts that haunt the present. Still, they are persistent and continuing structures of contemporary thought, actions, feelings, and private and public institutions in these regions. The African and Caribbean depiction of the relationships between all these elements that shape and inform the current neoliberal global economy, and thus the relationships between the centers of capital concentration and its peripheries and subjects, can be analyzed through the theory of Articulation. For Stuart Hall, articulation is the combination of contingent/indefinite contextualized elements that constitute the whole, a differential ensemble of signifying sequences (Tchatchou 31). Because the contingent elements are always complex, Richard Middleton conceives articulation as the theory that “recognizes the complexity of cultural fields” as “it preserves a relative autonomy for cultural and ideological elements,” showing how articulating principles “operate by combining existing elements into new patterns or by attaching new connotations to them” (Middleton 8). Taken this way, articulation is used in cultural analysis to grasp the various connections in play and to look at how connections are made possible, i.e., the way different categories of things are connected to one another (Slack 112). But for these connections to be possible, articulations, as Lawrence Grossberg affirms, require contextualization because they are always “complex: not only does the cause have effects, but the effects themselves affect the cause, and both are themselves determined by a host of other relations. Accordingly, Lawrence Grossberg argues that “articulations are never simple and singular; they cannot be extracted out of the interlocking context in which they are possible”

(Grossberg: 56). Following this logic, one cannot reduce post-colonial black leadership to an innate repressive instinct, nor can one adequately understand this phenomenon without connecting its actions to a wider system of repression and exploitation as well as their causes and effects. Using articulation, this work will show that contemporary black ontology is an assemblage of ideological (philosophical), political and economic subjectifying processes. In specific terms, by employing the theory of Articulation, this work will also demonstrate how the three novels under consideration represent three interconnected processes (ideological, political, and economic) mobilized to maintain African and Caribbean bodies and spaces in a subordinate status. The first process manufactures violent and lackey political sovereigns whose functional role assures the accrual of benefits to and that the interests are served of global big market economic elites. The second process is realized via Biopolitics and Necropolitics (theorized by Michel Foucault and Achille Mbembe), which constitute the structural tools of sovereign repression that guarantee the exploitation of black bodies and spaces. The third process comprises two sub-mechanisms: the exchange of raw materials with what Adam Smith calls “superior manufacturing goods,” and the debt trap triggered by the deficits generated from the previous relation. These three processes assure the confinement of Afro-Caribbean black bodies and spaces to subaltern roles in the market system by any means necessary, given that the market system is the invisible hand of capitalism, which itself constitutes the power of capture, influence, and polarization that has always depended on racial subsidies (Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* 179). As we shall see, the three processes outlined above constitute the structural system of a form of exploitation that stems, not only from the economic conditions of the past (slavery) but from the west’s ontological definition and classification of black bodies and spaces in terms of a perpetually productive function, as evidenced in the colonial discourse of political and philosophical writings.

## **1.2. Theoretical approach**

In this dissertation, my understanding of global economic relationships is influenced by Immanuel Wallerstein. In his world-systems analysis, Wallerstein posits that the world economic system is divided into a hierarchy of three types of countries: core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral. For Wallerstein, core countries are dominant capitalist countries characterized by high levels of industrialization and urbanization. These countries have high wages, high technology production patterns, and lower labor exploitation and coercion. Semi-peripheral countries are less developed than core nations but more developed than peripheral nations. They are the weaker members of "advanced" regions or the leading members of former colonial ones. Peripheral countries depend on core countries for capital and are less industrialized and urbanized. Peripheral countries are usually agrarian, have low literacy rates, and lack consistent Internet access. Core countries own most of the world's capital and technology and control world trade and economic agreements. They are also the cultural centers that attract artists and intellectuals. Peripheral countries generally provide labor and materials to core countries. Semi-peripheral countries exploit peripheral countries, just as core countries exploit both semi-peripheral and peripheral countries. Core countries extract raw materials with little cost. They can also set the prices for the agricultural products that peripheral countries export regardless of market prices, forcing small farmers to abandon their fields because they cannot afford to pay for labor and fertilizer. The wealthy in peripheral countries benefit from the work of poor workers and their economic relations with core country capitalists. For Immanuel Wallerstein, peripheral states like Haiti and those in Francophone Africa constitute the bottom of the world economic system, with core countries and semi-peripheral states at the top. At the bottom, peripheral states, for example, most African countries and all the francophone African countries, as well as Haiti, have historically and

structurally been assigned specific functions in the global market: providing raw materials to core countries that struggle with one another to remain at the top.

Wallerstein's World Systems theory, like dependence theory, analyzes the historical realities of forced relations of production and exploitation between the west and the third world's ex-colonies. The combination of Immanuel Wallerstein's World-systems Theory and Hardt and Negri's theorization of Empire leads to the assertion that, despite the transition from imperialism to Empire, there is still evidence for the persistence of colonialism and imperialism in the way that global political and economic power is structured. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri define empire as the new world order through which sovereignty is exercised as it is "composed of a series of national and supra-national organisms united under a single logic of rule" (xii) with the US replacing the past European empires. Thus, Empire is timeless and omnipresent; "it is a decentered and de-territorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers" (376).

According to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, the shift from imperialism to Empire is characterized by the assertion that "no nation-state can today form the center of an imperialist project" (xiv) Hardt and Negri believe that imperialism is over, but a new system of domination they call Empire with open, expanding frontiers, where power is effectively distributed in networks is alive and strong. This new global order is different from the old European regimes of colonialism and imperialism because it is characterized by the "lack of boundaries." For these critics, Empire establishes unlimited rule over the entire "civilized" world and no territorial boundary limits its reign. Thus, they believe Empire is not a historical regime originating in conquest. Its rule operates on all registers of the social order extending down to the depths of the social world. Empire does not only manage a territory and a population but creates the very world over which it rules. At the

heart of this new system of domination, America replaces the European conquistadors. Following this rationale, one can rightfully assert that there has been a shift from the colonial process of subjugation that found justifications in the ideological discourses of European colonial ideologues. The new methods of domination aren't conducted with what Edward Said in *Orientalism* refers to as "brute political, economic, and military rationales" (12) by the western colonist sovereignty. This is so because, following globalization, sovereign states (western colonial states) have seen their power and the ability to rule directly over other countries dwindle. People are no longer physically coerced to participate in their exploitation by providing free land, labor, and natural resources to western imperialist governments. However, the mechanism used by Empire to solidify power and the profiteering structures of the market system has the same generative effect: the assignation of black bodies and spaces to what Wallerstein calls the periphery of the global economic system. Under Empire, Neo-liberal financialization, proxy wars, and the propping-up of corrupt dictators by market super players have become the modern Leviathan of the subjugation of black bodies in the Caribbean and francophone Africa. These Empire principles ensure the ex-colonies' maintenance in a perpetual state of defeat, which guarantees their subsidizing role in western corporate economies.

There is a strong relationship between the relegation and confinement of black bodies to the bottom of the global economic pyramid and their earlier exploitation by international market institutions like slavery, colonialism, and empire. Sylvia Wynter's analysis of the Caribbean's function in the European extractive system is built on the recognition of a colonial ontology defining black bodies and spaces. Wynter's theorization of the relationship of black bodies and spaces to the western capitalist market system emphasizes the ability of these systems (slave and colonial) to define and assign functional roles. These roles are not limited to the historical realities

of slavery and colonialism, as they still inform the realities of the market system in these countries today (the postcolony). For Sylvia Winter in "History, Plot and Plantation," the Caribbean was conceived as a "plantation," what she calls "plantation America," because the region was invented as a classic plantation. Many of its units (bodies/plants) were imported not to form a nation of free men but to spawn the plantation, whose purpose was to produce unique crops for the western market. Thus, Caribbean plantation companies emerged as complements to the market system; their peoples were born as a complement to the product, to the only staple crop - sugar cane - that they produced (1).

For Wynter, the 'discovery' of the New World and its vast exploitable lands, a process known as the "reduction of Man to Labour and of Nature to Land," modified the logic of the traditional relationship of man and nature, in which "Man adapted to Nature, and adapted Nature to his own needs" (99). Thus, for Wynter, through his "discovery" and invasion of new lands, western Man saw himself as the lord and possessor of Nature. Crucially, "nature" here wasn't limited to the land and its ecosystems. In European imperial rationality, non-western men became a part of nature, and thus, a "process of dehumanization and alienation was set in train" (99). Wynter's argument seeks to uncover the effects of colonial power structures and their ability to invent new world realities as they define and assign roles aimed at satisfying the market needs of the centers of imperialism. Following Wynter's argument, one can derive a similar function for Africa. If the Caribbean constitutes a plantation, Africa is an invention, a conceptual space of extraction of raw materials and bodies used by the market system to generate surpluses for western economies.

This modality derives from the fact that the west brought upon black spaces the structuration of European monarchical orders. In Haiti and Africa, for example, colonial France

and other colonizing countries reproduced the cultural logic of western monarchical societies established on discriminatory class standards.

### **1.3. Manufacturing a colonial black ontology**

The colonial ontological<sup>1</sup> conception of black bodies as essentially inferior and therefore assimilated to commodities began with an ideological regime of representation that later justified the enterprise of depravity to which the black Man has historically been subjected. European ideologues resorted to doctrinal elements such as God, faith, racial supremacist theories, philosophical theories, and literature to justify and normalize the relegation of black bodies to the bottom of humanity. Through these cultural factories, a colonial ontology of the “negro” was invented, and the black man’s body and space became the fuel for the European market system. The pretext of the civilizing mission opened an avenue for the conception and relegation of black bodies to the bottom of the pyramid of human existence. Through education and immersion in French culture, Francophone Africans, particularly African elites and their children, were indoctrinated to view France as the mother country and the Gauls as their ancestors. For France, the emphasis on cultural assimilation was the dominant colonial policy, and it was in that context that economic and political relationships with the colonies were determined. It was a bond the French were unwilling to relinquish at the end of the colonial era” (Watkins 27).

The idea according to which one had to export civilization served as a pretext for Europe to invent a sickness from which Africa was suffering: “savagery.” Thus, scholarly narratives portrayed the African continent as a figure of “the strange”, what Achille Mbembe calls the

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, I use the term colonial ontology as a reference to the western discursive construction of black bodies and spaces as extractive domains.

inaccessible “Other with a capital O” (Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* 3). Africa was also portrayed as the edge of the Earth where “reason is supposedly permanently at bay, and the unknown has supposedly attained its highest point,” (3) a kind of

headless figure threatened with madness and quite innocent of any notion of center, a vast dark cave where every benchmark and distinction come together in total confusion, and the rifts of a tragic and unhappy human history stand revealed: a mixture of the half-created and the incomplete, strange signs, convulsive movements. In short, a bottomless abyss where everything is noise, yawning gap, and primordial chaos (Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* 3).

This conception order was manufactured in western political and philosophical discourse and materialized by the colonists. Similarly, Fanon, in his psychological analysis of the relationship between colonizer and colonized, argues in *White Skin, Black Masks* (1952) that the “black” is the product of the white imagination, created out of “a thousand details, anecdotes, and stories” (91). The black man, according to Fanon, is thus an “object” of the white gaze, “fixed” in his difference and inferiority in a world in which whiteness signifies the human and the universal. The colonial discourse described by Fanon governed the manufacture of Africa and Haiti as inaccessible “strange” places filled with chaotic people and served as a rationalizing pretext for exploitation that has always been the basis of the relationship of black bodies with the new market system invented by Europe’s unscrupulous capitalists (this system began with the monetization of black bodies that were seized and sold as slaves). Within this new system, African territories (countries), Haiti, and their people (black bodies) were assigned only one role: to subsidize this market system following a norm that can be traced within the episteme of European societies.

The role assigned to non-Europeans (blacks) in the new market system (slavery) derives from Europe's monarchical society and its hierarchical social classifications: the sovereign lords, the nobility, and the serfs (servants of the lords). These standards were politically and juridically structured by western ideologues like the French jurist Loyseau for whom the popular class accomplishing its function as servants of the commanding class was the natural order of things:

Il faut par nécessité que les uns commandent et les autres obéissent. Ceux qui commandent ont plusieurs ordres, rangs ou degrés : les souverains Seigneurs commandent à tous ceux de leur État, adressant leur commandement aux grands, les grands aux médiocres, les médiocres aux petits, et les petits au peuple. Et le peuple qui obéit à tous ceux-là est encore séparé en plusieurs ordres et rangs. Les uns sont dédiés particulièrement au service de Dieu ; les autres à conserver l'État par les armes, les autres à le nourrir et maintenir par les exercices de la paix. Ce sont les trois Ordres ou États généraux... Mais chacun de ces ordres est encore divisé en ordres subalternes, à l'exemple de la hiérarchie céleste (Loyseau 1).

Loyseau's articulation is embedded in a cultural norm of the monarchy. This codification contributed to the solidification of social norms: the masters were served by the serfs. During the encounter between the West and black bodies and spaces, the same European monarchical ideologies were reproduced, and the functional role of servants was assigned to black bodies under slavery in the colonies. In the latter, western ideologues rationalized the condemnation of black bodies to the posture of serfs as the "natural" order of things, and a new ontology (a colonial ontology) of the "negro" (people with black skin) was invented. This ontology was codified in *The Code Noir* (Black Code), signed by King Louis XIV in 1685. It was a set of laws that governed the practice of slavery in the French colonies around the time when many European governments

in North America defined the legal status of enslaved Black people. This so-called legal status invented an ontology of the black body: an object, a tool, a product, a productive element that exists essentially for the service of western economies.

In *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale* (1871), Renan argues that the enslavement of the black body is the natural order of things : “ la nature a fait (...) une race de travailleur de la terre : c’est le negre (...) une race de maîtres et de Soldats, c’est la race européenne” (13). A similar doctrine is developed by Jules Ferry, a nineteenth-century French statesman and philosopher, twice prime minister of France from 1880-1881 and 1883-1885. Ferry believes that the natural “higher race,” i.e., the white race, is endowed with a divine right over the lower race (Blacks). In his 1884 justification of the colonization of Africa (Tunisia, Madagascar), in a Speech before the French Chamber of Deputies, he had this to say:

Gentlemen, we must speak more loudly and more honestly! We must say openly that, indeed the higher races have a right over the lower races... I repeat that the superior races have a right because they have a duty. They have to civilize the inferior races... In the history of earlier centuries, these duties, gentlemen, have often been misunderstood; and certainly, when the Spanish soldiers and explorers introduced slavery into Central America, they did not fulfill their duty as men of a higher race .... But, in our time, I maintain that European nations acquit themselves with generosity, with grandeur, and with sincerity of this superior civilizing duty (1-5).

Following the same line of thought, Victor-Marie Hugo, the French poet, novelist, essayist, playwright, and dramatist of the Romantic movement, argued that Africa only existed because of “whites.” He defends this position in his *Discours sur l’Afrique* from May 1879:

Que serait l’Afrique sans les blancs ? Rien ; un bloc de sable ; la nuit ; la paralysie ; des paysages lunaires. L’Afrique n’existe que parce que l’homme blanc l’a touchée. Est-ce que vous voyez le barrage ? Il est là, devant vous, ce bloc de sable et de cendre, ce morceau inerte et passif qui, depuis six mille ans, fait obstacle à la marche universelle, ce monstrueux Cham qui arrête Sam par son énormité, -l’Afrique. Quelle terre que cette Afrique ! L’Asie a son histoire, l’Amérique a son histoire, l’Australie elle-même a son histoire ; l’Afrique n’a pas d’histoire. [...] Cette Afrique farouche n’a que deux aspects : peuplée, c’est la barbarie ; déserte, c’est la sauvagerie [...] Au dix-neuvième siècle, le blanc a fait du noir un homme ; au vingtième siècle, l’Europe fera de l’Afrique un monde. [...] Allez, Peuples ! emparez-vous de cette terre. Prenez là. A qui ? A personne. Prenez cette terre à Dieu. Dieu donne la terre aux hommes, Dieu offre l’Afrique à l’Europe. Prenez-la. [...] Versez votre trop-plein dans cette Afrique, et du même coup résolvez vos questions sociales, changez vos prolétaires en propriétaires. Allez, faites ! Faites des routes, faites des ports, faites des villes ; croissez, cultivez, colonisez, multipliez (1).

Like Hugo, Voltaire in his *Essay sur l’histoire générale, et sur les moeurs et l’esprit des nations*, defends the superiority of the white race over the “Negros”:

la race des Nègres est une espèce d’hommes différente de la nôtre (...) on peut dire que si leur intelligence n’est pas d’une autre espèce que notre entendement, elle est très inférieure.

Ils ne sont pas capables d'une grande attention, ils combinent peu et ne paraissent faits ni pour les avantages, ni pour les abus de notre philosophie. Ils sont originaires de cette partie de l'Afrique comme les éléphants et les singes ; ils se croient nés en Guinée pour être vendus aux Blancs et pour les servir (269-270).

Immanuel Kant's position on race and the discursive manufacture of black colonial ontology is more disputed. Kant in his *Essai sur les maladies de la tête - Observations sur le sentiment du beau et du sublime*, once declared that : « la nature n'a doté le nègre d'Afrique d'aucun sentiment qui ne s'élève au-dessus de la niaiserie(...) Les Noirs (...) sont si bavards qu'il faut les séparer et les disperser à coups de bâton ». This statement prompted Pauline Kleingeld to claim that Immanuel Kant “defended the superiority of whites over non-whites” (229). However, Jeff Bowersox believes *that* Kant is attentive to the possibility of fluidity and change over time even though “he also undermines this by falling back on a schema of fixed racial characteristics that condemned blacks to an inferior status” (Bowersox 2). Given Kant's scholarly authority, his works carried considerable weight among his contemporaries. According to Bowersox, he bears significant responsibility for amplifying abhorrent stereotypes developed first by slaveowners in the Caribbean. But over his career, he (Kant), according to Bowersox, seems to have become aware of his contradictions, and his ideas appear to have evolved considerably.

Along with the philosophical and political articulations of a colonial black ontology by the west's influential minds, Montesquieu expresses the economic function of black subjectification. In his book *The Spirit of the Laws*, the French political philosopher says he endorses slavery because “sugar would be too expensive if there were no slaves to cultivate the plant it comes from.” These slaves are, in Montesquieu's words, “black from head to foot” (CHS. 1, 4-8.). Montesquieu's discourse clarifies the function of the west's colonial philosophical discourses,

whose narratives constitute the bedrock of Europe's colonial ideologies that fueled the fabrication of an inferior black body and justified its subjectification and exploitation.

Following the reductionist rationale of black bodies discursively manufactured as non-humans, Hegel, in *The philosophy of history*, represents Africa as an "Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature" (117). Africa and black bodies for Hegel are non-historical parts of the world and therefore have no movement or development to exhibit" (117). This order of things is well structured in western cultural and philosophical conceptions of relations with the non-Europeans. We see this rationale in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and in his discussion of the Master and Slave relationship.

Hegel brilliantly theorized and explained from a European standpoint what he understood by logical relations. Fuelled with the spirit of the Humanist movement, Hegel defined and mastered the episteme of European rationality before Derrida could articulate his theory of deconstruction. Even though Derrida grasped and explained the western relational matrix with his analysis of the structure of the epistēmē of the west, which positions the European subject at the centre and subordinates others (Hiddleston 98), Hegel had already realised a philosophical chef-d'oeuvre. For Hegel, the master and slave relation is based on conflict and exclusion, a predisposition for domination between humans. As Hegel believes, self-recognition depends on the recognition of the other. This quest for recognition in the social field is the origin of a fight to the death for recognition. Suppose we judge by the encounter between the colonist and the colonized, with the shifting modalities of that relation as represented in our three novels. In that case, verifying the materialization of Hegel's theory is possible. Looking at Alexandre Kojève's reading of Hegel's dialectic it is clear, that for Hegel, the human being can only be constituted if at least two of these Desires are present: the quest for recognition and the struggle to the death with a view to

recognition are accomplished. Because each of the beings endowed with such a desire is ready to go all the way in the pursuit of his satisfaction and, is ready to risk his life and put in danger that of the other to be recognized by the other and to impose himself on the other as a supreme value, their encounter can only be a struggle to the death and, it is only in and through such a struggle that human reality is born, constituted, realized, and revealed to itself and others. It is therefore realized and revealed only as a "recognized" reality. But Hegel does not stop there, and the notion of "subjectivity" becomes more interesting because for the being to be able to enjoy the recognition as Hegel posits, the one to whom the recognition is acquired must be alive: "for human reality to be constituted as a recognized reality, the two adversaries must remain alive after the struggle" (15). From this point of view, it becomes clear for Kojève that between the master and the slave, one individual must behave differently, in this struggle of recognition and accept his position of the subordinate. Even without being "predestined," as Kojève argues, he/she must "be afraid of the other, must yield to the other, must refuse the risk of his life to satisfy his desire for" recognition. "He must abandon his desire and satisfy the desire of the other: he must "recognize" it without being "recognized" by him. Thus, to "recognize" the other in this way is to "recognize" him/her as his Master and to recognize himself and to be recognized as the Master's Slave (Kojève 15).

This philosophical thought proper to Hegel seems nevertheless to have contaminated the European mind historically. Or was it just an explanation of what Eurocentrism is? Hegel's philosophical thought has served as the ideological basis of slavery and colonization. His reasoning also became the governing matrix of neo-colonialism and their most recent manifestations (neoliberalism and Empire.) We recognize that Hegel and other originators of colonial discourse have constructed the other (the black, the oriental) not only as subjects excluded from history but as essentially different from the westerner and therefore suitable to be the slave in Hegel's

dialectic. These various regimes of discourse (political, philosophical) founded the colonial black ontology. They served as the moral and sometimes scientific basis for the thingification and condemnation of black bodies to the bottom of the human pyramid. Thus, as I argue in this dissertation, black bodies in western philosophical, political, and economic thought constitute an ontologized entity frozen in a fixed state: a subsidizing element for the market system, or to borrow from Montesquieu, the black body is the sweetener of western economies.

