

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Racial-Class Paternalism and the Trojan Horse of Anti-transmasculinity

Introduction

Nsambu Za Suekama

Nsambu Za Suekama
Racial-Class Paternalism and the Trojan Horse of
Anti-transmasculinity

Introduction

March 4, 2023

Retrieved on April 3, 2023 from
medium.com/@riptide.1997/racial-class-paternalism-and-the-trojan-horse-of-anti-transmasculinity-5b22cf66a00e

theanarchistlibrary.org

March 4, 2023

Contents

Transmisogyny and Patriarchy	6
Western Body Reasoning and the Sidelining of Trans Struggles	9
Bioreduction, Assimilation, Integration, and the Nuclear Family	15
Neocolonialism, Grand Patriarchy and Minor Patriarchy .	20
Racial-Class Paternalism and the Nexus Hypothesis . . .	30

evolved in these diverse settings. We cannot be anachronistic and speak of all such manhoods and masculinities with modern notions like “trans” and “queer.” But through a Nexus hypothesis we can illuminate how these precolonial, ancestral, indigenous manhoods and masculinities constitute a range of embodied span-drels (including gender expansive ones): all consequences of the nature-nurture construction of those forms by which groups and individuals negotiate the endogenous and exogenous dynamics of their living, their conditions, their experience, their societies. From here, it would become apparent why anti-transmasculinity emerges: it allows the racial-class gender paternalism to succeed at maintaining a hegemonic and narrow manhood and masculinity. And this has implications for our capacity to apprehend the whole totality. Because, just as colonial ethnographer Richard F Burton saw masculine roles as “outside” the gendered embodiment he projected on the so-called Amazons of Dahomey, turning them into a “chief proof of Dahomé’s barbarian under-civilization” (The Amazon Warrior Woman and the De/construction of Gendered Imperial Authority in Nineteenth Century Colonial Literature, Maeve E Adams), today’s gender paternalism frames any manhood and masculine embodiment outside of (western) cisheteronormativity as not just biologically illegitimate but also the result of a barbaric threat to civilization. And who typically figures as the face of that barbarism but the Black trans woman? Materialist transfeminism has to theorize Anti-transmasculinity.

and gendered nexing forms, and then their reconstruction as a Grand Patriarchy and Minor Patriarchy.

This allows me to give name to why a binarist “body-reasoning” is taken as a given, as a natural part of life, or even as a neat outgrowth of every society’s relations. The hegemonic Nexus comes to overdetermine a nature-nurture process in which the individual and group negotiation of the dynamics in a given society are stabilized by a range of “nexing-forms.” As a hegemonic Nexus, Patriarchy disorganizes and reorganizes pre-existing Nexuses, sometimes in the manner described by the Marxist feminists, and other times in ways that have been underexplored in radical thought.

Racial-class paternalism comes to hold weight so long as it is assumed that the stabilization process (of how exogenous and endogenous dynamics are navigated, because of their “nexing” vis-a-vis various spandrels of embodiment) can only happen through the Marital-Familial-Binary-Patriarchy nexus. Moreover, this binary misapprehension of how the negotiation of societal dynamics are anchored is there to naturalize (or even sacralize) the dynamics of the master’s house, the colonial-imperial and bourgeois society and its Political order. If anything, it exposes its own fault lines in this way: the State and class society are anchored on the gender/sexual configurations that “body-reasoning” conceals. Therefore, any threat to the material/power structure is framed as a threat to the propagation of the body, because it upsets the dynamics of a nexing-form which has stabilized how both human embodiment and societal relations are co-constructed and reconceived.

The task now is to transect the many forms of embodiment and societal relations in human history, especially in Africa and the Third World, and attend to their “nexings” in each region, be these gendered or non-gendered nexuses like Seniority or Energy or more. Part of this requires understanding that Anti-transmasculinity serves to further erase the egalitarian, non-dualist, and expansive manhoods and masculinities that have

There is a story from ancient Greece about a war with the people of Troy, a city that was well fortified. According to the story, the Greeks had built a giant wooden horse and hid inside. The Trojans, unaware that their enemies lay inside the contraption, snatched it up and brought it inside their city walls. Now, having entered a once impenetrable city, the Greeks had the opportunity to lay siege on their opposition. They broke out of the horse and defeated the city of Troy. That’s how I understand the story, at least.

I’m starting with this fable because I want to bring clarity to something I have said more than once when discussing theories of trans liberation. I see anti-transmasculinity as the wheels of a sort of Trojan Horse. What does that mean? Well, first, we have to define what anti-transmasculinity is.