#### **1.4. The Economics of Colonial Black Ontology**

The philosophical and political articulation of black bodies as the sweetener of the western market system served as a normalizing base for the real goal of western discursive projections onto black bodies. This goal has always been to achieve the economic exploitation of black bodies and spaces. Thus, this exploitation was enforced in economic theory and practices. At the end of colonialism, it became difficult to force and exploit people through coercive means. In this regard, the perpetuation of black exploitation was achieved through processes derived from an imposed agreement at the end of colonialism. This means that the birth of new African nations did not end exploitative mechanisms. The newly independent African states did not part ways with ex-colonizing countries like the United States did with Britain. According to Noam Chomsky, the fundamental difference between the US and these ex-colonies is that when the U.S. gained independence, it was free to ignore the prescriptions of classical exploitative political and economic theory, the brain force of the exploitative market system (delivered at the time by Adam Smith). Contrary to this approach, contemporary developing countries remained in the grip of ex-colonizing centers and the market system through the threat of force and the manufacture of dictatorship. This was achieved through the eradication of genuine independentists and the propping up of political lackeys. These new faces of power were and are only tolerated if they

proved to be able to do the bidding of Empire by submitting to the rules of the neoliberal market system encapsulated by big corporations and western-controlled monetary institutions. The latter fundamentally ensures the exploitation of these new economies still subjected to the Smithian rule. This norm was structurally enforced in the early 1970s when western capitalist centers reversed the practice of capital expansionism to cling to the new norm of consolidation and exclusion. This meant that western capitalist centers, which had amassed huge proportions of wealth from slavery, colonialism, and the industrial revolution, formed an exclusionary club. These countries used their wealth as a basis from which policies of inclusion or exclusion were enacted. Inclusion into the circle of finance meant that the peripheral governments that wanted to receive capital investments (crippling loans) had to submit themselves to the rules established by wealthy western governments and their medicine men.<sup>2</sup> They had to “meet defined standards of behavior and normative expectations” (Chomsky 7). This means they had to bow to the neoliberal economic prescriptions, adhere to international (western) standards of “good governance,” or subscribe to donor-approved poverty reduction measures. In simple terms, these southern governments are forced to do as they are told. Thus, the ideological basis for structuring the new market system (beyond the coercive fundamentals of the past) is still tied to the core belief of Adam Smith. Accordingly, it seems more like some ex-colonies, namely those of francophone Africa and Haiti, are still playing according to the Smithian doctrine of the weak. They still produce primary

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<sup>2</sup> I borrow this expression from Isebill V. Gruhn in her essay titled “The Recolonization of Africa: International Organizations on the March”. For Gruhn, Medicine men are individuals appointed by western governments and international financial institutions to provide council to the governments of poorer countries in need of financial investments. Most of the times, these medicine men force upon these countries economic policies that in the long run contribute to decimating these countries’ economies for the benefit of the borrowing country or financial institutions.

products for export and import superior manufactures, don't attempt to monopolize crucial goods, and have also subjected themselves to the financial colonizing power of the western dominated monetary institutions. This mode of functioning, a prescription identical to that of Adam Smith, is supposed to be "good" because doing otherwise "would retard instead of accelerating the further increase in the value of their annual produce and would obstruct instead of promoting the progress of their country towards real wealth and greatness" (Chomsky 4)<sup>3</sup>. A real absurdity is still at play for three reasons: the semi-monopoly of financial capital, the manufacture of political despots who abide by the rules of western medicine men, and finally, the war machine. Financially, the passive coercion of Haiti and African states by financial capital is perpetuated because financial institutions, the active hands of the colonial empire, only propose aid and direct capital investment on the condition that these countries follow the same old Smithian doctrine. Chomsky portrays this state of affairs with the example of Egypt, where the post-World War II United States displaced Britain as a global hegemon and adopted the same stand, making it clear that the U.S. would provide no aid to Egypt unless it adhered to the standard rules for the "weak" contained in Adam Smith's theorization of a good economic policy. The monopoly of financial capital, the sustenance of the economic policy of the weak (exchanging raw material for "superior manufactured products"), and the move to prop up anti-democratic governments in Africa and Haiti also have generative effects. The new generation of Africans and Haitians is caught between their aspirations for a new world of innovation, progress, and development and the revival of mechanisms of exploitation.

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<sup>3</sup>Adam Smith from *The Wealth of Nations*, 1776, cited by Noam Chomsky in *Is the World Too Big to Fail? The Contours of Global Order*, 2011.

### 1.5. The organization of this dissertation

My five-chapter work will cover five related subjects. First, the impoverishing relationship between black bodies, spaces, and the market system defined by a devastating principle of exchange formulated by Adam Smith; second, the manufacture of marginal bodies in the market system, extraction, and the governing of the “living deaths”<sup>4</sup> (*Membe Necropolitics* 40); third, the subsidizing function of black bodies in the market system and fourth, the philosophical move to deconstruct black ontological imprisonment using economic principles. In chapter one, “The Subaltern Black Role in the Market System,” my main argument is that the sustenance of exploitation is not done with the coercive features of slavery or colonization but through normalized processes derived from an imposed agreement at the end of colonialism. This means that the birth of new African nations didn’t end exploitative mechanisms. The newly independent African states didn’t part way with ex-colonizing countries like the United States did with Britain. According to Chomsky, the fundamental difference between the US and these ex-colonies is that when the U.S. gained independence, it was free to ignore the prescriptions of classical exploitative political and economic theory, the brain force of the exploitative market system, delivered at the time by Adam Smith.

In chapter two, “On the Politics of Extraction: Manufacturing of Marginal Bodies in the Market System,” I approach the works of Emmanuel Dongala, Sony Lab’ou Tansi, and Jacques Stephen Alexis with the concept of articulation to analyze the structural linkage between violence,

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<sup>4</sup> The precarious living conditions of a people confer upon them the status of what Mbembe has termed “living-dead”. For Achille Mbembe, the concept of living death refers to an individual who is unable to set he’s/her own limitations due to social or political interference. This person for Mbembe is not truly alive and is no longer sovereign over he’s/her own body.

anomy and the market system which has a functional role in assuring the perpetuation of these ex-colonial bodies to their subsidizing roles in the market system. Using articulation, my contribution in this chapter complexifies the question of violence in critical works on Afro-Caribbean narratives of black bodies and spaces. Thus, this chapter looks at the manufacturing of black political elites as one founding element of a global structural regime of violence perpetuated on black bodies and rooted in the western imaginaries of the colonized black body. In other words, this chapter posits that mad dictators are preferred entities of neoliberalism.

In chapter three: “On Extraction and the Governing of the “Living Deaths,” I look at the deployment of biopolitics and the exercise of Necropolitics as sovereign tools used by big market players to achieve the maintenance of black bodies and spaces in Francophone Africa and in Haiti in their colonial ontological function, i.e., spaces and bodies of essential extraction and exploitation. Chapter four: “On the Subsidizing Function of Black Bodies in the Market System,” analyses the two mechanisms used by the neoliberal-market system and its big players to maintain black bodies in the position of subsidizing entities. The process of exchange of raw materials with what Adam Smith calls “superior manufacturing goods” and the debt trap caused by the deficits generated from the previous relation assures the condemnation of black bodies and spaces to subaltern roles in the market system, which is designed to do so by any means necessary. The final chapter: “On Ontological Erasure,” looks at the philosophical response of African novelists, which is to deconstruct and articulate a rejection of capitalists’-imposed market principles.

## **Chapter 2: On the Politics of Extraction: Manufacturing Marginal Bodies in the Market System**

Many guilty consciences have been created by the slave trade. Europeans know that they carried on the slave trade, and Africans are aware that the trade would have been impossible if certain Africans did not cooperate with slave ships. To ease their guilty consciences, Europeans try to throw the major responsibility for the slave trade on to the Africans.

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Pg. 82.

This chapter examines the question of violence in postcolonial black spaces represented in the literary works of Sony Lab'ou Tansi, Emmanuel Dongala, and Jacques Stephen Alexis. This section contributes to the existing literature on violence in Postcolonial black spaces. Many literary works approach the question of violence and anomy in postcolonial Afro-Caribbean spaces, portraying the political 'sovereigns' as bloodthirsty crazy maniacs and the cause of the disorder and despair to which black bodies are subjected. Writers like Ahmadou Kourouma, Sony Labou Tansi, Tierno Monenembo, Jacques Roumain, Jacques Stephen Alexis, and others in their literary works accuse black political leaders of having betrayed the trust of their compatriots. These authors, in their works, denounce abuse, totalitarianism, corruption, nepotism, and injustice that characterize the regimes of these politicians.

There's no doubt today that the political leadership in the countries portrayed by Emmanuel Dongala, Sony Lab'ou Tansi, and Jacques Stephen Alexis are partly responsible for the disastrous state of violence and repression their people have been subjected to. We know the stories of the Haitian dictator Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and the "Tonton Macoute" in Haiti, beginning in

1959. We know how violent and repressive his son and successor Jean-Claude, or "Baby Doc" was from 1971, forcing thousands of Haitian "boat people" to flee by sea to Florida. We also know what has been happening in francophone African countries since their independence. The reproduction of strong men at the head of these states has been well documented by Achille Mbembe in in *De La Postcolonie*. Nevertheless, it is insufficient to understand the whole notion of political violence, social repression, and subjection without understanding the innate historical relationships between violence exercised by postcolonial potentates upon their people and the function of these sovereigns within the market economy. To understand how a body of people defined by their skin color are subjected to structural violence that curtails their ability to strive and exist in the global economic system as free-developed entities, we can look at the relationship between local state power incarnated by political strong men and the historical and neo-colonial influences on this political body, on the postcolonial nation and subjectified bodies. Marginalization is, therefore not caused by ferocious political 'maniacs' exclusively. Marginalization is the product of many elements that we can trace in the literary representations of Sony Lab'ou Tansi, Emmanuel Dongala, and Jacques Stephen Alexis. These authors reveal in their works a deep understanding of the complex nature of the relationship of black marginal bodies within the market system and the role played by the postcolonial potentate in assuring the exclusion of these bodies from market capital surpluses. Utilizing the theory of articulation, I am excavating in *La vie et demie*, *Johnny Chien Méchant* and *Les Arbres Musiciens*, the imperial mechanisms put in place to ease the manufacture of black political elites as one founding element of a global structural regime of violence perpetuated on black bodies as a normative rule rooted in the western imaginaries of the colonized black body.

## **2.1. The Function of Sovereigns in the Market Economy**

To analyze the complex relationships between black bodies, sovereign power, the market system and its consequences, and the relegation of black bodies to the margins of the global economic system, I borrow from the concept of articulation which provides the theoretical framework enabling the perception of the seemingly disparate elements of a system. As Richard Middleton asserts, “the theory of articulation recognizes the complexity of cultural fields. It preserves a relative autonomy for cultural and ideological elements,” showing how articulating principles “operate by combining existing elements into new patterns or by attaching new connotations to them” (Middleton 8). Following this logic, one cannot reduce post-colonial black leadership to an innate repressive instinct, nor can one adequately understand this phenomenon without connecting its actions to a broader system of repression and exploitation as well as their causes and effects.

In the margin of the market system, the political element in the articulatory rationale (the brutal and preferred political leaders) is connected to market forces and acts in the interest of these invisible hands. These political figures then serve as the agents of foreign interest groups and accomplish two distinct functions. In the first function, they are the shields of neoliberal extractive forces connected to these brutal political figures through corruption and threat of force. In the second function, they become the scapegoats for the state of poverty and instability in their country. In both functions, there is a direct causal relationship between big market forces, these puppet political figures, and the people they exploit, pauperize and govern with brutality to guarantee surpluses to big capital interest groups and foreign governments. There is, therefore, a continuum of historical, cultural, political, and economic connections binding the capitalist institutions and black bodies that are reduced to depraved conditions. These brutal political figures

who serve as mediators between market forces and their people are present in the African and Caribbean-Haitian novels I am analyzing. In these novels, various forces are linked together: colonial history; the ideological and ontological conception of black bodies and spaces; the African and Haitian relationship to the European market system; the structuration of that market system; and the current modes of extraction that perpetuate the idea of a colonialist black ontology. The three novels focused on in this dissertation represent a normalization of the system of structural domination and extraction and how the manufacture of preferential political power functions as the foundation of this system. As these novels show, establishing and perpetuating the exploitative market system in these regions has always depended upon a weak and compliant governing political body. In Africa, as in Haiti, a regime of behavior has long been normalized, i.e., the propping up of political lackeys to do the bidding of foreign interest groups. The postcolonial elite has a central role in assuring ex-colonies entrapment in their subsidizing role in the market system *ad vitam aeternam*. Jacques Stephen Alexis refers to this class of people as the “nouvelle espèce zoologique” (AM 161).

## **2.2. Postcolonial sovereign violence in Haiti**

It is insufficient to understand the role and function of the postcolonial black sovereign without understanding his function within a complex market system and global power relations. The role of the postcolonial political sovereign in Haiti complexifies the reductionist critical posture adopted by many critics who examine the question of violence and exploitation in black spaces. The postcolonial political figure in Haiti, what Alexis refers to as “la nouvelle espèce zoologique” acts and exists within a complex web of power that have assigned the sovereign the role of a violent potentate whose mode of existence turns his people into subsidizing entities of the

global market system. Alexis's Nouvelle 'espèce zoologique' emerges as a political reality in the 1940's. The United States that became the new face of Empire came along with mechanisms of influence developed historically in western dominated countries. One fundamental mechanism used by the United States to exercise its power on ex-western colonies was assuring the control of political elites by varying means. Jacques Stephen Alexis, writing in the 1950's about the 1930-1940's, represents an early example of US domination and neocolonialism, which will become standard from the 1950's on. Alexis thus charts the rise of the US as a superpower and the creation of a new type of local political leader (la nouvelle espèce zoologique) out of these neocolonial conditions. Hence, Alexis's novel provides a history of the new political character who will become familiar in post-Independence sub-Saharan Africa some four decades later. Alexis's political figures are products of a complex articulatory assemblage.

For Alexis, the 'nouvelle espèce zoologique' are the people in power. These people constitute a privileged social group headed by a president who unapologetically declares that his policies are mere copies of those of the United States: "ma politique est le reflet fidèle de la politique des États-Unis" (AM 159). The western preferred Haitian political elite (imposed by the US) is in bed with the new big players of the market system in Haiti: the US government and US private corporations who, following Adam Smith<sup>5</sup>'s idea of comparative advantage developed in 1776, to implement the new ideology of a neoliberal free market. Within the new neoliberal system theorized by Friedrich Hayek in chapter six of his book *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), there

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<sup>5</sup> In his book *The Wealth of Nations* 1776, trade for Adam Smith is the result of countries having absolute advantage in production of particular goods, relative to each other. The implication of this theory for newly independent countries from Britain was that they were reduced by coercive means to produce raw materials while Britain produced what he called superior manufactured goods. A situation that worked in decimating the economies of these ex-colonies.

is no equality among people. This is so, according to Hayek because the legal status of equality doesn't determine the outcome of an unequal world. Hayek is one of the proponents of neoliberalism, a system that operates not outside of the state, but with minimal oversight and interference of the state. It is a world of corporate governance: the free market.

Elie Lescot “Mr le president”, incarnates this new species of Haitian rulers, a new bourgeois class whose mode of life mirrors that of the Western elite. These “aristocrats” just like the European bourgeoisie whom they emulate, are key elements used to pushed neoliberal policies in Haiti. While speaking French exclusively, they are also consumers of French high art and delight themselves with the music of the French singer opera singer Tino Rosi. They enjoy French films like *La porteuse de pain*, and the books of the French writer Maurice Dekobra (AM 44) in their “grand salon Louis XV” and they sit on chairs made by Boulle, the French designer. These elite members of Haiti's ruling class are post-colonial Haitians who belong to a global bourgeoisie, as seen in their taste for art and culture.

While enjoying the modern comforts their capitulation with foreign power assured, this elite class's job was to ensure US colonial policies in Haiti were implemented smoothly throughout the age of the US Empire, the era following the Spanish-American war and culminating in the US Occupation of Haiti from 1919 to 1934. US interventions and military occupations took place throughout Central and Latin America throughout this period, whose political and economic implications have been well-documented.

In Haiti, we could argue that the normative rule of the Empire began to be felt shortly after the slave revolution broke out on the island in 1791. A revolution that wasn't well taken by US presidents and big business owners who were often also enslavers for whom Haitians' (slaves) essential function was to serve the economic interests of the western man (white man).

Furthermore, they feared that threat of slave revolt would travel to the US south. Thus, the Americans of the north “jumped into the fray, people like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and other slave-owning politicians rushed financial and political support to their slave-owning counterparts in Haiti” (Martin 2). The move to maintain the blacks in Haiti in their “ontological nature” was unsuccessful since the formerly enslaved people fought off the French navy and declared their independence in 1804. The loss to white slave-owning powers and the global system of trade and economics more broadly assured that violence against Haiti would continue to be repeated in other forms. Following the Revolution, the former colony’s plantation economy was destroyed. More than one post-independence leader sought to force the formerly enslaved people back onto the sugar plantations to relaunch sugar cane production for export. The formerly enslaved people refused to work on large-scale agricultural enterprises for an owner, which was too close to the conditions of enslavement. Eventually, the government gave up, and under President Jean-Pierre Boyer, plantations were broken up and distributed to the formerly enslaved cultivators, who settled into independent small-scale farming, essentially living independent from the State.

The system of land and labor enjoyed by the Haitian peasant began to change with the US Military Occupation of 1919-34. Haiti was once again exploited as a supplier of free labor and resources and was forced to become a market for Western manufactured goods. For such a neocolonial system to survive, Haiti had to be maintained within the grip of Empire. Revolutionary political figures like Charlemagne Peralte, who fought against the Marines and opposed returning the country to the position of servitude, would be killed by US marines, who would eventually prop up the docile and brutal political puppets (Vincent et Lescot) preferred by the west, in “rigged elections so they could pretend to be supporters of democracy” (Martin 2).

Élie Lescot, whom Alexis depicts, was the second president installed by the US in a rigged election following the close of the occupation and ruled Haiti from January 1941 to November 1946. For Alexis, Lescot embodies the island nation's state of exclusion from the march towards economic and material development. For, the American empire, associated with significant progress and achievement elsewhere, did not come to Haiti to reproduce similar levels of industrial and technological development visible in the export of heavy US machine manufactures:

pick-up, jeeps, camions lourds, camionnettes ... des machines-outils: pelles mécaniques autotractées, tracteurs, machines à drainer, machines à dépierrer, machines à empierrier, machines à concasser les pierres et tout ce que l'esprit pratique américain ne cesse d'inventer pour la plus grande gloire de la libre entreprise et surtout pour écouler l'acier, marchandise essentielle du system capitaliste nord-américain (AM 300).

Consumer durables, like cars and trucks, will not be manufactured in Haiti but are the signs of American "superiority," commodities that Haitians should aspire to (but will rarely acquire), and tools, not for development but extraction. As Alexis shows, the goal of US capitalism in post-Occupation Haiti is to squeeze what is left of the island after centuries of exploitation of Haitian black bodies. The new elites are facilitators of this objective : "Dans ce pays, les tirants étaient des gnomes. Hissés sur le pavois, ils donnaient uniquement le triste spectacle de leur putréfaction ! il n'était plus donné de mêler un peu de grandeur à son égoïsme ! ...c'était plus que les Yankees qui menaient le jeu » (AM 25). In Alexis's rendering, Haiti's elite has been reduced to a rotting, parasitic class that watches from the sidelines as the Americans take total control of the country and its resources.

Alexis represents US Empire in Haiti as producing a revamped reality of the past : “la morale des prétendus civilisés d’aujourd’hui [est] la même que celle en vigueur pendant les millénaires de barbarie... rien n’a fondamentalement changé dans le monde, seuls les mots, les formules, les formes de la domination [ont] varié. La jouissance, le bonheur [sont] conquêtes égoïstes qui se [réalisent] aux dépens d’autrui » (AM 20). The question of morality that Alexis touches upon here in a country like Haiti has a deep-rooted history. To understand its ramifications, we should look at the historical logic of the morality that was established and served as governing principle in the Caribbean and in the other black spheres since the beginning of the slave trade and colonialism. It is fundamental to understand why it is possible for Empire, despite Haiti’s history and the determination and success of its people to fight against slavery, to return with a similar mentality of predation, as if Haiti were frozen in time as the French colony Saint Domingue. I argue that Empire returned with in a different clothing because market profiteers have historically defined the country as a plantation and nothing else. When the United States enters the game with the Monroe doctrine<sup>6</sup>, the voracious Western bourgeoisie continued to be guided by the logic endemic to it. Haiti never ceased to be perceived as a plantation. Despite decolonization in the early nineteenth century, as Western Enlightened Man supposedly moved into the age of reason, the United States did not deviate from the pre-modern European conception of the country as a

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<sup>6</sup> On the face of things, the Monroe Doctrine is just a warning to Europeans, expressed in a speech to Congress by then President James Monroe in 1823. Monroe warned European powers not to attempt further colonization or otherwise interfere in the Western Hemisphere, stating that the United States would view any such interference as a potentially hostile act. However, in practice, the Monroe Doctrine was an open declaration to the European colonizers that the ‘Western Hemisphere’ was the sole sphere of influence of the United States.

plantation. Even though one can claim, as Hardt and Negri do, that imperialism is over, one cannot deny that Haiti was forced into the new logic of Empire, which functions with a set of tools which in the last instance aim at destruction and systematic exploitation while as reproducing distorted economies, massive poverty, and neocolonial dependency.

### **2.3. Sovereign violence in francophone Africa**

As with Haiti, we can conduct a similar analysis of Africa through the lens of the novels of Sony Lab'ou Tansi and Emmanuel Dongala. Their literary portrayals of authoritarian figures converge and compare to Alexis's characterization of Haiti's Lescot. The core of their novels, beyond dictator and child soldier themes that most scholars focus on, are the structural and existential relations between this region and a metamorphosed colonial system. The strong dictatorial figures represented by both authors epitomize the counter-reason of western humanism. Indeed, the excessively influential values of humanism remain dominant within the boundaries of western societies, values that are often pretended to be shared with non-Western societies. The West's relationship with Africa has long been overdetermined by Western humanism's construction of an "other," the colonial conception of a black ontology, or an essential blackness. The authoritarian figureheads represented by Sony Lab'ou Tansi and Emmanuel Dongala have been overdetermined by western concepts of blackness, which is precisely what they seek to show. The process of a mythical fabrication of black bodies has produced a stereotypical ideological narrative foundation for depicting the bloodthirsty black African dictator. The traits and behavior of the strong men and elites in all three novels speak to the ontologies and the relationship of the black dictator to the west's market system.

In *La vie et demie*, Sony Lab'ou Tansi's autocrat is not one individual. Instead, autocracy is a whole regime, a family of maniacs symbolized as a single reproductive body who reproduce

themselves their power endlessly. They do so according to the rationale that one must: subject the people to cruelty and depravation because they are all replaceable elements of an extractive system that uses them as circumstantial pawns. While subjecting their people to cruelty, these political figures are, in turn, subjected to the same violence vis à vis the market system because they are also replaceable elements used as pawns by market profiteers. In *La vie et demie* imaginary country of Katamalanasia, the dictator is called euphemistically the providential guide (le guide providentiel). His power is structurally tied to a foreign sponsor, “la puissance étrangère,” who, in fact, himself “fournit les guides.” This foreign authority is pulling the strings of power and is the beneficiary of the guide’s political repression of his people and the status quo. The relationship of the guide to the foreign power is still tied to the colonial ideology of total domination over and dehumanization of the disempowered. In this case, the US, the foreign power (la puissance étrangère) maintains relative power over the state of Katamalanasia as it decides, backed by the brute force of military units, who becomes the leader of the country. The “guide providential,” a pervasive figure of decolonization, emerges at a moment in which life in Africa has been determined to be free from colonialism's repressive and exclusivist institution. This political leader incarnates for the West the anti-freedom fighter in charge of maintaining the economic status quo by containing the resistance movements of Africans that fight to gain their independence from this latest colonizing and extractive system.

The ‘guide providential.’ the new strange but familiar figure with a Black Skin and White mask to quote Fanon, oppresses with little guilt of forethought his people. He has become the new

post-colonial transistor<sup>7</sup> of empire, an entity through which empire is amplified. Achille Mbembe has written extensively political characters like the ‘guide providentiel’ who exhibits the repressive qualities if not the goals of colonists. In *On the Postcolony*, Mbembe looks at the various ways institutions use social and political power to dictate how people live and die, a form of control that replaces the top-down relation of power that defined colonialism and imperialism. The power of direct rule exerted by colonial governments upon the native’s shifts to a sub-contracted regime, according to Mbembe, that guarantees the same repression through the violence of the new aspirations for liberty. For Mbembe, there is a direct causality between colonial violence and postcolonial violence because the colony’s governance modes were not based on the state’s relationship to ‘citizens’ but instead on the violent exercise of power and the denial of the population’s right to personhood. The brutal postcolonial political leader reproduces the same structures of power that he inherited from the colonial leader. Still, he exercises them against his people, even though they became theoretically right-bearing citizens after independence. Mbembe believes that the potentate that emerges as the ruler after independence simply assumes the role of the colonialists and the citizens remained subjects (Mbembe 24). As much as Mbembe considers these elites as mercenaries, he insists that the historical conditions and ideologies of colonial

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<sup>7</sup> A transistor is a semiconductor device used for amplifying, controlling, and generating electrical signals. In this case the political figure is the political transistor that helps in diffusing the power of empire throughout the populace he oversees. The “electrical signals” suggest that the political figure can enter the thoughts and emotions of the populace with the power that he diffuses, an insidious form of social and individual control.

governance are still entrenched in the postcolony's institutions and thus continue to determine its modes of governance.

In Sony Lab'ou Tansi's *La vie et demie*, the dictator incarnates the potentate described by Achille Mbembe. Sony Lab'ou Tansi's strong man exercises power by destroying life: "l'homme est plus que jamais résolu a tuer la vie" and any aspiration for freedom in the Congo. The opposition voices who stand against the enslavement and subjection of the people to the exploitative system of neo-colonialism are faced with the wrath of this Maniac. In *La vie et demie*, the character Martial is the incarnation of and an allegory for the nation's opposition movement. An embodiment of resistance, he is a body literally condemned to die in every moment of the life of the post-colonial state of Katamalanasié. This contrasts with what Lab'ou Tansi depicts as the reproductive process of dictatorship, in which the dictator is replaced by one of his descendants, in a sense, never dying, —Similarly. Still, with a twist, Martial's body, like all the bodies of Katamalanasié, are repeatedly repressed and killed when "necessary." An incarnation of the people, Martial embodies their pain and suffering, their deprivation, beginning with the natural right to live. For this reason, Martial's painful "deaths" by torture do not kill him, as his maimed body continues to incarnate the people's suffering, presence, and persistence.

The providential guide for whom the state exists is constituted as the feudal lord of Katamalanasié. He has his special ceremonial process : "le guide providential commençait toujours ses repas par deux doses d'un alcool local fabriqué a l'intention des guides" (VD 17). Not only is there a whole industry that produces pleasurable wines for the providential guide, but the small percentage of wealth that is left to the country after the neo-colonial governments and corporate moguls have been fed also belongs to the guide, his group, and everyone who belongs to the social-political class of the dictator. The guide and his people own and control part of the country's

economic capital, just like the European Feudal lords of the past. They live lavishly with the region's wealth and upon the backs of "serfs," or quasi-slaves. Everyone in the providential guide's crew lives lavishly. His doctor, the ex-minister of health, has a secondary hotel room that he has reserved and paid for eight years at the hotel name importantly "Life and a half" (La vie et demie): "J'ai louer la chambre ... j'ai payé pour huit ans" (VD 30) The implication seems to be that the Doctor pays not only for a hotel in which to vacation and relax for eight years, but by doing so invests in his own life, in its care and perpetuation, and also in the guarantee that his life will multiply just like his monetary investments. The same doctor offers a check of 87 millions to his fleeing friend Chaidana as a gift : "c'est en payant le propriétaire quelle remarqua dans le lot d'argent que le docteur lui avait donner le chèque chiffre a quatre-vingt-sept millions (VD 43). The gift seems to suggest that the doctor has invested in Chaidana's life as a guarantee that her life, too, will multiply. Like the hotels that seem to commodify and make life from life and money from money, the education system reproduces lives by generating diplomas for the children of the dictator's elite, after a single phone call: "les fonds de classe étaient réservés aux enfants des pontes, qui avaient des diplômes sur un coup de fil au services national des examens" (VD 31). Through the elite's buying and selling of diplomas, they assure the reproduction of their dynasties, allegories in which change seems impossible.

In this system, it is also easy for any regime member to become rich and semi-powerful. All it takes is for this person to make good use of international funding, special economic aid, and military support from the foreign country that supplies the providential guide in return for appropriating the country's resources. The 'guide providentiel', the prototype of the neocolonial leader preferred by the west, installed, and backed by foreign powers in post-independence Africa assures the perpetuation of the extractive rationality of colonialism. The guide is supported

financially by the European and American neo-colonial powers, and they are also by his side, both assuming his security and ensuring he stays in line with the extractive agenda he has been assigned. The personal security of the guide is carried out by an American colonel named Green Man (VD 54) who ironically addresses the guide by your majesty, though this is the role to which he aspires. The same colonel oversees the training of the dictator's close guards. Hence, he holds supreme power over the life and death of the president. Thus, the state of Katamalanasie props up the absolute reign of US-backed weak and powerful political maniacs, which are reproduced in power with the same rationale of power. The Dynasty of guides has been given the medieval names of Catholic knights, suggesting why they are sometimes called "majesty." Jean Sans Coeur and Jean Coeur de Pierre identify with the same trappings and symbols of the power of their former colonial enemies, the French Ancient Regime, and the Catholic church, thus signifying their civilization and sense of superiority over their subjects from whom they are further and further distanced.

These insane individuals are supported financially, military and, are protected and propelled to power because they vowed to protect foreign interests and repress the aspiration of the people they have been ordered to keep in line. Their assigned function is to serve as the protective shield of multinationals and foreign interests, to the detriment of the people of Katamalanasie. Suppose any leader of Katamalanasie doesn't abide by this principle of the weak and dare to think about his people and their interest. In that case, the Westerners pulling the strings overthrow, remove, and replace him with someone who looks like him and who may even bear his name since the country has reproduced, along with commodities for the West, these thousands of submissive and tropicalized types.

In *La vie et demie*, Daniello Mesdinachi incarnates the non-submissive politician who failed to govern as instructed. Just as Lumumba, Thomas Sankara, Sylvanus Olympio, and many

others in Francophone Africa, the fictive Daniello who dares question and contest the norm imposed by foreign influence in Katamalanasi is Killed just eight weeks into his presidency for not acting like a typical tropical leader<sup>8</sup>:

Daniellio Mesdinaci fut assassiné après huit semaines d'essai du pouvoir ... Daniellio Mesdinaci s'était montré trop sage et trop intelligent pour être tropical. Il avait même parler de rapatrier les deux cents trente mille soldats de la puissance étrangère installés dans son pays pour assurer la sécurité des coopérants qui mettaient leurs nez dans les affaires de la Katamalanasi. Trois de ses soldats avaient été fusillés pour haute trahison et pratique de mercenariat.

-Ce con parle trop

- Ce cancre va trop loin" (170).

Imposing a tropicalized type of leader upon Katamalanasi has become doctrinal to the point where any politician that doesn't exhibit the characteristics of a submissive 'tropical' figure is eliminated as a "cancer." There is a designed structure and an enforced system that requires the elevation of lackeys into positions of power where they can be controlled. This system normalizes the countries' surplus value appropriation to benefit the submissive political elite and their foreign controllers. This perverted wealth guarantees their submission to this regime in which they represent the chosen ones from a population of desperate people. The chosen ones swim in the country's surpluses as money "le pognon" flows within their circles by structural means of

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<sup>8</sup> The concept of tropical leader is derogatory. It refers to a fixed conceptual representation of African manufactured leaders as having a prototypical behavior that make them likeable by western colonists. A tropical leader is similar to Fanon's black leader in white mask. He is placed in power and does the biddings of imperial powers to the detriment of his people.

corruption: falsified government contracts in healthcare, constructions, equipment and missions financed by public funds but never come to fruition. One minister of the supreme guide of Katamalanasia is aware of this situation:

Dans le system ou nous sommes, si on n'est pas craint, on n'est rien. Et dans tout ça, le plus simple c'est le pognon. Le pognon vient de la -haut. Tu n'as qu'à bien ouvrir les mains. D'abord tu te fabriques des marchés : médicaments, constructions, équipement, missions. Un ministre est forme. Tu dois savoir cette règle du jeux-, un ministre est forme' de vingt pourcents des dépenses de son ministère. Si tu as de la poigne, tu peux fatigue le chiffre a trente, voir à quarante pourcents (VD 34).

In this corrupt system, money (le pognon) comes from the foreigners, who are here described as god-like, "le pognon vient de la-haut. Tu n'as qu'à bien ouvrir les mains," as if it were manna from heaven. The expectation is that with this mystical money, the Minister may engage in a variety of sham industries and thereby multiply the value of his money as he seeks to multiply his life, which possesses its own sort of value.

This type of regime that emerged after the independence era in Africa and, in a different way, in Haiti, is also portrayed by Emanuel Donagala. In *Johnny Chien Méchant*, Dongala addresses the way that subjugation is manufactured. Unlike the settings in the two previous novels, in *Johnny Chien Méchant*, the head of the state, a neo-colonial strong man is portrayed from the perspective of those who are not in the official sphere of power. They cannot control the surplus value of the unnamed country in which the novel is set. In this country, state repression is viewed through the eyes of Johnny, the sixteen-year-old uneducated and naïve child soldier who belongs to the anti-state rebel group in the war against state forces. Through the voice of Johnny Mad Dog,

Emmanuel Dongala is in line with Jaques Stephen Alexis and Sony Lab'ou Tansi in criticizing the structurally inherited neo-colonial state apparatus that is nothing but the shield for neo-colonialism, Empire, their extractive market system, and financial profiteers. The surplus value of the impoverished state is seized by a small class of people : “je connais le comportement de nos chefs ; chaque fois qu’il y a des sous, ils bouffent tout et certains se croient même généreux lorsqu’ils vous lancent quelques pièces comme on jette des miettes à son chien (JCM 70). The post-independence lackey leaders in the Congo are expected to act in a certain way in their relation to the capital market and the people they claim to represent. For the reason previously mentioned in *Les arbres Musiciens* and *La vie et demie*, government officials in *Johnny Chien Méchant* act according to the prescriptions of neo-colonial interest groups to consolidate their grip on power. These government bureaucrats have no real aim in rooting out the structural causes of misery that creates the shortage of surplus value that they otherwise could rely on for economic planning and development. They usually choose the easy path; they submit to foreign interests and they biddings of market super players by maintaining a colonial-like economic structuration. By means of a variety of coercive mechanisms, these leaders accept the colonial economic rule of the weak, and they allow their countries to adopt the economic principle of this weakness. They export raw material and import structurally needed goods and services. This process benefits the elite and their western backers but creates a circle of generative poverty for the country and its people.

This local elite is lavishly wealthy amid generalized poverty. They live in refuges, armored homes in gated communities not far from the generalized misery the people are subjected to. Kandahar is the sanctuary, a wealthy district that Johnny Mad Dog, the poor child soldier is stunned by when sees it for the first time:

Je ne connaissais pas bien le quartier Kandahar et je ne savais pas que les gens y avaient de si belles villas. Celui qui avait bâti celle-ci devait certainement être un homme d'affaires millionnaire en euros ou en dollars, pas seulement en petits francs CFA. Si par contre, comme tant d'autres, il n'était qu'un fonctionnaire payé par l'État, il n'y avait alors que deux possibilités : soit il avait détourné d'importants fonds des caisses de l'État, soit il faisait de la politique et était membre actif du parti au pouvoir ; de toute façon, l'un n'allait pas sans l'autre dans notre pays (JCM 331).

Johnny's speculations are answered when he finds out who owns the lavishly wealthy house his fellow rebel-soldiers that just stormed on their looting expedition:

J'ai failli tomber sur le cul en apercevant l'homme qui se recroquevillait dans un coin de la salle avec son épouse. M. Ibara! Le douanier Ibara ! L'inspecteur Ibara ! L'homme qui touchait une commission de dix pour cent sur toutes les marchandises importées, l'homme qui changeait de Mercedes tous les ans, l'homme a la belle femme. On disait qu'il détournait plus d'argent sur les recettes douanières que notre président en détournait sur les recettes pétrolières. Qui ne le connaissait pas dans notre pays ? Et c'était moi qui avais le privilège de le piller (JCM 331-332).

Johnny, whose hopes for prestige or respect are entirely thwarted by his poverty and exclusion is perversely proud to have access to the house of the famous man, and to experience "the privilege" of looting this opulent house. The contrast between Johnny and the custom inspector's opulence reinforces the stunning absurdities in which the dire poverty of the masses that characterizes the rest of the country, exists side-by-side with the grandiose wealth of a man who engages in government corruption and theft.

Mr. Ibara who incarnates the government's corrupt and opulent lifestyle lives in so much wealth that the poor rebel Johnny Mad Dog is stunned to find how Ibara's freezer is crammed with food and foreign and very expensive drinks like Chivas Regal and Dom Perignon among others:

Le congélateur était plein de bouffe et le frigo avait la bière fraîche, pas n'importe quelle mousse locale, mais de la vraie, celle importée d'Europe et même d'Asie s'il vous plait. Je ne savais d'ailleurs pas qu'on fabriquait de la bière en Chine ou au Japon. Il était vraiment riche M. Ibara. Tandis que nous, on crevait de faim, il y en avait qui faisait bombance tous les jours (JCM 334).

Johnny gains an education here on the existence of imported beer, a luxury good that takes precedence over feeding those plagued by famine. Mr Ibara was one of the corrupt rich embezzlers who looked down on their impoverished fellow citizens:

M. Ibara, l'un de ces grands qui passaient dans leurs véhicules luxueux en nous méprisant, en ignorant la misère autour d'eux. Ces grands qui volaient l'argent de l'État pour bâtir leurs villas et entretenir leurs maitresses, qui n'avaient pas besoin de construire des hôpitaux ou des écoles ici au pays puisque dès qu'ils avaient un petit mal de tête, ils prenaient l'avion pour l'Amérique ou l'Europe pour se faire soigner (JCM 342).

The lifestyle of the political elite in power is tailored in such a way to be disconnected from the realities of the people they don't even pretend to serve (why build hospitals when the rich can travel to get medical care?). There is a superstructure that has normalized these social and class relations and provides, due to class, access to the global elite standards of living, that disconnects them from the realities of (local) African space, from which they none the less express their belongingness to a global body, by airplanes, medical care, and imported beer and manufacture goods from Europe and Asia. Their bourgeois lifestyle and consumption habits guarantee their

submission to the economic forces that allow them to pursue their bourgeois standards of living alongside the misery of the majority of those who surround them. Power and money then represent the instance of *jouissance* that must be maintained via the political control of power: “nous n’avions jamais soupçonné que nos compatriotes mayi-dogos pouvaient avoir autant de richesse cachée. Pas étonnant que leurs chefs voulaient s’accrocher au pouvoir à tout prix” (JCM 346).

#### **2.4. The function of sovereign violence**

In all three novels, I am analyzing, the spaces and people portrayed bear a historical connection to the past. From colonialism to Empire, there has been a constant western conception and consideration of these countries as a ‘plantation’ or ‘extractive domain.’ This order of things is perpetuated through three processes. The control of a preferential political elite, the entertainment of anomy generated by the inability of subservient elites to produce economic progress for their people, and the perpetuation of extraction, which is the goal of the influential market players. We’ll cover points two and three in our forthcoming chapters. These three structural realities of exploitation aren’t an abnormality given that this system and its justifying ideology are in continuity with the Western relation to black bodies, historically based on the conception of black inferiority. The current condition of Haiti, one of the impoverished countries of the western hemisphere, and francophone Africa, the richest in resources but an impoverished region derives from their assigned roles in the market economy. They stand as a mirror to the development of western capitalist societies. Haiti’s subjectification to the market system beginning with the US occupation proved to be a successful extractive experiment that was later pushed into Africa by the same market forces whose ideologies mirror the relational philosophy of Hegel (see chapter I).

The Caribbean, as we know, was the product of an invention of the European colonialist who needed to build wealth-producing goods to satisfy the European market. This process wasn't limited to the Caribbean; it is the same rationality that fueled all the colonial empires. We see the articulation of this expansionist colonial economics in people like John Stuart Mill, the British economist and philosopher who put in words the endeavor of the European colonist:

Our ... colonies cannot be regarded as countries with productive capital of their own ... [but rather] the place where England finds it convenient to carry on the production of sugar, coffee, and a few other tropical commodities... almost all industry is carried on for English uses. There is little production of anything except for staple commodities, and these are sent to England, not to be exchanged for things exported to the colony and used by its inhabitants, but to be sold., for the benefit of the [western] proprietor there (Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* 90).

This conception of black spaces as areas of exploitation and extraction is in line with the Hegelian ideology of master and slave as the colonial body exists to satisfy the needs of the metropolitan subject. Hegel defined himself in the language of nineteenth-century Europeans based on a universal definition of the male body as the referential model for humanity. This same ideology resulted in the invention of extra-European territories in the interest of the European bourgeoisie. In this movement, extra-European lands and people were assigned various roles. Africa was invented in this logic to be the space par excellence for the extraction of bodies and raw material for European Markets, and the Caribbean and Haiti became a plantation, a space par excellence for the realization of Hegel's dialectic. Haiti became part of what Sylvia Wynter calls

“plantation America” because the region was invented as a classic plantation, and many of its units were planted with people, not to form societies, but to carry on plantations' whose aim was to produce single crops for the market. Accordingly, “the plantation societies of the Caribbean came into being as adjuncts to the market system; their peoples came into being as an adjunct to the product, to the single crop commodity—the sugar cane — which they produced” (1).

Beyond these literary representations, there's a real game of roles in the colonial arena. Hegel first articulated this game. Hegel's articulation of relations from an orientalist and historically realistic standpoint mirrors the rationality of the European colonial mentality articulated based on structural dualism. In the case of Haiti and Africa (Francophone Africa), when we look at the historical and literary representations of the manufacture of the Caribbean as a sphere of implantation and plantation and Africa as a sphere of extraction both of bodies and raw material, there is a logical paradigm that motivates me to claim that the only possible relation between the black bodies of these spaces and the European market system is one in which the black body is subjectified. The mechanisms of reproduction of this system vary from colonialism to the era of neocolonialism, but the outcome is almost already predictable. The conception and enactment of the black social elite represented in all three novels enables me to put forward the idea by which the relation of master and slave as the centers of neocolonialism see it; the black body and his space have a role that historically hasn't faded, and this historical reality is always at the doorstep of postcolonial Haiti and Black Francophone Africa.

The whole rationality of post-humanism or any other theoretical structure considered to be “post” is articulated on the basis that there has been a transition, a historical shift between past and present realities, and beyond the classical systems of subjectification, domination and exclusion. If this has been the case for the westerner, the story of the “colonial” and postcolonial subject has

been otherwise: it has almost followed the same path; indeed, Haiti's past seems to have had a significant effect on its present. We've seen with Sylvia Wynter how the condition of the Caribbean has been pre-determined by the ideology that invented it and gave it a particular role at birth. This reality doesn't seem to have moved in the imagination of the western market, which has given away none of its fantasies of a master, an attitude Hegel clearly understood.

We've seen the historical moral of humanism, and we know it never was a system that could help the "negros" of the colonies escape the shackles of subjugation. The capitalism that emerged at the end of feudalism resembles the latter as it was rooted in a systematic ideology of exploitation, instrumentalization, and the exclusion of working bodies. Feudalism persisted for many centuries, with the help of church ideological apparatuses that solidified a class system of masters and serfs. When the Europeans reached the age of consciousness (renaissance) and decided to eliminate the serf system, the bourgeoisie class designed another organism, as Aimé Césaire claims. Greed and the need to grow wealth and develop Europe's economy without enslaving its people who were now becoming citizens. Slavery and later colonialism then became the everyday praxis of European relations. Consequentially, the contact between the west and the rest was articulated and materialized based on the locus of the Hegelian dialectics of master versus slave, creating a system that lasted in the interest of the western bourgeoisie class until the revolts and brutal battles for independence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this move, Haiti obtained its independence in 1804. But because black bodies and land were never imagined to be free and Western wealth and prosperity were generated from exploiting them, the bourgeoisie had to do something to maintain that order. For over a century, Haiti, as a plantation and land of extraction, remained out of touch with "history" in the mind of the white bourgeoisie. When the United States entered the dance of imperialists, the hegemony of Europe faded. But the memory

of the American capitalist was never shaken. The bourgeoisie of America continued the work of their defeated European ancestors, and in Haiti, the plantation was waiting to be harvested.

### Chapter 3: On Extraction and the Governing of the “Living Deaths.”<sup>9</sup>

«gardez vous de vous croiser les bras  
en l’attitude stérile du spectateur,  
car la vie n’est pas un spectacle,  
car une mer de douleurs n’est pas un proscenium,  
car un homme qui crie n’est pas un ours qui danse »

Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d’un Retour au pays natal*, éd. Présence africaine, 1956, p. 8

In this chapter, I analyze anomy and deaths from war as the most concrete manifestations of violence in Sub-Saharan Africa (and beyond). Such deaths exemplify the forms of everyday violence that provide the foundation for the often politically motivated exercise of postcolonial power and domination over the populations of francophone Africa and Haiti. In this chapter, I return to the three literary texts in question because these works show how the sovereign use of power was ultimately inherited from the western colonizer. Under colonial rule, violence was often exercised outside of established law (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 23) and constituted thus the bedrock upon which absolute power was enacted. Violence was normalized as a language, performed on bodies to punish and subjugate, but also to be internalized by the victim, motivating him/her (a living death) to kill others, often in the name of revolution. But the language of violence could also be positively appropriated by the victim, gaining him or her the words to demand agency and subjecthood. Others are caught up in dictatorships in which the human body is subjected to brutal

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<sup>9</sup> The precarious living conditions of a people confer upon them the status of what Mbembe has termed “living-dead”. *Necropolitics*, 40.

regimes, whose power and expressions of sovereignty and violence reside to a large degree in their ability to “dictate who may live and who must die” (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 11). This form of oppressive power, i.e., ruling by oppressive means, becomes fundamental to sustaining the subsidizing role of the ex-colonies within the western-dominated market system. The materialization of this logic stems from an invented reality for black bodies, still part and parcel of the new economic market system, which continues to manufacture a colonial and slave rationality as spaces of extraction, as in the past. To guarantee their continuous exploitation, a political mechanism of coercion, what Mbembe has termed “Necropolitics,” had to emerge

### **3.1. Theorizing Colonial and Postcolonial Coercion**

Foucault and Mbembe have done extensive work on the constitution of power, and its exercise as sovereign violence, in both Western and non-Western guises. Foucault well documents the functioning of the old regime of sovereignty in his analysis of the relationship of subjects to the sovereign, which appears in his *History of Sexuality, Right of Death, and Power over Life* (1976). Foucault cites the example of the ancient *patria potestas*, the power that the male head of a Roman *family* exercised over his children and his more remote descendants in the male line. This power granted the father of the Roman family the right to “dispose” of the life of his children and his slaves” (135). For Foucault, the power vested in the ancient Roman father figure to give and to take life was eventually diminished by the classical theoreticians and “it was no longer considered that this power of the sovereign over his subjects could be exercised in an absolute and unconditional way.” There were however situations in which this traditional norm could still be exercised, i.e., in cases “where the sovereign's very existence was in jeopardy: a sort of right of rejoinder. If he were threatened by external enemies who sought to overthrow him or contest his rights”. In this situation, according to Foucault, the father could then legitimately wage war and

require his subjects to take part in defense of the state; without "directly proposing their death," the father was empowered to "expose their life, and in this sense, he wielded an "indirect" power over their life and death (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 1).

The line separating the external enemies of the Patria and that of the people who opposed him and transgressed his laws was very thin. A person supposedly a subject of the patria could easily suffer the enemy's punishment because in opposing the patria, the subject became an enemy. The consequence of that travesty was predictable: the patria could then "exercise a direct power over the offender's life: as punishment, the latter would be put to death" (135).

From this observation, Foucault concludes that the power of life and death was not an absolute privilege but conditioned by the defense of the sovereign and his own survival. (135). According to Foucault, this form of power was exercised mainly as a means of deduction (*prélèvement*), a type of "subtraction mechanism that paves the way to a normalized "right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods, and services, labor and blood, levied on the subjects." Thus "Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life to suppress it" (136).

This governance of subjected bodies, normalized in even our own time, ended in Europe with the classical age, as the west went through a "very profound transformation of the old formulas of sovereignty." As Foucault notes, "Deduction" is no longer the primary form of power but merely one element among others to be used by the empowered to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces subordinated to it.

The new regimes of modern power are now committed to generating forces, making them healthy and fit, making them grow, and ordering them, which contrast sharply with that dedicated

to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them. There has been a parallel shift in the right of a death, or at least a tendency to align itself with the exigencies of a life-administering power and to define itself accordingly. This death based on the sovereign's right now manifests as simply the reverse of the right of the social body to ensure, maintain, or develop its life (Foucault: 136).

Foucault's positive observation of the end of the classical sovereign and its replacement by a regime of power that nurtures life to control it, namely in the west, is instructive. However, we must adjust Foucault's paradigm to account for how the history of the right to live versus the right to die is exercised in non-western regions, like Haiti or Africa, where power takes on many different forms and histories. The administration of life in non-European territories was never entirely disconnected from the old-fashioned modalities of sovereignty: the European reproduced that model in the colonies, an experimental zone for what would later be transposed to Europe and implemented on its social marginals. Enzo Traverso has demonstrated how the mechanism used to dehumanize the "savages" of the colonies was the first stage leading to the discrimination and exploitation of the European working classes and "stateless people."<sup>10</sup>

For Foucault, the western modern state "made the management, protection, and cultivation of life coextensive with the sovereign right to kill" (Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 17). In *Biopolitics*, the French theorist demonstrates how sovereign power has evolved since its inception and has now become about the management of life, in which various mechanisms exert power by controlling, managing, and protecting life. However, even as slavery was abolished by the mid-nineteenth

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<sup>10</sup> Achille Mbembe reference Enzo Traverso and Hanah Arendt for whom the « the existence of a mass of stateless people, deprived of citizenship and rejected by all the Western powers, was a fundamental precondition for the Holocaust." See Enzo Traverso, *La violence nazie: Une généalogie européenne* (Paris: La Fabrique Editions, 2002). In Achille Mbembe *On Necropolitics*.

century and colonial rule ended with decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s, western-backed political leaders (potentates) chosen to govern the newly independent African and Caribbean countries exercised *patria potestas*-like rule over their people. What Foucault calls “*droit de glaive*”<sup>11</sup> (Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société* 159) was readopted by these dictators. It soon became an active tool of the government infrastructure in the postcolonial states. Indeed, the reality is that the governmentality of bodies outside of European borders hasn’t shifted beyond the old-fashioned governing structures that could kill or let live when deemed necessary.

Colonial regimes, past and present, that manufacture violence exclusively against non-Europeans do so via past institutions. These institutions are characterized by colonial practices by which they extract resources and exploit black bodies. Thus, exploitation is carried out by modern industries that likewise use surpluses from black bodies and spaces. These mechanisms reveal how slave-like systems are central to economic realms almost entirely controlled by Europe and the United States. Mbembe’s *Necropolitics* is essential, as he links slavery and its rise to biopower and the power modalities of sovereign domination.

For Mbembe, “any historical account of the rise of modern terror needs to address slavery, which could be considered one of the first instances of biopolitical experimentation. In many respects, the very structure of the plantation system and its aftermath manifests the emblematic and paradoxical figure of the state of exception” (21). The aftermath of slavery and colonialism perpetuates these institutions and practices in other forms and names. For Mbembe, one can still make the claim, and he does so, that the end of the age of sovereign monarchs and the march towards what Foucault has termed biopower was never complete, most certainly when we use a less Euro-centric view: The old right to kill or let live that characterized sovereign power and was

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<sup>11</sup> The sovereign right to kill.

“carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life” (Foucault 139) was never implemented in non-European spheres. Mbembe thus believes, which is crucial to this dissertation, that the Foucauldian notion and practice of biopower is “insufficient to account for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death” (Mbembe: 39). Mbembe argues that the classical western practices of power enacted through the dispersal and administration of death still exist and constitutes what he has termed Necropolitics: “ I have put forward the notion of Necropolitics and Necro power to account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the—creation of *death-worlds*, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*” (Mbembe 40).

Mbembe demonstrates what he calls “the politics of cruelty,” which dates from slave societies and continues into our late modern colonial and contemporary societies. Postcolonial citizens are still subjected to the sovereign exercise of power over life and death through the potentate’s exercise of a politics of cruelty and profanity using “a peculiar terror formation” (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 22). A peculiar power formation For Mbembe folds or “collapses biopower, the state of exception and the state of siege” through which the terror of statesmen is exercised upon the people (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 22). Thus, Mbembe believes that the postcolony and its potentates carry remnants of the colonial in the pursuit and consolidation of their power and economic benefit.

Mbembe’s theories provide critical tools for my analysis as I attempt to illuminate the peculiarity of postcolonial terror as it appears in the literary works of Emmanuel Dongala, Sony Lab’ou Tansi, and Jacques Stephen Alexis. These works provide evidence for my argument by

vividly representing Necropolitics, i.e., the different ways that death is meted out by the preferential political figures that do the bidding of outside market forces and the ways that death worlds are produced in which mass populations live in proximity with the threat of death. The narratives of Jacques Stephen Alexis, Emmanuel Dongala and Sony Lab'ou show the processes of social control through the management of life and death by violent political potentates whose cruel practices emanate from an earlier era.

### **3.2. The function of the sovereign ruling of black bodies and spaces.**

As Noam Chomsky argues, third-world economies are forced to abide by economic policies designed for the weak. These policies were developed and prescribed by Adam Smith and his twentieth-century heirs. Such policies, according to Chomsky, assure the poor's continuing subaltern position within the world market system<sup>12</sup>. However, the neoliberal world economic system of Hayek and others evolved, along with its extractive methods, the structural, political manufacture of violence, the imposition of market exchange principles, and the Debt trap. All of these are part of the structuring elements through which material deprivation is maintained through the sovereign ability to suppress free minds with the threat of death.

### **3.3. Sovereignty in *Johnny Chien Méchant***

In all the novels I examine, different groups In *Johnny Chien Méchant*, there is a war opposing the government's forces to rebel groups who want access to power and the small percentage of wealth left after the foreign rulers of the market, and their obedient puppets have been served. For Sony Lab'ou Tansi in *La vie et demie*, the potentate placed in power by corporate

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<sup>12</sup> See introduction.

market forces, as we have seen, has one important purpose. He embodies the evil and repressive government institution, which is perceived as the direct enemy of a people aspiring for political and economic freedom because of its violent actions and inability to provide. In *La vie et demie*, the ‘guide providentiel’ exercises sovereign power over a population that must accept sovereign brutality or be killed. In Haiti, the preferred leaders manufactured by the US empire act in accordance with the demands of the market super players. Any political leader must act according to the behavioral norms of the “nouvelle espece zoologique” (new zoological specie) by keeping himself distant and isolated from the people. Living in a bubble of opulence, this leader can then carry out abominable acts that materialize the brutality of the neo-colonial capitalist and foreign governments who rule, often from afar, through brute force and a supreme authority over life and death. The local dictator in Alexis’s novel, Elie Lescot, backed by the US military, holds the power of life and death over the Haitian people and pushes them to the margins of capitalism, where they are denied the country’s surpluses.

The storyline in Dongala’s *Johnny Chien Méchant* represents and explores the madness that erupts from the implementation of what Chomsky calls the economic policies of the weak. This economic model (neoliberalism) is the source of underdevelopment, deprivation and war in Dongala’s narrative. Though never stated, the novel is set during a civil war in the Congo Brazzaville through many indirect textual references. The novel’s narrative takes place after controversial presidential elections when the former president, who “won” reelection, was overthrown by militias groups moving into the capital to seize power. Two teenagers narrate the novel. Johnny Mad Dog, the child soldier and Laokolé, one of the many civilian victims of the war. Laokolé is an intelligent, sixteen-year-old girl in school preparing for her final year exam when the war broke out, shattering her dream of becoming an engineer. In the novel, her father is

killed by looting military men. Government troops and rebel groups all oppose one another, and the bone of contention -- besides disputes over the spoils of the presidency -- is merely the quest for the means of survival (despite the country being resource rich):

Le Général Giap a proclamé un pillage général de quarante huit heures. Ecoutez le brailler à la radio. Ici, c'est moi, Général Giap. Nos vaillants combattants de la liberté se sont battus comme des lions et de buffles. Ils ont terrorisé l'ennemi qui a fui la queue basse. Victoire, la *lutta continua* ... Servez-vous donc jusqu'à lundi ... Les pillages ... dans notre pays couronnaient toujours l'arrivée des troupes victorieuses ou en déroute (JCM 19-26).

These statements from the young narrators of the novel (Johnny Mad Dog and Laokolé) capture, on the one hand, a manifestation of the hegemony (The influence or control over another country by a group of people) of a system that is built on extraction and exploitation of the inhabitants of the Congo. The clashing between opposing forces guarantees the population's subjugation to a cultural order. The rebel forces entering the city left by government troops are as materially deprived, violent, and devastated as the country's government forces. From the crisis emerged more than one *patria potesta*-like figure. Even though the hegemonic order is being contested, both the government's sovereign and the rebel leader exercise their power by disseminating death among the bodies they govern as they wield an "indirect" power of life and death over them:

Le big chief pour qui nous combattions, celui qui, depuis quelques heures, depuis que nous étions entrés dans la ville, était maintenant le président de notre pays... Il savait que de

tous les miliciens qui avaient combattu et combattaient pour lui, notre faction était la meilleure. Ce n'était pas pour rien qu'on nous appelait les Mata Mata, les "donne-la-mort", ceux qui n'avaient pas peur de la donner ni de la recevoir (JCM 20).

The battle between the two immediate enemies: the crazy men of the government forces and rebel groups, shields the real enemy, which is systemic: the (foreign controlled) extractive market system. The two opposing groups operate with the same destructive consequences. The government and its administrative powers seek to stabilize the war by trying to regulate and control the bodies which resist the government's repressive power to borrow from Foucault. By repressive power, I refer to the process by which individuals are forced to do what they don't want to do or put into situations where they must risk their lives to continue living. For Foucault,

wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity; massacres have become vital. ... The principle underlying the tactics of battle - that one has to become capable of killing in order to go on living - has become the principle that defines the strategy states (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 137)

When Foucault refers to 'killing', he is not simply referring to the vicious taking of someone's else life directly: "I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of putting someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection and so on" (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* 256).

In the African context, this translates into the government subjecting its people using force to accept and submit to the spectacle of its governing power (always derivative of the colonial), a supreme power enacted through repression and death. The resistant rebels, as well as the government representatives, act according to a principle, what Foucault calls “the tactics of battle,” which implies that one has to be capable of killing to go on living” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 137). Thus, while killing becomes the act of taking life, living for both the military forces and the opposing militia bodies implies more than just being alive: it entails having access to resources which, in the last instance, is the real cause of war.

In the war depicted in *Johnny Chien Méchant*, the real enemy, i.e., the profiteers of the colonial-like system imposed upon the country, are not directly involved. However, the apparent enemies (the inhabitants of the resource-rich country caught in the killing game of one another) are both manufactured through the discourse of “rebels,” “armies,” and “soldiers,” mutually constituted using discourse to normalize their repression or extermination when necessary. Hence, these entrapped bodies gradually work to deconstruct and destroy the social order paving the way for anomy. In anomy, the postcolonial state and its sovereign no longer claim the monopoly of violence due to the dramatic change that occurred in this region over the last quarter of the twentieth century, diminishing the ability of the state to claim a monopoly on violence and the means of coercion within its territory (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 32). The new power tower: the urban militias, private armies, armies of regional lords, and state armies all claim the right to exercise violence or the right to kill or to let live. According to Mbembe, these nonstate deployers of violence (militias and child soldiers) are tricked into using manufactured hate for the other or forced to join these militias and are subject to the authority of its gurus, supply two critical resources: labor (military manpower) and minerals the revenue generated from the sale of illegally

mined resources, used to obtain fighters and weapons necessary to their attempt to overthrow governments. Most of these militias are composed of citizen soldiers, child soldiers, mercenaries, and privateers (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 32). The Young Johnny Mad Dog, a child soldier, exemplifies this new reality and encapsulates the diffused nature of sovereign violence whereby those who die or kill to go on living are subjected to the authority of a new type of patria potesta: “our leader was an army general.”

As Dongala shows, the root cause of the war is the quest for resources that derives from the intrinsic trap created by an extractive and exploitative global market economic system that deprives social and political bodies of the benefit of the country’s surplus value. The chaos that erupts also serves as a basis for the control and expansion of markets (which we will return to in the subsequent chapter). In the Congo, this extraction process for the global market contributes to recreating and entertaining the “extractive domain.” Control over the extraction of non-western resources drives neoliberal governments and mining corporations to nourish what Deleuze and Guattari have termed War machines (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 466).

For Deleuze and Guattari, the war machine is manifested in wars and wars “follow the same movement as capitalism: In the same way that the proportion of capital must constantly keep growing, so war becomes increasingly an industry of “war of matériel” as it grows ever larger, drawing in more and more capital investments by the state (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 466). War then constitutes a means by which western states and big market players maintain and contain an exteriority for exercising economic and political hegemony. The disparaging implication here is that capitalism not only finds value in its most radical other—the war machine—but that it must enable a necropolitical industry to continue

to go about its business. As is visible in *Johnny Chien Méchant*, the war machine comprises segments of armed men who oppose the state or sometimes who work with or for the state, when necessary, to profit from the chaos orchestrates. Chaos stems from the norm of extraction of material resources and the appropriation of surplus value and its use by a clan that constitutes the political body and benefits from its international benefactors.

For Dongala, international extractive commercial entities in Congo only have one interest: resources. Thus, by any means necessary, they strive to extract despite the political and social costs to the country. In one scene In Dongala's narrative, as the war rages dangerously on, a conversation occurs between a UN aid worker (Tanisha), a foreign oil company CEO, and an IMF officer. In this exchange, the CEO and IMF officer demand priority for their evacuation from the violence, revealing the depth of their absurd yet realistic belief that they bear no responsibility for the violence and chaos in the Congo:

**CEO:** Nous sommes des expatriés, madame. Des hauts fonctionnaires internationaux avec nos familles. Si cela ne vous suffit pas, je vous informe que je suis le directeur de l'agence locale de la plus grande compagnie pétrolière du pays et que je vais chez le chef de l'État sans rendez-vous, du moins quand ce pays avait encore un semblant d'État. Et nous sommes des citoyens Européens, et il y en a même des Américains parmi nous. Alors un peu d'égards. Nous ne sommes pas en train de mendier de la nourriture comme ces gens-là, madame, car cette nourriture, cette aide, vient de chez nous, elle est payée par l'impôt de nos concitoyens. Alors quand je dis que nous avons la priorité, nous avons la priorité, HCR ou pas.

**Tanisha:** vous vous foutez de ce pays ? Mais qui ne le sait pas ? Argent, argent, argent, pétrole, pétrole, pétrole, diamant, diamant, diamant ! Je n'ai jamais pensé qu'un expert bien payé comme vous était un humanitaire... Vous pourrez revenir dans ce pays de merde pour pomper le pétrole et tirer des plans d'ajustement structurels quand ces tribus auront cessé de se massacrer ! (JCM 223).

**IMF officer:** Vous tenez des propos racistes et discriminatoires envers les blancs, madame. Nous ne manquerons pas de signaler cela aux autorités du HCR ainsi qu'à vos autorités consulaires, en plus de votre attitude inamicale et de non-coopération. Et croyez-moi, vous serez punie et virée (JCM 224-225).

In the post-imperial era proclaimed by Hardt and Negri, i.e., an era characterized by the dwindling power of nations, “no nation will be world leader in the way modern European nations were” (xiv) because, with Empire and the process of globalization, sovereign states have seen their power and the ability to exercise direct ruling of other countries dwindle. This is because the primary factors of production and exchange – money, technology, people, and goods – move with increasing ease across national boundaries,” and the nation-state has less and less power to regulate these flows and impose its authority over the economy” (xiv). In this new era with its unique parameters of control, Hegemonic power is manifested in the ability of powerful private interests’ groups (multinationals, foreign governments, and international banking institutions) to choose and control political figures that will, in turn, secure their interests to the detriment of the inhabitants of the countries they rule. This process ensures the entrapment of these countries and their bare lives (those people over there) to their historically productive function despite the march towards the age of ‘reason.’

In Dongala's narrative, the aftermath of contested elections becomes a scene par excellence of the sovereigns' exercise of power through their ability to eliminate those they deem deserving. The president in power orders his national army to engage in slaughtering. This army then becomes a kind of death squad that always appears in the extractive domains (colonial lands or any natural resources-rich region deemed by neo-colonists to be their playground), supposedly for the sake of "national interest." Their presence ensures killing for the special interest and its opulent commanders to preserve their source of wealth and power. Armed with machine guns, the state's army of maniacs faces various rebellious armed groups and their warlords. These warlords are a mixture of every deranged mind willing to participate in this purge like-situation.

Overall, power is guaranteed by the machine gun, not coincidentally produced by foreign capitalists: American-made, Russian-made, Israeli-made, Chinese-made, or French-made. The militias are not stuck with only one tool of carnage: they participate in a free market, consuming commodities exchanged on the global market that further assure foreign entities' political and economic dominance. The hunt can begin with these market-exchanged products in the hands of unhinged actors of a shadowed market system. But not without the normalizing process of discursive definition (another form of Necropolitics) of the "other" whose death sentence is manufactured by language. The others become the devils, the enemies that must be slain. The trap of elections comes into play and serves as a structuring element of discrimination and one is faced with a familiar story: "lorsque les combats avaient commencé, nous on savait seulement que, comme d'habitude, deux leaders politiques se battaient pour le pouvoir après des élections que l'un disait truquées et que l'autre disait démocratiques et transparentes (JCM 127).

Johnny Mad Dog, the narrator who would become one of the slaughter machines of his fellow citizens, is then consumed in this political game of winner takes all and is quickly convinced

by the normalizing mantra of all propagandists and their well-practiced discourses. A new regime of language emerges here, one that is productive of death, not life, and people whom yesterday were united by culture and misery, line up behind their new gurus. They constitute themselves into restrictive fraternities as they march toward extermination. The manipulated poor line up behind the leaders of parties with-similar names, MPLDP and MPLTP. These leaders who want power and control of resources ask their factions to arm up and confront others who are deemed, enemies:

le chef du MPLDP était de notre région, donc son parti était automatiquement notre parti et celui ou celle qui était contre, était un traître. Gare aux traîtres à la région ! Ce fameux parti qui, parait-il était le nôtre avait donc gagné les élections, mais le MPLTP actuellement au pouvoir refusait de le reconnaître et ne voulait pas céder la place afin de rester éternellement aux affaires pour continuer à piller le trésor du pays, à bouffer l'argent du pétrole et des diamants et, surtout, à nous brimer. C'était grave, il fallait que tous les gens de notre région -majoritaires dans notre quartier – prennent les armes pour chasser le président (JCM 128).

This discursive practice aims to divide a population that has always been united by a generalized form of misery and initiate the inevitability of death through necropower. The manipulated people, children of the same country, then progress from shouting insults to shooting each other with machine guns. The sacrificial rite of auto-destruction requires the existence of an enemy other, the expiatory body through which one's ferocious instinct is satisfied. This other is quickly identified and fixed in discourse, given devilish and evil traits that serve as the basis for its extermination. By helping the militias groups and their leaders, the bodies being used as circumstantial pawns put themselves in a position where they must kill to go on living. The militia

gurus' ultimate power resides in their ability to rule over their "enemies" and dictate death. The more one guru can kill with the help of child soldiers, the stronger his grip on power and its exercise is solidified.

In Dongala's narrative, the war machine is used to ensure the perpetuation of extraction from a land that couldn't be entirely emptied by slavery and colonialism. Dongala's literary representations depict the system of predation that entertains the chaotic containment and destructive battles of impoverished black bodies based on nothing but pseudo-ethnic differences<sup>13</sup> that generate the auto-destruction of life in any form while generating profits for foreign capital.

What Dongala depicts here isn't new. The divide-and-rule strategy is one of three methods used by modern colonial powers to maintain their far-flung empires<sup>14</sup>. Colonial and post-colonial market profiteers had always functioned this way when black bodies and spaces were forcibly inscribed in a market system from the 15th through 20th centuries, were progressively conquered and used to subsidize Europe's economies. Dongala's Africa (the Congo) is the lieu par excellence of the kind of manufactured dirty wars our world has learned to accommodate. The productive forces generating this order of things are the massive transglobal infrastructures of trade and extraction and the exponents of market forces that have succeeded through the material deprivation

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<sup>13</sup> On this point, there's no question that Ethnic differences exist on the African continent. However, we should concur with Walter Rodney that they are not necessarily political differences and "they don't necessarily cause people to kill each other. They become so-called "tribalism" when they are politicized in a particular framework. And in post-independence Africa they have been politicized largely by sections of the so-called African elite (the African petty bourgeoisie, in the search for bases for their own maintenance in power)." *Class Contradiction in Tanzania*. An April 1975 lecture at North-Western University, published in *The State in Tanzania: A Selection of Articles*, Haroub Othman, ed. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1980, 18-41.

<sup>14</sup> See Richard Morrock in *Heritage of Strife: The Effects of Colonialist "Divide and Rule" Strategy upon the Colonized Peoples*.

they have produced in liberating agents of madness and chaos, who jump for joy at the sight of the corpse of the “enemy,” a mere construction of discourse. We see this exaltation through the eyes of Johnny Mad dog, who like the other rebels, finds satisfaction and gratification in his ability to disseminate anguish. This is Johnny’s description of the despair:

Les fuyards transportaient un brick-à-brac incroyable de tout et de rien dans des brouettes, des cuvettes, des dames-jeannes, des bassines, des bidons en plastique, sans compter les bambins que les femmes traînaient avec elles. Une poussière ocre montait de la terre... Nous n’avions pas prévu un tel déferlement de population, si bien que, pendant un moment, je n’ai su comment procéder ; mon commando s’excitait déjà comme des chiens de chasse prêts pour la curée et soudain ratata ... ratata... Mes gars ont commencé à lâcher des rafales en l’air sans attendre mes ordres... À peine avais-je fini de réfléchir sur la situation que j’ai entendu de violents coups de klaxon et le bruit d’un moteur martyrisé, émettant des hurlements plaintifs comme si un pied coince sur la pédale de l’embrayage, le chauffeur s’amusait à donner d’incessants coups d’accélérateur avec celui qui était libre. Tournant mes yeux vers l’endroit d’où venait le tintouin, j’ai aperçu un véhicule dont le porte-bagages recouvert d’une bâche bleue s’affichait au-dessus de la marée humaine. En me déplaçant un peu, j’ai pu discerner un gros 4x4 japonais. Le chauffeur avait apparemment des difficultés pour faire demi-tour dans cette foule compacte ; il avait déjà réussi à tourner aux trois quarts, il ne lui restait qu’une petite marche arrière et il filerait en sens inverse. Pourquoi fuyait-il ? Et qu’y avait-il sous cette bâche bleue ? Des armes sûrement. Un homme qui a la conscience tranquille ne fuit pas. Comme en territoire ennemi, il ne fallait jamais hésiter, j’ai tiré, ou plutôt, comme aimait le dire Rambo, notre chef avant Giap, j’ai “rafale” dans l’auto. Je crois que les balles ont dû faire des victimes parmi la foule alentour,

mais comme je l'ai appris des Européens et des Américains, on appelait cela des dommages, collatéraux et il n'y avait pas de guerre sans dommages collatéraux. Tout innocent tué était une bavure ou un dommage collatéral... je me suis approché. J'ai regardé à travers les vitres qui avaient volé en éclats ; cinq cadavres : une fille, un garçon, trois adultes dont une vieille femme, tous baignant dans leur sang. Un tireur d'élite comme moi manquait rarement sa cible. La portière gauche du véhicule était cependant ouverte ; l'un des passagers l'avait certainement poussée pour tenter de fuir avant d'être fauchée par mes tirs. Que voulez-vous, on ne peut pas courir plus vite qu'une balle de kalash. On n'échappe pas à Matiti Mabé<sup>15</sup>, le chef des Tigres Rugissants. (JCM 108-112).

Institutional (the politician in power) and non-institutional (the rebel leaders) sovereigns generating violence (the government militias) who confront, uneducated and unemployed youths with deranged minds (the rebels, the child soldiers) enlisted in the administration of brutality and killings. The war opposing government force to rebel groups constitutes what Mbembe calls 'Negro's fight in a tunnel'. This conflict cost thousands of lives, given that they operate within the midst of an already predictable system that feeds and thrives on misery and the proximity to death. The miserable lives of poor people on both sides of the conflict are sacrificed for market economic growth. In turn, they guarantee the opulence of its affluent players: those who fund the war with machine guns and extract blood minerals.

The expression of power through the distribution of death exposes the reality of a system in which these bodies and spaces, after more than half a century following pseudo-independence, and the omnipresence of extractive neo-capital, have never ceased to eviscerate a whole race of people. All this is for the benefit of corporations and their global consumers of oil, diamonds,

coltan, or whatever resource is needed to satisfy the never-ending capitalist quest for profit. In the absence of reason and understanding of the functional self in the economy of chaos, everything eventually returns to gunfire, and the one who controls it and knows how to use it against the “enemy” who achieves the power to negotiate percentages with multinationals waiting for the opportunity. After destroying any sense of humanity, in chorus and guaranteeing the discursive primitive function of life, loud media voices, proclaim the victory of democracy. Usually when the potentate or the ex-war lord who gains power has cut favorable deals for western corporations and has agreed to do the bidding of foreign powers. This politically preferred figure is celebrated as the light of democracy that shines upon a country of darkness until the potentate or ex-rebel, now dressed in a suit, demands complete control or attempts to look after his type. He is then painted as an enemy of democracy and usually overthrown.

### **3.4. Sovereignty in *La vie et demie***

The narrator in *La vie et demie* formulates the brutality of the political leadership in Katamalanasia, an imaginary African country. In this country, brutal leaders known as “guide providential” are preferred and backed by influential foreign governments and private interests. These violent potentates use brute force to subject their people to abject living conditions. Lab’ou Tansi’s narrative does more than portray the “providential guides” as the unique source of the problems in Katamalanasia. His novel articulates the relationship of the colonial type of violent political leaders, their foreign backers, and the deprivation to which the system they perpetuate subjects the people of Katamalanasia. Using violence, the “guide providentiel,” as his title suggests, accomplishes the function of a past European sovereign and works with the material support of prominent market representatives by excluding certain bodies from the resource basket of Katamalanasia. The potentate rules through coercion and brutality. Under these rulers,

‘Katamalanasians’ have two choices: accept their servile condition (and live) or contest the regimes and die. This version of the politics of life and death falls within Mbembe’s Necropolitics: “the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die [...]. To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power” (Mbembe, *Necropolitics*: 11-40).

In *La vie et demie*, local puppet politicians are portrayed as a series of cannibalistic totalitarians, the “Guides providentiels,” one of whom has captured Martial, the leader of the opposition, and his family. Martial is subjected to the most extreme torture and killed by Ogramoussando Mbi, a providential guide. This violent puppet politician has the qualities of a violent and voracious sovereign who controls his country’s resources at will. He uses these resources for his glory and shares them with his crew and his European and American instructors. All these people feed on his country’s resources while the people are compelled to starve and accept their condition or face death. The providential guide’s meals usually last four hours: “le repas du Guide Providentiel prenait habituellement quatre heures” (12). But the providential guide isn’t just an avid lover of food; he is the perfect prototype of the sovereign who has the power and expresses it with his ability to kill or let live. During one of his lavish meals, he has Martial, an opposition leader, and his family (wife and several children) bound up and forcefully brought to his dinner table, where he takes the knife used to cut up his meat and stabs Martial in the throat:

Voici l’homme, dit le lieutenant qui les avait conduits jusqu’à la chambre verte du Guide Providentiel ... La chambre verte n’était qu’une sorte de poche de la spacieuse salle des repas. S’approchant des neuf loques humaines que le lieutenant avait poussées devant lui

en riant son amer “voici l’homme”, le Guide Providentiel eut un sourire très simple avant de venir enfoncer le couteau de table qui lui servait à déchirer un gros morceau de la viande vendue aux quatre Saisons, le plus grand magazine de la capitale, d’ailleurs réservé au gouvernement. La loque-père (Martial) sourcillait tandis que le fer disparaissait lentement dans sa gorge. Le Guide Providentiel retira le couteau et s’en retourna à sa viande des quatre Saisons qu’il coupa et mangea avec le même couteau ensanglanté. Le sang coulait à flots silencieux de la gorge de la loque-père (VD 11-12).

Martial, however, does not die. Hence, the Guide proceeds to stab, shoot, and poison him. Martial refuses to die, saying I do not want to die this death: “je ne veux pas mourir cette mort” (VD 13). Eventually, the Guide cuts him up and informs his family that they must eat the remains. Martial’s family members are offered pâté and stew from their dead father and husband. Jules, the eldest son, refuses to eat. They are murdered, and the family is forced to eat his remains the next day. Chaidana and Tristansia are compelled to spend the next seven days eating the remains of their family members:

Le Guide Providentiel se fâchât pour de bon, avec son sabre aux reflets d’or il se mit à tailler à coups aveugles le haut du corps de la loque-père, il démantela le thorax, puis les épaules, le cou, la tête; bientôt il ne restait plus qu’une folle touffe de cheveux flottant dans le vide amer, les morceaux taillés formaient au sol une sorte de termitière, le Guide Providentiel les dispersa à grands coups de pied désordonnés avant d’arracher la touffe de cheveux de son invisible suspension; il tira de toutes ses forces, d’une main d’abord puis les deux, la touffe céda ... -Vous allez me bouffer ça, dit le Guide Providentiel aux autres loques. Je n’y ai pas enfoncé ma sueur pour rien” (VD 13-16).

This opening scene sets the stage for a never-ending torturous power exercise. When the guide dies, the sovereign repressive system continues. His successor: Henri-au-Coeur-tendre follows a similar path of the Guide providential” and continues his father’s rhythm of power and spreading death anywhere and anytime to revolting bodies:

Le jour où l'université de Yourma protesta contre les « politisations inconditionnelles des diplômés », le guide Henri-au-Cœur-Tendre donna l'ordre de tirer, les trois mille quatre-vingt-douze morts entrèrent tous dans la mort de Martial, puisque le soir du 20 décembre, on les vit marcher dans les rues, brandissant des drapeaux de sang, avec leurs blessures qui saignaient toujours. Nombreux étaient maintenant ceux qui voulaient mourir de la mort de Martial pour avoir l’occasion de repasser dans la vie après la mort. Beaucoup enviaient les étudiants et tous ceux que les guides faisaient fusiller (VD 86-87).

As a family tradition, the providential guide’s governing of bodies entails killing the people who do not submit to his supreme authority. Thus, when Henri-au-Coeur-tendre is overthrown and killed by his brother Jean Oscar-Coeur-de-Pere, the latter immediately adopts a long-lasting family tradition of killing non-compliant voices:

Ce fut Kakara Mouchata, le quart de frère du guide Henri-au Cœur-Tendre qui assassina celui-ci à l’asile, mit le meurtre au compte du colonel Kapithianti qu’il fit fusiller place de l’Indépendance avant de prendre la radio nationale et le nom de règne de Jean Oscar-Cœur-de-Père (VD 126).

Jean Oscar enters the political scene with chevrons reminding everyone what bloodline he's from. The opposition voices will quickly feel the wrath of the mad leader whose parental deeds precede him. He quickly adopts a new constitution with him as the supreme leader: "Article premier: "le pouvoir appartient au guide" (VD 126). Power then becomes the sole property of the Supreme guide. Thus, the new supreme leader exercise of sovereignty entails the division of social bodies "into those who must live and those who must die" (Mbembe 17). For a Yes or a No people are classified and killed « le temps passait sur Yourma de la même façon, toujours un temps de plomb, un temps de cris, un temps de peur pour un oui, pour un non, les gens de forces spéciales[...] te faisaient peur, te faisaient bouffer tes papiers, ta chemise, tes sandales » (VD 131). Opposition voices who dare to critique the government violent and corrupt policies that resulted in a "living hell" (l'enfer) are simply put to death for their current lese majesty crimes and even unknown future ones:

Le Guide Jean Oscar apprit le surnom honteux qu'on avait donné au pays...il se fâchât cruellement et ordonna qu'on fusillât sans process tout propriétaire de la langue et de lèvres qui, à l'avenir, auraient prononcé le mot "enfer". Le premier fusille avait été l'évêque kha Dominique Roshimanito, qui n'écoutait jamais la radio nationale et qui avait dit le mot "enfer" dans son sermon du Jeudi matin. On exécuta quatre cent soixante-douze prêtres et pasteurs et on tira sur la foule aux obsèques de l'évêque Dominique Roshimanito ou les gens avaient chanté : seigneur reviendras-tu, ou le mot "enfer" revenait dans tous les couplets (VD 133).

The copycat replacements of the guide supreme are reproduced in perpetual regimes of repression manufactured by the market structures. They fight vehemently to preserve their interests

and the interest of prominent market players using the sovereign exercise of power. They kill anyone who defies this normalized order of things. The practice of sovereignty inscribes the novel's events within the framework of Necropolitics and all that it entails.

In the political and social scene in Sony Lab'ou Tansy's novel, the manifestation of Necropolitics produces a dual instance of sovereignty. The despot rules by imposing death on non-conforming voices, while the resistance that emerges does the same by killing the forces of the despotic government to achieve freedom. The governing of life and the spread of death among the inhabitants of Katamalanasia shades the influence of the real enemy pulling the strings. Thus, resistance remains within the sphere of subjugation because the battle for freedom remains caught up in the margins of power of the big market players. The atrocious authority of the Guide and his replacements manufacture an opposition that must kill to exist. This opposition sees what Foucault calls the "immediate enemy " in the dictatorial regimes," a functional entity of the exploitative market superstructure. This merciless enemy then becomes that which must be resisted and eliminated. The resistance against the dictatorial regimes engenders other sovereigns. Hence, military operations' right to kill ceases to be the state's sole monopoly, and the "regular army" is no longer the unique entity carrying out the killing function. This creates a situation whereby "a patchwork of overlapping and incomplete rights to rule emerges" (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 31). Thus, among the descendants of the guide, "Les trente Jean de la série C," the numerous children of the guide Jean-Coeur-de pierre who had left their father to join their grandmother in the forest among the pygmies exercise the function of the sovereign with generative consequences. Lawlessness becomes the norm, and the same ability to kill and let live becomes shared. In this line of killers, the "trente Jean de la serie C" have a preponderant role in the book's plot evolution.

They oppose and leave their father's dictatorial, oppressive, murderous power to create a powerful rebellion in Darmellia, the secessionist state.

Once in Darmelia, they engaged in the fifteen years of the war between Darmellia and Katamalanasia. They are enormously helped by the big-haired Chaïdana, Martial's daughter, who is also the book's heroine. She had escaped the Providential guide with the help of the guide's doctor, who was killed for that act of treason. With the help of her father, Martial, whose spirit continues to appear to her, she plots revenge against the regime of the providential guide.

In the revenge war opposing the supreme guide to the secessionist state of Darmelia, Chaïdana uses her body charm<sup>16</sup> and kills every high-ranking personnel of the Guide providentiel's regime by means of poisoning: « Au cours de la première année qui suit son coup avec monsieur le ministre des affaires intérieures chargé de la sécurité de Yourma, Chaïdana avait terminé sa distribution de mort au champagne à la grande majorité des membres les plus influents de la dictature katamalanasienne » (VD 59).

Besides the deaths of high-ranked members of the guide's dictatorial regime, the low-ranking officers through whom the regime's power is disseminated are used as pawns for the war-opposing bodies of the same typology. They are slaughtered for the war by the rebellious Darmelian pygmies who oppose the rule of the dictatorial Providential Guides:

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<sup>16</sup> « Un corps parfaitement céleste, avec des allures et des formes systématiques et carnassières, des rondeurs folles [...], elle avait le sourire clef des filles de la région côtière, les hanches fournies et puissantes, délivrantes, le cul essentiel et envoûtant [...] » (Tansi 1979 : 42). Chaïdana est « la plus belle fille de la Katamalanasia » (Sony 1979 : 52). Si sa beauté « insinuante et délicieuse » (Sony 1979: 55)

On avait emmuré au parc d'attraction quelque trois mille pygmées. Mais quelque jour plus tard, quand les prisonniers purent se procurer assez de leurs petites flèches et de leurs serves-la, on ne trouva plus au camp que des cadavres kaki : les trois cent douze soldats du guide qui gardaient le camp avaient été tués par des mahas qui avaient repris le chemin de la forêt dans la nuit (VD 103).

The prevalence of death in *Life and a Half* clearly illustrates Mbembe's articulation of Necropolitics. For Mbembe, Necropolitics entails the distribution of death by instances of power (and not only state power) that "continuously refers and appeals to exception, emergency, and a fictionalized notion of the enemy" (16). The fictionalization of the enemy creates a generalized normalization of the destitution of life. What we read through the lines of Emanuel Dongala and Sony Lab'ou Tansi's works is a fight for survival and affirmation of the self in a world in which black bodies and spaces are ontologized and objectified as sites of production and extraction.

### **3.5. Sovereignty in *Les Arbres Musiciens***

Investigating Foucault's theories through analysis of Emmanuel Dongala, Sony Lab'ou Tansi, and Jacques Stephen Alexis opens a horizon of possibilities for explaining why the old regime of governing bodies might have ended in the West while its vestiges became a new norm in the neo-colonies. Here, the sovereign right to kill and the mechanisms of biopower co-exist and aim at ruling over non-submissive voices and concealing the interests of the market superstructure.

Jacques Stephen Alexis' narrative in *Les Arbres Musiciens* highlights the co-functioning of the sovereign right to kill and the mechanisms of Necropolitics. The realist novel is set in the forties in Haiti. Alexis's Haiti is a country where the use of the land follows the colonial extraction system and where black bodies are deprived laborers, who, in the last instance, are excluded from

the country's surplus value. Haitian political elites and US capitalists gobble up this surplus through the imposition of a regional and global market system whose rules are designed to generate this condition of inequality. With despotism, sovereign violence, and the threat of death anytime, anywhere, the ruling class and their foreign backers want to silence Haitian voices resisting imposed conditions of depravity.

Governing entities exercising violence on social bodies deprive the people of their land, labor, and ability to have the basic material needs necessary to affirm themselves as fully functional humans. Deprived of these necessities, poor Haitians are reduced to existing like "living dead" (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 40). Alexis understands the structure of the oppressive regime in Haiti. Both the imposed repressive political leaders and the prominent market players constitute the core cause of the miserable living conditions of the Haitian people. The realist storyline in Alexis *Les Arbres Musiciens* reveals how foreign interest groups use local dictatorial rulers and their entrenched regimes of violence to ensure the expropriation (stealing) of peasants' land. This stolen land is then handed over to S.H.A.D.A (Société Haïtiano-Américaine Exploitation Agricole) and HASCO (Haitian American Sugar Company). The US Export-Import Bank funded these companies. These companies were set up to produce rubber and sugar for western allied countries engaged in World War II. These two companies appropriated 21.55 percent of Haiti's agricultural land. Using involuntary expropriation, Haitians and their land were forced into their ontological colonial conception, i.e., produce and subsidize western economies. First, there were the French with sugar cane plantations. Then came Americans who approached the island with the same conceptual rationale, i.e., visualizing the land and its people as space and bodies of extraction as theorized by Sylvia Wynter in *Novel and History, Plot and Plantation* (1971). We've seen in the previous chapter how the preferred politicians are the ones that do the bidding of foreign

interest groups. This old and refined colonial technique assures the imposition of a political body that uses repression and death as the primary means to subjugate its people to the global market's impoverishing principles.

The physical imprisonment, torture and death<sup>17</sup> in 1961 of Jacques Stephen Alexis by the dictatorial regime of François Duvalier is a lens through which one cannot help but view *Les Arbres musiciens*. Jacques Stephen Alexis's narrative depicts the relationship of black Haitian bodies to the capitalist market system. This relationship is based on exploitation. The first stage of this exploitation is the seizure of land: "les blancs américains reviennent dans le pays! ... ils arrivent ! Ils en veulent aux terres ! Le président Lescot leur a donné le droit de prendre ce qui leur plaisent ! ... le lieutenant est là pour ça !" (AM 186). By means of state force, farmlands are forcibly taken from the people and given to the two corporations. The expropriated peasants are then pushed into slums :

nos gens s'en aillent sur les routes, tells des armées de mendiants, sans objectif...vers la ville ? peut-être...Mais alors vers l'inconnu aussi, vers la misère, la prostitution pour les filles et le désespoir pour es vieux et le vagabondage pour les gosses. Ah Papa Bois-d'Orme, quelle tristesse" (AM 351).

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<sup>17</sup> In April 1961, Jacques Stephen Alexis was captured by the Tontons Macoutes and killed. Jacques Stephen Alexis was more than a brilliant realist novelist. He was also an active participant in the social and political debates of his time. In 1959, he formed the People's Consensus Party (Parti pour l'Entente Nationale-PEP), a left-oriented political party, but he was forced into exile by the Duvalier dictatorship. He is also known for his participation in the post-négritude and post-indignite writing in Haiti.

The Haitians who resist expropriation or contest this government action become what Foucault has termed racism, a category of disposable bodies: those who must die (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 133) They are classified as enemies of the state and killed like other Haitian contesting figures:

c'est vrai que Jolibois<sup>18</sup> est mort, papa Bois-d'Orme, mais je me demande ce qu'il aurait pu faire si on ne l'avait pas encore assassiné ... ils l'auraient battu, ils l'auraient tué une nouvelle fois s'il se mettait en travers de leur route... tu m'as parlé de Dessalines<sup>19</sup>... Bien avant, Jolibois, l'empereur, était le peuple, ils l'on assassiné, découpé en morceaux, trainé les quartiers de sa chair dans les rues et sur les places publiques... Acaau aussi était le peuple, ils l'on assassiné, Antenor Firmin, le général Jean-Jumeau étaient aussi le peuple, ils les ont encore assassinés... Charlemagne Perralte était le peuple, ils l'on vendu et, crucifié vivant, on l'a laissé en pâture aux fourmis et aux malfinis... et chaque jour, les véritables enfants de Dessalines sont abattus à quelque Pont Rouge (AM :352).

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph Jolibois Fils was a Haitian teacher and a political activist who opposed The US Monroe imperial policies in Haiti. Because of his opposition to the United States Invasion of Haiti, he was arrested and jailed on sixteen different occasions. He dies in prison and is martyred by Michel Soukar in a book titled « Joseph Jolibois Fils, la doctrine de Monroe et autres textes », C3Éditions, 2014

<sup>19</sup> Jean Jacques Dessaline is a Haitian revolutionary leader and one of Haiti's founding fathers who in 1804 lead the revolution against slavery, fought for political independence and implemented agricultural socialism. His movement was repeated by Jean-Jacque Acauu who distributed western stolen lands to Haitians. Both men were opposed by western governments who fueled violent insurgencies that lead to the systematic killings of these leaders and any other that came to being and didn't do the biddings of the west and the United States.

The entire history of Haiti, from its inception as a plantation to its revolutionary wars and post-independence era, is a theater of death par excellence due to the country's ontological conception as a space of production and extraction. These repeated processes have contributed to establishing a fertile sphere of unnatural death using sovereignty vital for these systems. Thus, one can assert that the exercise of control over mortality in Haiti has always constituted the basis of the conception of life as the deployment and manifestation of power (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 11). Being an ex-colonial land with certain practices of the colony still prevalent, Haiti has been the theater of 'the extermination of exploited peoples and has served as one of the first testing grounds of neoliberal proxy sovereignty. In Haiti, we can grasp what Hannah Arendt refers to as the "syntheses between massacre and bureaucracy, that incarnation of western rationality" (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 23).

For Arendt, the colonial conquest revealed a potential for violence previously unknown. Thus, what one witnessed in World War II is the extension to the "civilized" peoples of Europe, the methods once reserved for the "savages." By savages, she refers to the colonial discursive articulation of non-Europeans subjected to the most unimaginable forms of degradation. This was done following a rationale of essential exclusion that constituted the strong basis of European "modern philosophical thought and European political practice and imaginary as the colony represented the site where sovereignty consists fundamentally in the exercise of a power outside the law (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 23). Because the colony in the European imaginary constitutes the frontier, the outer space occupied by "savages," a kind of non-human world where "the controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended—the zone where the violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of 'civilization' (Mbembe, *Necropolitics* 24), it is

therefore for the good of the colony and its conceptual “savages” that the westerner, in this case, the French and later the Americans (USA), put into place whatever system and policy of exception they deem to secure their interest. Securing interest often means normalizing brutality and death in the name of the good old “civilization” or “democracy,” interchangeable concepts, as Alexis suggests: “l’un des Américains, “n’avait à la bouche que les mots de liberté, de démocratie, d’aide fraternelle et de civilisation occidentale » (AM 79).

For generations in Haiti, western countries and the United States opposed any emancipatory movement despite the US claim of the propagation of liberty, democracy, and fraternal Aid. We know what Edward Said thinks of the self-proclaimed goodwill of every Empire:

Every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort. And, sadder still, there always is a chorus of willing intellectuals to say calming words about benign or altruistic empires, as if one shouldn't trust the evidence of one's eyes watching the destruction and the misery and death brought by the latest mission civilisatrice” (Said, *Orientalism* xvi).

The concepts of liberty, and democracy being the new guise of the old civilizing mission, all empty artifacts of invasion and imposed control using non-laws for the colony or neo-colony, enabling invading entities to dictate extractive norms: “Faire la loi chez les autres” (AM 80). The implementation of this norm entails the renaissance of the brutal remnants of authority incarnated by the preferred neo-political sovereign whose right to kill and biopower mechanisms co-exist and seek to demolish non-conforming voices. We see the manifestation of this logic in the methods

implemented by the west towards Haiti and in the fact that, for generations, they repressed their revolutionary voices from Jean-Jacques Dessalines to Peralte.

This norm of systematic repression and execution of Haitian freedom voices continued in the 1900s. The United States staged invasion, pillages, and theft of Haiti's wealth. In 1915, US marines invaded the country (Danticat 1), seizing all the gold from Haitian banks and transferring it to the National City Bank of New York (Yveline 3). Every bank in Haiti was subsequently put under the control of American Banks. A new constitution written by Franklin D. Roosevelt was imposed for the country's good, normalizing forced expropriation and sale of Haitian lands. A movement led by Péralte<sup>20</sup> opposed this invasion. Péralte committed an unforgivable act: he “organized a group of nationalist rebels and waged war against the U.S. troops” (Dawkins 4). On October 31, 1919, he was haunted by two U.S. marines who infiltrated his camp and murdered him. “U.S. newspapers ecstatically reported the tale of how the marines had dressed in blackface to carry out their mission. The marines were awarded Congressional Medals of Honor” (Dalleo 2). Péralte's body was then tied to a door and paraded in the streets of Haiti for all to see. Photography of Péralte's was then multiplied, flown in a marine jet, and spread throughout the country to dissuade the Haitian resistance (Yveline 2). The country was then subjected to US colonial rule for 20 years, after which the country was inscribed in the neo-colonial era. The US handpicked political puppets chosen for their allegiance continued the brutal governing principles of the United States. This process gave way to a normalization of brutal political regimes who exercised sovereignty in line with the prescriptions of their masters. Thousands of Haitian opposing voices desirous of their land were labeled communist, subjected to brutal torture, imprisoned, and

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<sup>20</sup> Charlemagne Masséna Péralte was a Haitian nationalist leader who opposed the United States occupation of Haiti in 1915.

assassinated. The so called enemies : “ les ennemies du gouvernement, les nationalistes bornes, les communistes et autres énergumènes matérialistes et athées” (AM 81-65), were all killed. Entire villages of the anti-Duvaliers were eradicated with the support of the United States, who provided military and financial support to Haiti’s brutal regimes who had become the arms of the American Empire.

The brutal governing practices continued with Jean Bertrand Aristide, elected in office by the Haitian populace. Aristide started structural reforms that would improve the material condition of Haitians. But he was soon overthrown by the US marines and the CIA. He was kidnapped and taken to the United States. UN troops took over from the US marines and installed Michel Martelli, whom Jovenel Moise, in a similar process, replaced.

This form of ruling of the Haitian colony or post-colony is performed with absolute lawlessness. It denotes the racial denial of any common bond between the US conqueror and the native peasants. In the eyes of the US conqueror who exhibits the sovereign practices of the European patria Potesta, the “savage life” of Haitians is just another form of animal life, what Hannah Arendt calls “something alien beyond imagination or comprehension” (1966:195). In fact, according to Arendt, what makes the savages different from other human beings is less the color of their skin than the fear that they behave like a part of nature, that they treat nature as their undisputed master. Nature thus remains, in all its majesty, an overwhelming reality compared to which they appear to be phantoms, unreal and ghostlike. The savages are, as it were, “natural” human beings who lack the specifically human character, the specifically human reality, so when the American men (Marines) massacred them, they somehow were unaware that they were committing murder. Murder becomes a normal routine for the people reduced to the living conditions of the deaths. When these people don’t die from direct slaughtering and gunfire, they

die a social death as expropriations bring them down to a state of nothingness, having lost what is most precious to them: the land that kept them alive:

Au moment où on s'y attendait le moins, un enfant, lancée dans une course échevelée, apparut. Hors de souffle il donna l'alarme. Six bulldozers s'avançaient dans le chemin vicinal, zébrant la poussière des mille dents de leur chenillettes ... Osmin était entouré d'une troupe de blanc 'méricains et d'une escouade de gendarmes, les bulldozers éventraient un groupe de cases. Les paysans s'élançèrent. ... les gendarmes, le fusil en arrêt, s'avançaient. Les paysans reculèrent. ... après le passage des bulldozers, il ne restait plus rien, rien que la poudre livide de la maçonnerie des cases. ... rien que le cri d'adieu des familles a leurs souvenirs, le cri qui vibre longuement dans l'air, meurt et renaît, de proche en proche, a chaque nouveau foyer abattu...les machines sont ivres... elles dilacèrent le nid d'un espoir et écrasent entre leurs dents un amas de vieux rêves, elles pulvérisent l'effort et la patience de trois ou quatre générations (AM 388-389).

Besides the physical death imposed upon the Haitian populace by the violent mantra of the political sovereign, the process of expropriation causes other forms of death. Social death due to expropriation and disposition of the peasants' land, their unique source of livelihood. Cultural and psychological death because these peasants are forcibly separated from their ancestral roots.

## Chapter 4: On the Subsidizing Function of Black Bodies in the Market System

« Comment donc expliquer qu'un otage qui a pu se soustraire de l'emprise de son ravisseur se retourne pour ainsi dire lui confier son avenir? »

Ambroise Kom, *La Malediction francophone. Défis culturels et condition Postcoloniale en Afrique*. 2000. Pg. 7.

The rupture with the ancient rationale of European societies was marked by Renaissance, humanism, enlightenment, and revolutions against the feudal lords. This divide meant that « man » had become autonomous and was able to regulate himself as the new governing principles of European societies became, which became the measuring elements of all things” (Braidotti 2327). This born-again European male subject became the figurehead of liberal individualism and the referential subject of European constitutional democracies (Braidotti 2327). But before the old regimes were laid to rest, the new “Man” adopted and came to embody the ideologies of his predecessors, contaminated as he was by the duty to disseminate his values, defined as natural and universal. Individualism and progress in the nineteenth century became synonymous with the European “man” who set himself apart from the rest of the world. In contrast, “la difference” from the white European male norm resulted in exclusion, inferiority, and otherness (Braidotti 2327). The radical conception of “rational man” so central to western humanism became, in the end, a systematized standard of recognition (Braidotti 2327). A regulatory regime that consigns racialized ‘others’ to what Frantz Fanon calls the wretched of the earth, the negated, impoverished, and colonized masses of the non-West, who functioned as the structural elements of marginalized economic systems. But, as earlier stated, the relationship between the European self-centered

“man” and this kind of exclusive system wasn’t new. The ancestors of this newly democratized “man” were governed by the same principles, and modern man’s slave and colonial regimes operated on a similar schema of values. Once economies based on slavery ended, “man” had to abandon the old brutal methods and became the upholder of liberty, equality, and fraternity, supposedly the new elements of a universalized humanity.

However, because the founding relation of the West to the rest had always been built on a forced introduction of black bodies into capitalist systems of exploitation, new methods had to be developed that pretended to be humanist values while achieving the same results: the relegation of black bodies and spaces to a colonial ontology that enabled extraction and exploitation. Two mechanisms are used by the liberal neo-market system to maintain black bodies in the position of subsidizing entities of the extractive system: first, the process of exchange of raw materials with what Adam Smith calls “superior manufacturing goods”; and second, the debt trap caused by the deficits generated from the previous relation.

This chapter looks at the manifestation in a new guise of the old structural principle of exclusion and exploitation in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean as portrayed in the literary works of Dongala, Tansi, and Alexis. This chapter thus analyzes how the regions about which each author writes have been peripheralized through the perpetuation of new forms of colonial exploitation -- trade underdevelopment and debt--, and how these writers respond to the West’s consignment of each region, by these processes, to the position of peripheral post-colonies.

#### **4.1. The Function of Black bodies and spaces**

It is common knowledge to assert that wealthy countries (core countries) profit from poorer countries (peripheral countries) using a form of structural and relational exploitation, generating conditions that nourish the production of low-cost labor and cheap raw materials, which are usually exchanged for manufactured products. The global economic system, as Wallerstein asserts, has always been “a European-dominated world economic system,” at least since the sixteenth century (Wallerstein 66). For Walter Rodney, an excellent illustration of the scale of this dominance “is the fact that the so-called international law which governed the conduct of nations on the high seas was nothing else but European law” (Rodney 77). For example, other regions of the Atlantic world, including Africa, did not participate in its making. In many instances, African people were the victims, for the law recognized them only as transportable merchandise. Europe’s power was precisely exercised in its ability to dictate what Africa should export according to European needs (Rodney 77).

Colonial and imperial systems and ideologies relegated black bodies and spaces to the bottom of global human and economic hierarchies. Africa and Haiti's exploited bodies and spaces constituted the bedrock of western political and economic strength and consolidation. The current world system (the postcolonial), despite the transition into Empire, still functions according to some of the premises of past systems, most obviously in the structural relegation of these spaces to the bottom of the global order. This is a reality, regardless of the affirmation that there’s been a significant transition from western European imperialism (the extension of the sovereignty of the European nation-states beyond their borders) to Empire. Per Wallerstein’s classifications, postcolonial Francophone Africa and Haiti positions are still relatively the same. The reason is that these spaces are still approached with an ideology derived from the European colonial ontology:

as subsidizing entities of the global economic system. In line with this theoretical assertion, it is important to note the generative effects of new methods of Empire on these ex-colonial spaces and bodies: their normative classification on the periphery of the global economic system. Haiti and Francophone Africa's pasts have significantly cast a shadow on their present. Africa (Francophone Africa) and Haiti still occupy marginal positions within Empire or the world system. We've seen with Sylvia Wynter how the condition of the Caribbean was almost pre-determined by the ideology of its invention, its "birth" as a plantation colony of Europe. This reality of a persistent colonial ontology, coupled with structural exploitation, fulfils the vision of big market players who see no need to abandon their fantasies of global economic control.

#### **4.2. the subsidizing function of black bodies in Haiti**

In the shadow of World War II, the United States began the recolonization of Haiti to gain control of the country's land and profit by exploiting rubber, sugar, and timber and flooding the country with manufactured goods. Jacques Stephen Alexis in *Les Arbres Musiciens* represents the structural methods used by the US and foreign capitalists to extract the country's surplus value. This method has a two-part structure: the first element is seizing land owned by ordinary cultivators and exploiting their labor. The second element is the debt trap that derives from the country's inability to satisfy its needs because, in the first instance, most of its surplus value goes to the country's elite body and foreign masters. The forced expropriation of Haitian peasants unleashes a process that manufactures slave-like workers. Haiti's expropriated farmers are then reduced to fight for survival as they rely on whatever proportion of a dollar they can hang on to survive. S.H.A.D.A, the rubber company that obtained the expropriated land of the local farmers by corrupting Haitian politicians and other leaders, reproduced plantation style labor, often at the threat of violence, that assured the maximization of its profits:

La compagnie était stylée et le lobby qui avait, à Washington avait obtenu l'affaire pour la S.H.A.D.A. était parfaitement au courant des us et coutumes politique d'Amérique latine. ... La jeunesse chômeuse de la classe moyenne ne tarda pas d'entrer en action. C'était à qui trouverait le plus de lettres de recommandations à l'adresse de cette S.H.A.D.A. ... il se fut avérer que la compagnie ne faisait pas grand cas de ses messieurs qu'elles venaient d'arroser de ses dollars et qu'elle voulait avant tout comme employés des costauds qui feraient de bons nègres dans des plantations (AM 66).

SHADA is not interested in hiring and thus investing in the unemployed petit bourgeois gentlemen who hope to find employment with the new American company and improve their social and economic prospects; instead, they seek physically powerful men of the displaced peasantry, who will work like "good" plantation "niggers."

The rubber company's degree of corporate power, the capital it brings by US direct investments in the corporation and as the only producer and exporter of a major crop puts the country US in a position of dictating the policies in Haiti: "c'était plus que jamais les Yankees qui mennaient le jeu" (AM 25). Haiti's main exports in Alexis' narrative are rubber, sugar cane, coffee, cocoa, cotton, and banana (AM 159). However, in terms of market exchange, the return value of these products can't match the value of the manufactured goods that the country needs but can't produce because of the financial mechanisms (policies of the weak) implemented by the financial powerhouses.

Because Haiti was historically forced into the market system as a space of extraction of free labor and freely produced crops, the neo-liberal capital investors followed the same path. They deny the country the possibility of transforming the base of its exports and offer loans to purchase

the “superior manufactured products” that Haiti’s insufficient export surplus does not permit. Financial banks, primarily American, lend the country money on condition that the same lenders manage the loans. Naturally, they impose terms on the country. The loan is structured as follows: an American financial bank lends dollars to Haiti to develop rubber plantations. The puppet government expropriates peasant lands. The loan goes directly to the management board of the US-dominated corporation S.H.A.D.A. The corporation pays a significant portion of the loan to its board members to manage the loan. Another part of the loan is sent back to other US corporations. The corporation delivers “superior” manufactured products (machines) to Haiti. The machines are used on the peasants’ expropriated lands, with low-wage peasants labouring to produce raw materials (rubber, sugar, etc.) The corporation exports the raw products to the US and other markets. The corporations keep most of the surplus in their headquarters in Manhattan and pay a tiny portion to Haiti’s US-friendly political elites while the country bears the burden of the debt:

il se trouvait un petit pays assez idiot pour confier à l’usurier l’administration de l’argent emprunté, pourquoi se gêner ? on n’avait qu’à importer toutes les machines que produisaient les petits copains de Detroit ou de Chicago et, au surplus, on avait là un bon moyen de caser tous les fils à papa qui cherchaient à se planquer. Coup double, on verserait des salaires dix fois plus élevés à John et à Brown qu’aux « natives » et l’Oncle tout en or conserverait le précieux sang bleu des capitaines de la libre entreprise (AM 300).

As Alexis shows, what is left for Haiti, “petit pays assez idiot” are discourses of kindness from the “Yankees” who push forward the ideology of their generosity towards their poor vodou believing Haitians:

la généreuse entreprise privée Américaine investissait ses capitaux pour la plus grande gloire de Dieu, tout le peuple Haïtien, comme l'affirmait Lescot, allait brouter des champs de dollars et se mettrait à chanter les louanges de l'Oncle toujours soucieux d'aider les pays affaiblis ou sous-développés (AM 261).

The trope of the “generous” private American enterprise and American philanthropy towards the global unfortunate signifies the fallacy of aid, the masquerading strategies of an exploitative system that praises its largesse regardless of its stench.

Of course, the surplus gained by the government from corporate profits and the low wage paid to the Haitian workers can't cover the country's need for manufactured products. This creates a permanent situation of surplus transfer, a contracted cycle of borrowing, debt, and ultimately exploitation and resource appropriation. Naturally, in the long run, the country can't afford the US manufactured goods since it doesn't generate enough surplus from the agricultural sector (the primary source of income for its people and the government). When this situation occurs, the United States government and big corporations, loan more money: “des tas de millions de dollars en emprunt” (AM 65) and Haiti, predictably unable to repay, will hand over more land: “les terres nécessaires seraient prisent au paysans et la SHADA aurait le droit d'expropriation” (AM 65).

In this game of roles, Haiti becomes the first laboratory of neo-colonial and neoliberal experimentation as its relationship to the market system is defined by a cycle of impoverishment characteristic of most of the third world's reality today. The idea of a “free market” implies the freedom of core countries to navigate freely and make economic policies in poorer countries to maintain their exploitative privileges. A free market also entails the preservation of economic exchange disparities. When “superior manufactured” products can be disproportionately

exchanged for labour and farm products, it is evident that a country like Haiti, operating within the neoliberal model, is condemned to be poor till the kingdom come.

#### **4.3. the subsidizing function of black bodies in Africa**

For Haiti, as for Africa, there is a recurrence of western media discourses whose function is to shade the reality of the forced and well-engineered transfer of wealth from “peripheral countries” to “core countries.” Achille Mbembe notes in *Critique of Black Reason* that there has always been a remarkable lack of rigor surrounding talk about Africa and Blackness, a “total abdication of responsibility” that allows people, again and again, to conveniently end up “with a tale with which we are already familiar” (52) The imaginary stories that cover up the transfer of wealth from North to South never cease to be reproduced in mainstream media representations of the continent. The fundamental logic governing this set of normalized fantasies has always been to conceal the function of violence on the continent, which is enmeshed in the western market system through its subsidizing role in western economies. Emmanuel Dongala covers this methodology of representation in *Johnny Chien Méchant*. For Dongala, in western representations, Africa is still a space of overwhelming chaos, always portrayed as emanating from the confrontation of tribes who are innately violent. An example of this in Dongala’s novel is the representation of the Congo by Euronews on one of its evening broadcasts in the UN headquarters:

le reportage a commencé par un déferlement d’images de réfugiés, de longues colonnes d’hommes et de femmes trimballant sur leur tête, leur dos ou dans leurs bras des sacs, des valises, tout un bric-à-brac d’objets hétéroclites, sans oublier leurs enfants ; bref une image qui semblait être un replay de vieilles images d’archives, des images que j’avais déjà vues mille fois dans des reportages sur le Rwanda, l’Angola, la Sierra Leone, le Liberia, le

Centrafrique et dans l'est du Congo démocratique, ce qui donnait l'impression que l'Afrique n'était plus qu'un vaste camp de réfugiés (JCM 304)

The television footage of the Congo as a permanent “refugee camp” elides history and the specificity of the conflict, as, in the eyes of the Western media, it's been seen “a thousand times.” As illustrated by Dongala, the media never raises the issue of how economics governs violence and the displacement of people. Instead, while African bodies and spaces subsidize the market system, the racist ideology governing their conception represents them as weak, underdeveloped (affaiblis, sous-développés) and needy, historical images built on the philosophies of the civilizing mission.

This media representational mode is the basic structuring and governing of the bond of Haiti and Francophone Africa to the European market system. The displacement and suffering of the South's people usually occur due to a vast, intersecting web of market, political and ideological interests designed to produce these situations. We have seen the role of the war machine in creating conditions for exploitation. In the market, the exchange of valuable local resources, as Dongala shows, results in an industry based on the same forms of greed and exploitation of raw materials from Africa: pétrole, pétrole, diamant, diamant, diamant!” (JCM 224); along with “trinkets from Europe or America” (224). To the list, we can add cars, American Cosmetics, and especially guns (the primary product that circulates throughout the war machine). The context for these market and war “machines” is depleting financialization that constitutes the core of an extractive structure that guarantees the entrapment of African bodies and spaces to their peripheral position. In the citation quoted earlier that reveals the depths of this phenomenon, Dongala represents a dialogue

between a UN worker (Tanisha) and foreign oil company CEO, and an IMF officer taking place amidst war:

**CEO:** Nous sommes des expatriés, madame. Des hauts fonctionnaires internationaux avec nos familles. Si cela ne vous suffit pas, je vous informe que je suis le directeur de l'agence locale de la plus grande compagnie pétrolière du pays et que je vais chez le chef de l'État sans rendez-vous, du moins quand ce pays avait encore un semblant d'État. Et nous sommes des citoyens Européens, et il y en a même des Américains parmi nous. Alors un peu d'égards. Nous ne sommes pas en train de mendier de la nourriture comme ces gens-là, madame, car cette nourriture, cette aide, vient de chez nous, elle est payée par l'impôt de nos concitoyens. Alors quand je dis que nous avons la priorité, nous avons la priorité, HCR ou pas.

**Tanisha:** vous vous foutez de ce pays ? Mais qui ne le sait pas ? Argent, argent, argent, pétrole, pétrole, pétrole, diamant, diamant, diamant ! Je n'ai jamais pensé qu'un expert bien payé comme vous était un humanitaire... Vous pourrez revenir dans ce pays de merde pour pomper le pétrole et tirer des plans d'ajustement structurels quand ces tribus auront cessé de se massacrer! (JCM 223).

**IMF officer:** Vous tenez des propos racistes et discriminatoires envers les blancs, madame. Nous ne manquerons pas de signaler cela aux autorités du HCR ainsi qu'à vos autorités consulaires, en plus de votre attitude inamicale et de non-coopération. Et croyez-moi, vous serez punie et virée (JCM 224-225).

Despite being the regional head of the National oil company that extracts oil and exploits the Congo, the American claims to have no responsibility in the crisis and demands preferential

treatment, which he deems deserving given his financial and US diplomatic status. The IMF officer also denies any complicity in the crisis unfolding. Like the American, he assumes superiority over the displaced Congolese based on his financial role and white skin. Tanisha, meanwhile, refuses to listen to their hypocrisy and shows that she is aware of their games of roles and that they will return to the Congo to continue to get fat off its resources once they have nothing to risk.

In the Congo, the mechanism of economic restructuring is similar to what has been implemented in Haiti by western financial institutions. Here, the extractive industry constitutes the main pocket of commercial investment interest (Gruhn, *The Recolonization of Africa* 38). This means that following the classical doctrine of aid, another term for extraction using financialization, western big market players control a significant proportion of the Congo's (Francophone Africa) economy and gain possession of its surplus value, therefore, manufacturing conditions for war (see Chapter II), a direct consequence of deprivation of the countries surplus value.

In her analysis of financialization, Isebill Gruhn analyses the degree and longevity of external intervention and management in Africa that constitutes "something tantamount to colonialism" (Gruhn 39). For Gruhn, this process was strongly prepared in the west during and after the debt crisis in 1983 as the IMF, and the world bank became the flagship influence of European and American banks. Thus, western Banks, Central Banks such as the US Federal Reserve, according to Gruhn, used the IMF as the "linchpin" in an influential "network of information-sharing and policy coordination that runs from small regional banks in the US middle West to major banks" and other aid and technical assistance bureaucracies and their "bail-out commands" (39). With this amount of coordination, these international bureaucracies often play

the “multiple roles of assessing the problem for African national governments and recommending solutions, and then implementing and supervising the taking of what Gruhn calls medicine.

The usual medicine prescribed is tied to Adam Smith’s recommendations, the one he deemed to be suitable for these peripheral countries, i.e., the third world countries should focus on supplying the rich countries with raw materials and importing “superior” manufacture products or allowing these international (western) financiers and bureaucrats to decide how their loan will be managed. This naturally creates a dependency situation through which international bureaucracies manage these countries’ international and national economic affairs (Gruhn 39). African and Haitian economies were usually approached as essentially material providers with a low skill of workers needed in the process. Financial institutions functioned with this manufactured reality and established this norm as the natural order. Western high-skilled workers would produce “superior manufacture products” for the African markets, which would shove out significant resources.

But despite these rules restricting Caribbean and Francophone African countries from a large proportion of their surpluses, these countries have been able to invest in education, and there has been a significant increase in educated and high-end graduates. However, these graduates can’t find work because these countries haven’t been able by design to transition from archaic agriculture and raw material extraction to advanced technological transformational industries as they are prevented by design from moving beyond the traditional roles of supplier of raw material and low-skilled labor. This creates a situation whereby extraction provides western industries with highly skilled and well-paid laborers who benefit from the non-labor of the peripheral countries that are reduced to consumption and give away the political and economic power that comes with the appropriation of financial surpluses. Consequentially, most western investment capital is

diverted towards countries that have “swallowed their medicine,” The IMF and the World Bank only open commercial investment to the country where their medicine men are fully on board.

Sony Lab’ou Tansi represents well the phenomenon described by Gruhn. The novel’s Potentate is closely advised by one of these medicine men, a colonel named Green Man. This colonel is one of America’s many military personnel whose role is to closely monitor this butcher (the providential guide) to ensure the medicine of western financial institutions is well swallowed. In this regard, Lab’ou Tansi narrates how the African potentate is granted significant aid, not to shift from the extractive economy to a manufacturing one but to build futile mega-projects managed, supervised, and constructed by a foreign company controlled in part by “la puissance étrangère qui fournit les guides”:

Jean-Oscar-Cœur-de-Père fit construire à tous les coins de rues des “regardoirs”<sup>21</sup> (...) Les regardoirs avaient été financés par un prêt de la puissance étrangère qui fournissait les guides. Ah ! ce pays ou, au lieu de s’adonner aux tristes problèmes du développement, on s’occupait simplement à structurer de problèmes. La construction des regardoirs avait avalé quatorze milliards (VD 133).

The “regardoirs” exemplify the kind of futile investment designed to guzzle the budget with the construction of self-aggrandizing mega-structures assuring the wellbeing and good feelings of the manufactured puppet:

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<sup>21</sup> Place(s) intended for people to stand there to look at.

on avait préparé cinquante lits dans l'une des trois milles chambres du palais des miroirs dont la construction avait englouti quatre ans de budget national, emprunter à la puissance étrangère qui fournit les guides et qui se faisait rembourser raisonnablement (VD 147).

Sony Labou Tansi compiles these representations of extravaganza in his novel to show how the financial donor in Africa is bent on extraction since the orientation of “concessional aid” from international donor networks is held and managed by international bureaucrats (Gruhn 39). Thus, charitable institutions usually dictate what type of capital a country gets and what it is used for. The condition for receiving funds is the condemnation of the borrower, usually via the dictator, to a revolving cycle of debt and impoverishment. This is for three reasons: first, the aid is used to finance non-productive projects that can't generate surplus value; second, most or part of the aid is guzzled by foreign companies and administrative and military personnel in charge of managing and providing dissuasive force for the foreign power. Thirdly, a good portion of the Aid is used to buy industrial “superior” goods (military supplies) from the same lending countries and corporations. The “superior” manufactured military supplies are used to slaughter opposition voices for the good of the free market. Thus, the most productive enterprise in Katamalanasié doesn't transform raw materials but is an industry that generates war and death and that thus feeds on the blood and sufferings of the black bodies of the Congo:

La première entreprise de maillot-l'Enfant-du-tigre fut une série de préparatifs pour la guerre contre les sécessionnistes. Il s'endetta en armement auprès de la puissance étrangère qui fournissait les guides, pour plus de neuf cents fois le montant du budget annuel de son pays. Il payait les techniciens et conseillers militaires de la puissance étrangère à des prix

aussi fous que lui-même. La Katamalanasie devint un pays avale-ferraille et le nombre de soldats de la puissance étrangère passa de deux cents trente mille à huit cent cinquante mille hommes de toutes arme » (VD 173-174).

These three extractive mechanisms (1-using foreign aid (crippling loans) for futile projects. 2-most of the aid used on ineffective projects returns to those who provided the aid (crippling loans) 3-Another significant portion of the crimpling loans goes back to the loaning countries who flood the indebted country with “superior” goods). These are some examples of the supposedly good market policies imposed on the exploited African country of Katamalanasie.

As a reward for a well-placed investment, western countries that have already consumed part of their loans via payments to their bureaucrats and military personnel are granted, using force, unrestricted access to the vast reserves of African raw materials. By means of aid and a military presence, western countries always have significant power and control over African policies, economic, political, and social (Gruhn 40). These pre-established norms, according to Gruhn, are usually the condition for any consideration for aid. “Not only can the IMF (the face of western financial institutions) tell a country what policy reforms it must institute but in quite a few African States, the IMF and other international agency personnel can and do insist that African ministries be supervised by international officials on the ground” (Gruhn 40). These officials validate any investment that will generate profit for the western investor, regardless of how destructive they are for the target country.

In Sony Lab’ou Tansi’s novel, part of the loans allocated to the providential guides by foreign capitalist countries is used to create mining companies that dig up resources to cover the debt, most of which has already been consumed by the loaning government or institutions. These institutions swallow the loans in their construction of futile mega projects, managing

administrative and military personnel, and providing industrial “superior” goods (military supplies):

Seules les marchandises (natural resources) quittaient les trois ports maritimes. Le port bleu servait parfois de débarquement des troupes de la puissance étrangère qui fournissait les guides. Ces troupes formaient la honteuse force de dissuasion d’environ huit mille hommes qui protégeait le pouvoir contre les intentions et les aspirations du peuple (VD 150).

Everything is set up such that a small portion, the elite of the Congolese society, is well taken care of as they receive the medicine of the bureaucrats of “la puissance étrangère qui fournit les guides.” This creates a situation whereby the country is trapped in a revolving debt cycle, and the already poor populace is squeezed and coerced by sovereignty to own and repay the debt: Jean-sans-Coeur “se fit construire un palais qui avalait la moitié du budget national. Il instaura l’impôt de la relance, l’impôt du prestige national, l’impôt de la réunification, l’impôt du Cœur tropical (VD 158). The generative consequence of this system designed to entertain the African potentate with superficial rewards to the detriment of his people and to the exuberance of foreign interest leads to socio-political turmoil: “l’opposition accusait la majorité de négliger la défense nationale au profit de embourgeoisement” (VD 166) The various tensions among the preferred political elite and the opposition over the management of the small portion of the country’s surplus value left after the western capital investors and their medicine men have been served naturally generates crisis situations and civil war. This type of instability creates a lucrative opportunity for foreign

imperial profiteers as they generate surpluses from the war economy of arms they sell to the despotic government and the opposition groups engaged in a blood bath.

As the preferred despotic bourgeoisie of the providential guide deprives the population of the country's surplus value generated from the extraction of minerals, one of the country's resource-rich regions opts for secession. The fourth chapter of *La vie et demie* introduces the great equatorial forest into Sony Lab'ou Tansi's narrative, the location of the birth of a new nation: the Republic of Darmelia within the boundaries of the Congo. This is the region where Chaidana "aux grand cheveux" gains refuge as she is running from the providential guide of Katamalanassie, who had killed her father Martial, ground his dead body, and transformed it into pâté and stew. In the forest, Chaidana recreates a bond with its pygmy inhabitants, and together with the "trente Jeans" (The thirty brothers of the Series C of the Johns), who had fled from the bloodline incarnated by the brutal providential guide, they form the seceding state of Darmelia that will oppose the guide's despotic regime. With this body of fleeing people, the Darmelians decide to be a separate autonomous territory. The new state of Darmelia is wholly cut off from Katamalanassie and its ruling principles that all favor the guide and his foreign backing power while leaving crumbs for the oppressed people. This institutionalized norm has perpetuated inequality in Katamalanassie, and the Darmelians will attempt to build a new country upon principles of independence from the West, and its draining imposed neoliberal norms.

## CHAPTER 5-Conclusion: On Ontological Erasure

« L'exploitation capitaliste, les cartels et les monopoles sont les ennemis des pays sous-développés. »

“Capitalist exploitation and cartels and monopolies are the enemies of underdeveloped countries.” – Frantz Fanon.

Suppose the current western market system guarantees the relegation of its black players to the periphery and the most abject forms of living: the living deaths. Can it substantiate its necessity for these members? Can the prominent market players whose core (dominant) status depends on preserving the periphery in a frozen state of depravity still galvanize themselves with the wonders of liberalism? Have the peripheral players accepted their assigned functions? How do critics of the global market system like Emmanuel Dongala, Jacques Stephen Alexis, and Sony Labou Tansi articulate a rejection of violent colonial and neoliberal market principles?

To summarize my argument, in the three literary works I have analyzed, there is a persistence of representation, critique, and rejection of the western model of market capitalism. In the previous chapters, we saw how the postcolonial western market system in Haiti and Francophone Africa works to maintain black bodies and their spaces at the bottom of the global economic pyramid, what Wallerstein has termed “the periphery.” Three political and economic processes are mobilized to contain these spaces in their western colonial ontological function. The first process is the manufacture of preferred tropicalized political sovereigns, whose functional role is to secure their benefits and the interests of some big market players. The second process is realized via biopolitics and necropolitics, constituting the structural tools of sovereign repression and guaranteeing the exploitation of black bodies and spaces. The third process comprises two sub-processes: the exchange of raw materials

with “superior manufacturing goods” and the debt trap triggered by the deficits generated from the previous relation. These mechanisms assure the confinement of black bodies and spaces to subaltern roles in the market system. This is so because the market system is the hand of Capitalism, which constitutes the power of capture, influence, and polarization that has always depended on racial subsidies (Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* 179). This structural system of exploitation stems from the colonial ontological definition and classification of black bodies and space in terms of a perpetually subsidizing function. In their writings on the postcolony, Emmanuel Dongala, Sony Lab’ou Tansi, and Jacques Stephen Alexis represent the rejection of this ideological order. In their narrative, these writers put forward new models of relations based on functional elements that differ from western colonial rationalism.

### **5.1. Defying Colonial ontology**

Dongala, Lab’ou Tansi, and Alexis all posit an abandonment of the western capitalist’s market values. For Jacques Stephen Alexis, this rejection is represented in discourses, practices as well as in direct action against the machine extension of Empire. In Alexis’ discourse, the character Gonaibo<sup>22</sup> incarnates the resistance to the progression of empire in Haiti. Gonaibo is a kind of fantasy figure, a noble savage who lives alone in the forest. He knows magic and has a connection to the indigenous people of the land (his mother was indigenous). Living his life far from the

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<sup>22</sup> Gonaibo is Alexis’s main character in *Les Arbres Musiciens*. The name Gonaibo was given to the Haitian town of Gonaives in 1442 by a group of Taino (a Taino is a member of an Arawak people formerly inhabiting the Greater Antilles and the Bahamas). The well-known gulf of Gonaive is named after the town of Gonaives (Gonaibo). Gonaibo is also mythical for Haitians because it is the lieu where Jean Jacques Dessaline declared Haiti’s Independence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1804.

peasantry's cultivated lands and working independently to ensure his survival, he becomes the voice and inspiration of the powerless peasants whose lands are seized. At the same time, the military power of Empire crushes them. When Haitians' lands are seized for the benefit of the Haitian political elite and their imperial ally, Gonaibo stands up, plots against the developers, and attacks the land-destroying machines deployed to seize and industrialize the communally owned possession of Haitian peasants:

Prudemment, Gonaibo rampait dans la savane. Personne ne l'avait vu s'approcher ... Il avança ainsi jusqu'à quelques pas des baraques...Il n'y avait personne... a cote des baraques, se carrait un monumental tracteur, flambant neuf, dont la superstructure peinte en rouge se détachait sur le ciel pale du matin. Il y avait aussi trois camions, cinq pick-up, une jeep et deux pelles autotractées. Les blancs devaient avoir abrite bien des choses dans les baraques, mais les machines constituaient la principale menace. C'était avec elles qu'ils comptaient conquérir la lande. Avant tout, il importait donc de les détruire... il aspergea les murs et le sol d'essence... (il) arrosa copieusement les constructions voisines, puis il craqua une allumette (AM 319).

Gonaibo surveys the US-made machines that represent for the peasants "the principal threat" and then burns the master's tools to the ground.

Alexis' depiction of Gonaibo's defiant stance is in line with Emmanuel Dongala's articulation of the Fanonian counter-violence exercised by rebels in *Johnny Chien Méchant*. Dongala's anti-government rebels clearly understand the function of sovereign violence exercised on the people of the Congo to perpetuate the predatory colonial system using neo-colonial-lackeys.

The government in place is made up of people who live like the global bourgeoisie and are cut off from the material deprivation of the average Congolese, who is crushed by misery. Thus, fighting to overthrow this government is an attempt to confront the local structural system, structurally positioned on the periphery of the global system that generates poverty: “nos compatriotes mayi-dogos [avaient plein de richesse cachée.] Pas étonnant que leurs chefs voulaient s’accrocher au pouvoir à tout prix” (JCM 346).

Similarly, in *La vie et demie*, the opposition incarnated by Martial and the rebellious state of Darmelia reject the preferred neo-colonial state and its violent sovereign potentates. These potentates serve the interest of their group, that of foreign extractive corporations and the big market players backing them: “la puissance étrangère qui fournit les guide.”<sup>23</sup>

The forms of anti-colonial resistance and counter-violence represented in *Johnny Chien Méchant*, *Les Arbres Musiciens*, and *La vie et demie* were theorized by Frantz Fanon decades before the publications of these works. For Fanon, counterviolence for the colonized or neo-colonized and “nanolocalized” is non-negotiable because colonialism and neo-colonialism systems are violent systems that rely on violence to subdue their oppressed populations. Without the violence inherent in these systems, they would not survive the violent resistance of those they exploit and who would destroy them. Thus, Violence shapes all relationships between the colonizer and the colonized and between the postcolonial subjects and the subjugating neocolonial system. In *The Wretched of the earth*, Fanon identifies three fundamental layers of violence exercised on the colonized people: “coercive and physical violence that’s brought into the “the home and into the mind of the native” (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 38); institutionalized violence that ‘allows colonizers to use their monopoly of violence to regulate and protect sovereign order

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<sup>23</sup> See Chapter III *On the Subsidizing Function of Black Bodies in the Market System*.

(Sharifi and Chabot 252). This “legalized violence eradicates all indigenous institutional rules, practices, and juridical norms on the one hand, and builds pseudo-traditions that enable the colonial system to persist on the other hand” (Sharifi and Chabot 252). The third layer of violence for Fanon is “epistemic, cultural, and psychological” (Sharifi and Chabot 252). Fanon reads this form of violence in the hegemonic construction of colonialism exercised in cultural practices that insist on the inferiority of the colonized. These layers of violence structure colonialism and neocolonialism, which, again, for Fanon, are essentially violent. Fanon’s response is to advocate for counter-violence since it stems directly from this reality. Fanon has famously argued that colonial and neocolonial violence cannot be countered by anything other than a violent process since these institutions exist due to violence:

Decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. At whatever level we study it... decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain ‘species’ of men by another ‘species’ of men... Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder... Decolonization is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature... Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together—that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler—was carried on by the dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons (36).

We must admit that, in the post-colonial landscape portrayed in the works of Emmanuel Dongala, Sony Lab’ou Tansi, and Jacques Stephen Alexis, some aspects of colonial violence have faded. Neo-colonial tropicalized sovereigns have replaced the colonizer with “black skins and white mask”; the forced and free extraction of labor and resources have been replaced by the

market system's principle of exchange (the Smithian doctrine still overdetermines that) and predatory financialization that is subjected to the monopoly of western dominated international institutions. However, as we have been arguing throughout this dissertation, contemporary forms of colonial exploitation (those of Empire and the World System), though dispersed, are equally violent as the colonialisms of old. And since the outcome of capital exchange is still fueled by a colonial ontology and ideology enforced through violence, Fanon's violent responses to colonial oppression remain relevant. Since the narratives of *Johnny Chien Méchant*, *La vie et demie*, and *Les Arbres Musiciens* reveal the colonial rationale that still violently relegates Haitian and Francophone African bodies and spaces to the periphery of the global economic system, their solutions are still those of Fanon, to represent violent resistance against the colonial and neo-colonial forces oppression and exploitation.

## **5.2. Redefining the black function in the global market system**

The works of Emanuel Dongala, Sony Labou's Tansi, and Jacques Stephen Alexis articulate Francophone Africa and Haiti's cultural, political, and economic past and present realities. Their various discourses constitute an engagement in current world history, which for Wallerstein, is one of an ongoing series of revolts against inequality. This inequality stems from centuries of economic and political oppression manufactured through western market rules, political relations of subjugation, and economic asphyxiation. Haiti, Africa, and Francophone Africa have been and are still spaces of exploitation perpetuated through three processes: the control of a preferential political elite, the entertainment of anomy generated by the inability of subservient elites to produce economic development for their people, and the perpetuation of extraction which is the goal of the global market system. The novel of Emanuel Dongala, Sony

Lab'ou Tansi, and Jacques Stephen Alexis constitute a protest against this historical reality of exploitation and peripheralization.

Of the three writers, Sony Labou Tansi in *La vie et demie* does the most to represent black bodies' postcolonial political and economic realities. Using science fiction, *his work* considers the components of the new market reality and their unique forms of violence that surpass the *tic quid pro quo* response of colonial and neo-colonial physical and material violence. *La vie et demie* goes beyond the representation of the systemic enemy who must be confronted in Alexis's novel and the western-backed postcolonial sovereigns who must be rejected and overthrown using counter-Fanonian armed violence in *Johnny Chien Méchant*. Sony Lab'ou Tansi's novel articulates a new system in which black bodies cease to be the fuel of the western market system and become producers of surplus values for their development instead. The literary creation of the state of Darmelia and its new imaginaries is Sony Lab'ou Tansi's response to the entrapment in history and its colonial ontologies. Tansi's narrative invents a new world free from colonial shackles: « Nous devons forcer ce monde à rêver un autre rêve, à inventer d'autres espoirs, à sortir des prisons battues du colonialisme. (Lab'ou Tansi, *Lettre à Guy Lenoir*). The transition he makes from magical realism (first part of the novel) to science fiction (in the last quarter of the book) determines his shift from the representation of the post-independence African novel, primarily descriptive, to a more imaginative response to the neo-colonialism and manufactured despotism that characterizes the post-independent Francophone African state. Using science fiction, Lab'ou Tansi goes beyond classical critique and elaborates a structural and material response to the historical African predatory system: he posits the appropriation of the levers of economic, political, and military power, three elements structuring western domination.

The new world for Sony Lab'ou Tansi is founded on economic, and political freedom and equality. In his discourse, Lab'ou Tansi articulates change in a clearly stated plan. In his plan, material appropriation using nationalization constitute the beginning of the reversal of the poor condition of black bodies within the capitalist world system. On the one hand, he is in line with Wallerstein, for whom new forms of economic relations do not negate existing ones but rather build on existing scaffoldings of exchange. But on the other, Sony Lab'ou Tansi's models of change are rooted in the posthuman idea of deconstructing ideological systems and practices. These systems established the structural classification of humans into subcategories: the fully and non-fully human. Following Lab'ou Tansi's rationale, one can assert that if all humans are endowed with the Cartesian notion of the Cogito and belong to the universal community of reasonable beings, then all humans possess the same abilities and exist and fully exercise their right to humanhood and free themselves from oppressive hegemonic systems like neoliberalism and the markets.

Sony Lab'ou Tansi cannot imagine a new system without some form of brutal mutation. He is, therefore, in line with Fanon, for whom counter-violence demands a reaction to the total violence of colonialism. For Fanon, this reaction arises from desperation; it potentially turns passive "non-beings" with inferiority complexes into revolutionary makers of their history using violent actions that produce radical transformations. Those "non-beings" under neocolonialism understand that there is nothing natural or innate about the institutionalized norms and structures of the neoliberal market system and its dogmatic, grotesque principles. This Fanonian posture can be traced in *La vie et demie*. Change in Lab'ou Tansi's narrative begins with movements: political organization and intellectual theorizations of resistance strategies. Lydie Moudileno identifies in

the shift to revolutionary politics in the last quarter of *La vie et demie*, the emergence, in Darmelia, of a new way of conceiving the state that has seceded from a neo-colonial autocracy:

Le dernier quart du roman est caractérisé par l'apparition d'une nouvelle forme d'opposition. Celle-ci est prise en charge par trente des innombrables « petits Jean... sortis-des-reins-du-Guide ». Les Jean de la série C (dont Jean Coriace, Jean Calcium, Jean Calcaire, Jean Canon (148)). Leur résistance à la dictature s'opère de manière bien différente de celle de Martial. Dans cette nouvelle ère, ce sont des ingénieurs qui prennent le relais des personnages tropicaux (71).

This new era, according to Moudilano, is marked by the emergence of engineers, builders in other words, who replace parasitic characters like the puppet « Félix le Tropical.» With these new architects of the nation, who are willing to use their knowledge for good, Darmelia develops a new modality of government. The escapees of tyranny (thirty brothers of the Series C of the Johns and other inhabitants and soldiers who escaped execution) leave their country and join Darmelia in the fight against the tyranny of their ancestors. In its endeavor for structural change, the state of Darmelia institutes new democratized norms: multipartyism and elections. Jean Coriace, with his party, the PPD (Popular Party for Free Democracy), is elected. Political transparency guarantees stability, leading to prosperity to the point where other Katamalanasiens flee their hellish territory of despotic and imperial control to settle in Darmelia. Under the guidance of Jean Coriace, the newly proclaimed independent state underwent significant transformation and substantial economic progress in comparison to Katamalanasia. Political freedom paves the way for free entrepreneurship, capital innovation, and engineering.

To emphasize the radical newness of Darmelia and its engineers, as Moudileno notes, Sony Lab'ou Tansi's relies on fantasy and science-fiction to describe the innovative forms of sustainable and efficient weapons of self-defense they have developed : « le plus spectaculaire est celui des insectes mutants, en l'occurrence « les mouches d'une capacité de trois cent douze piqûres » fabriquées par Jean Calcium, qui « avaient causé autant de ravages dans le camp ennemi que n'en auraient causé dix années de guerre classique » (Moudileno : 72). By innovating, the people of Darmelia structure a new state that puts the citizens at the center of its policies: “le Drapeau du Darmelia était blanc, avec au milieu un cercle jaune dans lequel huit mains noires soutenaient une grosse calabasse verte. Sa devise était fraternité, foi, travail, paix. » This flag symbolizes the unity of the people. The calabash symbolizes the national surplus pot carried by the united hands of its people who share the country's surpluses. As part of this new state, the army of 14000 soldiers: “quatorze mille hommes pour une population de vingt-sept millions de Darmeliens » (VD 161) defends the country's democratic institutions and defeats its imperial enemies. The country's military also serves as deterrent as the new leaders monopolize core products (raw material, oil). These resources are transformed and sold by the new government leadership, with part of the surpluses funding the development of the Darmelian military industrial complex and labs: “le laboratoire de Granita” (VD 68). This complex and its labs produce sophisticated weapons : « des mouches mutantes et tueuses” (VD 68). These mutant insects « les mouches d'une capacité de trois cent douze piqûres... les mouches radio qui pouvaient diffuser un rayon mortel à plusieurs

millions de kilomètres de distance, » (VD 68-183) are produced by par Jean Calcium. They are an efficient weapon comparable to military combat drones with devastating effects : ‘les mouches « avaient causé autant de ravages dans le camp ennemi que n’en auraient causé dix années de guerre classique » (VD 166-168). With this engineered military hardware, Sony Lab’ou Tansi speculates on new forms of resistance, drone-like machines drone-like machines that are products of modern technology are different from the non-industriel tools used by Martial : “dispositif de type artisanal (couteaux, fourchettes et autres instruments mécaniques) et/ou spectral (apparitions, sorts, ubiquité) » (Moudileno 73) With this advanced and efficient defense tools, the people of Darmelia efficiently defend their natural interest and fight and defeat the despotic regimes of Katamalanasia in what Sony Lab’ou Tansi describes as « une guerre de frappe, une guerre de dissuasion, une guerre précise, fatale et impitoyable » (VD 167). The State of Darmelia also restructures its military organization, to eliminate corruption and the influence of foreign interference hereby eliminating the base of manufactured instabilities and military coups. Thus, Jean Canon, the head of the military of Darmelia makes drastic decisions to prevent these situations and the normative form of intrusion by colonial (postcolonial) foreign interferences who have established the norm of deposing and replacing non-compliant rulers by more docile, submissive lacqueys:

Jean Canon avait décider, des son retour des études, que l’armée darmelienne n’aurait pas un grade supérieur à celui de sergent, Il disait que les colonels, les généraux et les

maréchaux n'étaient que des soldats en titre qui s'engraissaient, se battaient autour des jeunes filles et des vins mousseux, qui construisaient des boites de nuit et des villas, qui se vautraient dans la viande la plus inhumaine et, quand la puissance étrangère qui fournissait les guides en avait décidé, ils prenaient le pouvoir et choisissaient un nom de règne ; alors ils ouvraient des comptes écœurants dans les banques de la puissance étrangère qui fournissait les guides. De temps en temps, ils « perruchotaient » des versets établis par leurs ancêtres en discours inaugural de ceci ou de cela (VD 175).

By modernizing the military, engaging in social dialogue, and building new social relationships and strong institutions, Sony Lab'ou Tansi's characters create a new national consciousness based on egalitarian and valorizing policies that uplift not the elite but the people. We will remember that the people of Katamalanasié are not in a formal colony, but the political and economic conditions imposed upon them are colony-like. Thus, inventing a new system for Sony Lab'ou Tansi entails constructing alternative ways of life that go against and beyond the total violence of colonialism. Sony Labou Tansi's citizens of the new state of Darmelia could be said to adopt Fanon's ideas about violence in *The Wretched of the earth*. They understand that counter-violence is instrumental in the first stage of liberation; it is a temporary means, not an end. They organize counter-violence campaigns to push back against being choked to death by the western-backed despots of Katamalanasié. They use counter-violence to free themselves "from the physical daily abuse, suspicion, arrest, labor encampment, and ghettoization, (Sharifi Chabot 13) brought upon them by the neo-colonial dictatorial regimes. Using counter-violence, the escapees of violence, Martial's people, and the John brothers (Some children of the dictators of Katamalanasié) overcome the psychological fears they have internalized and recognize their will and desire, as

well as their military power. Their movement espouses Fanon's imaginaries of the revolt of the wretched of the earth. Thus, spurred on by national (collective) consciousness, they are encouraged to voice their demands, wishes, and expectations.

Building on Fanon's conceptualization of the second phase of counter-violence, the peripheralized bodies, Katamalaisians who move to Darmelia, achieve the implementation of popular democracy, the nemesis of the postcolonial sovereign of the State of Katamalanasia. Through the organized popular movement in Darmelia, economic and political systems are established, and honest elections are organized. Legitimate leaders implement policies that benefit the people of Darmelia. The country monopolizes core products and redefines its role in the market system. Darmelians create strong political institutions freed from corrupt influences. The new government implements mechanization, and industrialization and, again, monopolizes core products. Using science and innovation emanating from their experience of colonial history and the energizing political system they have built, the new region produces nationalized companies, "petites industries," in charge of managing its resources. The Darmelians approach the market with clearly defined standards. They use the monopolized surplus to implement economic policies that benefit the people in a system that is an antithesis of neoliberalism:

Jean Coriace monta une tannerie, Jean Calcaire commença à exploiter avec une compagnie belge le fer, le plomb, l'aluminium et l'uranium de Darmellia et fonda le port de Granita ; il fit construire cinq mille deux cent-douze kilomètres de chemin de fer dans la forêt. Jean Cuvette assurait le transport des minerais, d'abord vers la puissance étrangère qui fournissait les guides, puis vers d'autres pays. Jean Caoutchouc créa l'International Hévée,

Jean Case devint le patron de la West Construction des Ponts et Bâtiments, Jean Calcium monta la West Research, Jean Chlorure la Continental of Wood and Vegetation (VD 153).

Unlike the Katamalasiens, the elites of Darmelia aren't under the hypnosis of western medicine men and the prescriptions of their capital banks hidden behind the banner of international monetary institutions. More importantly, contrary to coerced mechanisms of control, the norm in the despotic republic of Katamalanasié, the leaders of Darmelia opt for a new form of financialization relying on their national bank: Kawangotaïan Union of Banks,<sup>24</sup> therefore freeing the country from the stranglehold of western financiers, one of the leading and most effective instruments used by the colonialists to take direct control and political administration of the African economies.

Stephen Ocheni and Basil C. Nwankwo, in *Analysis of Colonialism and Its Impact in Africa*, made some research on this question and came up with some interesting observations. In their analysis, they argue that the monetization of the African economy was one of the most effective tools used by the colonists to take direct control and political administration of the African territories. For Ocheni and Nwankwo, “the currencies introduced by colonists in the African territories were same as those used by the colonialists in their countries. The introduction and imposition of colonists' currency in Africa facilitated the regulation and control of the currency, the economy, and the political administration. Because of artificial scarcity of liquidity derived from the imbalance of exchange value between African raw materials and western manufactured goods. Thus, Africans disbursed every surplus from the unequal exchange and were still in deficit. As a result, Africa was condemned to be poor while the colonists amassed fortunes.

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<sup>24</sup> The word “Kawangotaïan” is Sony Lab'ou Tansi's creation. It derives from the word Kawango, a locality of the Democratic Republic of Congo. From the Ituri province and the District of Irumu.

More so, because the colonialists controlled the currency used in the African colonial territories, they determined the character and nature of the development of the African economy and political administration. Monetization of the African economy and introduction of currency institution was an effective imperialistic instrument used by colonialists to maintain effective control and domination of African territories” (50). This type of pauperizing economic relationship is contested and rejected by the people of the Darmelia. In Lab’ou Tansi’s imaginary world, the state monopolizes core products and critical sectors. For this reason, it engages in industrial and material transformation. Hence, Tansi’s imagined government elevates the historically excluded and hastens to erase the imposed colonial ontology. Darmelia undergoes significant development just like any other western nation, including the technologically advanced Asian countries and the flourishing economies of the Middle East. The Darmelians’ institutionalized resistance targets the three fundamental principles of the imposed structural mechanisms that relegate post-colonial peripheral countries to the margins of the global economic system: The manufacture of local elites, the governing of social non-aligning voices using sovereign violence and biopolitics, and the imposition of terms of trade and financialization that assure the maintenance of these regions to the margin of the global economic system.

Going beyond the narration of the political and economic realities of postcolonial Haiti and Francophone Africa, Lab’ou Tansi makes political projections as he constructs an alternative system of economic relations. Tansi’s new relations align with Immanuel Wallerstein’s proposal of an alternate system to neoliberalism. For Wallerstein, despite the claim by neoliberals that inequalities in the present system are inevitable but will eventually disappear” (Wallerstein 49) most evidence disproves that claim. In Wallerstein’s analysis of world systems, the strength of the state, its institutions, and its military power determine its participation in the world system,

according to the state's ability to control productive sectors, preserves its surpluses, and transpose its generated wealth to the human development of its society. For Wallerstein, this is the basic model of any peripheral nation seeking affirmation and breaking up the current system to which the current global market system has relegated peripheral countries. An example, for Wallerstein, of excluded peripheral countries that resist the rules of marginalization is the emergence of the politically sophisticated nations of the Arab world, whose transformation led to "a dramatic shift in the distribution of profit and the international terms of trade of oil (and possibly other raw materials" (57). This took place because these countries backed their political institutions with strong militaries and solid alliances that responded to and corrected the distortions of the imposed norms of the market system.

The imaginary model of the state proposed by Lab'ou Tansi resembles the Arab states described by Wallerstein regarding monopolization. As we've seen in chapter three, the structure of this state is politically democratic, represents the people, and has military strength and technological advancement. Most importantly, this state monopolizes its core products to maintain an edge over its financial system. Tansi's and Wallerstein's similar politics and theories of global economy and exclusion are significant for this dissertation and my argument in two aspects. The first aspect demonstrates how Core countries in the worldwide system do whatever is necessary to remain at the top. These countries employ colonial tactics and devious political and economic practices to maintain peripheral countries in a colonial ontological function. These countries are then forced by design to be at the bottom of the global economic system. In recent history, the west's war against Africa via Libya is in line with its historically normative practices of exclusion and extraction. What happened in Libya in 2008 was a clear statement from the west that the current system of exploitation must be maintained. NATO's intervention in Libya was mainly to

prevent Gaddafi from creating a hard independent currency in Africa that “would free the continent from its economic bondage under the dollar, the IMF, and the French African franc (The currency used by Francophone countries in Africa). That hard currency would have allowed Africa to shake off the last heavy chains of colonial exploitation” (Brown, *why they killed Gaddafi*). The colonial shackles in Francophone *Africa* are political and economic. In economic terms, they are the rules of the market and financialization from which *Gaddafi* wanted to free the Francophone African *Countries*: “Qaddafi's government holds 143 tons of gold, and a similar amount in silver ... This gold was accumulated before the current rebellion and was intended to be used to establish a pan-African currency based on the Libyan golden Dinar. This plan was designed to provide the Francophone African Countries with an alternative to the French franc (CFA)” The French CFA, the French colonial currency imposed by the French colonial empire is still in use in the francophone regions. It accomplishes its intended purpose, i.e., using these countries national reserves to subsidize the French economy and perpetuating their pauperization. This reality has been documented by Joseph Tchoundjang Pouémi in *Monnaie, servitude et liberté: La répression monétaire de l'Afrique* (1980) and more recently by Nicolas Agbohou in *Le franc cfa et l'euro contre l'afrique, Menaibuc* (2000).

The second aspect is that peripheral countries can't depend on the core countries' will to help them emerge from the bottom; it is up to them to do whatever is necessary to free themselves from the grips of predatory systems that originate in and are maintained by the West. We have seen this logic in the narratives of Jacques Stephen Alexis, whose discourse urges Haitians to confront Empire. A similar call is articulated by Emanuel Dongala, whose representation of the influence of foreign interest groups on preferred postcolonial sovereigns leads to his rejection of neoliberalism. Similarly, Sony Lab'ou Tansi's narrative invents an alternative model to the current

world system in which market principles are structured to maintain the periphery to an eternal state of depravity. The merging point of these literary narratives is that the west still conceives and approaches Afro-Caribbean spaces with colonial ontological conceptions. Consequently, the only way for Haiti and Francophone Africa to emerge is the same way that every other important nation on earth emerged: through violence, which has historically served as a disruptive tool against oppressive systems. Every free and prosperous country controls its production's means and surplus value. Haiti and Francophone Africa must do the same if they wish to exist outside the imperial bondage of the west. There's no prosperity without economic independence, the control of the means of production and the mechanisms of production, and the control of the financial system using a central bank (proposed by Qaddafi). These constitute the basis of what Wallerstein has termed "the socialist world government. "Wallerstein is Aware of the socialism label, the kryptonite of neo-liberalists. His proposition isn't the erasure of the capitalist system as we know it but rather a new approach. An approach that recenters the collective interest and diminishes the superpowers of corporate individualism that has led to an insane level of surplus inequality within the capitalist market system. Wallerstein believes that "the nationalization or socialization of all productive enterprises within the bounds of nation-state is not and theoretically cannot be a sufficient defining condition of a socialist system, even if the whole nation thinks socialism as its objective. As long as these nations remain part of the capitalist world economy, they continue to produce for this world market based on the same principles as any other producer. Wallerstein believes that even if every nation in the world were to permit only state ownership of the means of production, the world system would still be capitalist, but "the parameters would be different from what they currently are" (Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* 73) even better, to avoid a monarchical style state, state-backed corporations would still accomplish the objective of

redistribution of the state's surplus. Thus, the economic principle of the socialist world government, according to Wallerstein, is not imposed by market principles. Contrary to the fallacy of the market, the socialist world government is a system that can be constructed using "the optimum utilization and distribution of resources in the light of a collectively arrived at the notion of substantive rationality" (Wallerstein, *World-systems Analysis* 73)

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