See, anti-transmasculinity is about the oppression and discrimination faced by trans men. It also includes masculine people more broadly who are not cisgender. This means that those people whose manhood and masculinity are positioned as “going beyond” the biological categories that society typically uses to define gender: these are the targets of anti-transmasculinity.

As far as I understand, the term is relatively new. This is because many people do not believe that transness exists. They appeal to a very flat understanding of natural reproduction, insisting that humans are only male or female. Then, when they do finally think of the word “trans,” the first thing that comes to mind are very violent, disgusting, and fear-based representations of trans women and transfeminine people. This is known as transmisogyny: it affects those whose womanhood and femininity are positioned as “going beyond” the biological categories that society typically uses to define gender. The hypervisibility forced onto TMA (transmisogyny affected) peoples often means that the struggles of other gender expansive populations goes invisible (making them transmisogyny exempt or TME).

But even as TME struggles escape the mainstream imagination, they persist, and are often both fueling and being fueled by the

war on trans women and transfeminine people. Nothing makes this clearer than in how a Western binary system triangulates that war with Anti-transmasculinity. This is why I say that Anti-transmasculinity is a Trojan horse for Transmisogyny. Like the wooden horse in the Greek myth, it might not seem like what it is, for its actual contents and character are invisible, but at the heart of it, there is a violent campaign going on that is key to how the West aims to lay siege to its civilizational “enemies.” And, like the walls of the city of Troy, materialist transfeminism has fortified the opposition to Western domination, in such a way that to overcome the stronghold requires a new strategy for the Man, one that follows up the open and vicious attacks on TMA people with a different, more hidden form of warfare. Black Trans Radicalism has to grapple with all this from a militant perspective. I want to offer some insights on how.

Transmisogyny and Patriarchy

The very visible war on people affected by transmisogyny is because of counterrevolutionary propaganda. The reactionary legit acts like the fabric of the civilized world is torn apart just at the mere sight of a trans woman. Attacks on trans women and transfeminine people frame us as threats to children, to the family, to womanhood and femininity itself, and also to the Political order, and the economic power of the nation/empire. There was, for example, a Black Revolt in 2020, which tore up the property system in the US, set police precincts ablaze, and built solidarity with Rebellion all across the world during the pandemic. Soon after it died down, and everyone devoted their energy to voting, to reform, and to their business interests, we started to see an increase in hostile media narratives about trans women. This is most likely because the 2020 Uprising came on the heels of Black Lives Matter movement in the 2010s, which was deeply associated with the spread

For Oyeronke Oyewumi, sexual embodiment is not absent from the Yoruba world, only that it is situationally relevant, and non-hierarchically ordered, which is significantly different than how Western relations are imbricated (p 34, *The Invention of Women*). This is reminiscent of Malidoma Patrice Somé’s commentary about the notion of “homosexuality” in his Dagara culture. Somé suggests that the roles pertinent to the continuity of the tribe are not reckoned through anatomy, but rather a spiritual organization of cosmic “energies.” Like Oyewumi, Somé suggests that there is no “gender” as the West understands it in the Dagara world, only energy (*Guys: The Guardians of the Gate*). The instance in which sex associated traits become acknowledged is only when it is directly relevant, according to both Somé and Oyewumi regarding their respective cultures. For Somé, the so-called “Gatekeepers” who negotiate spiritual energies between worlds have no reason to be marked as “gay” in Dagara culture, but are marked as such by the West because anatomy becomes a defining feature of personhood in the West. Somé does not use the term “body-reasoning” but his suggestion is similar to Oyeronke Oyewumi, who also argues that the words for anatomical distinction in the Oyo-Yoruba world do not ground how personhood is defined, in contrast to the West. Thus, sexual embodiment is made supremely relevant to social life under colonialism and neocolonialism, as the negotiation of Yoruba or Dagara material/power relations is now stabilized by a binary Gender nexus—that “good ole boy network” of patriarchy. This has implications for how the terms referring to embodied consequences of the indigenous nexing-forms are translated into English, and how the roles and positions in society those terms are associated with are reorganized or disorganized by the imposed Nexus. From this view, rather than assuming that modern Patriarchy evolved out of a preceding sexual dualism, or simply from the substitution of clan-based gender relations to nuclear family style gender relations, my hypothesis offers a more robust view. We can attend to first the evolution of non-gendered

interact with dynamics introduced by contact, conquest, trade, cultural diffusion, imperialism, slavery, even more-than-human phenomena (exogenous forces), including unpredictables like natural disasters, which generate non-linear and non-additive phenomena co-emerging with our human cultures. Now, the body is a nexus for the interplay of these dynamics; the “nexing” of this interplay vis-a-vis our embodiment is stabilized by certain social forms that only transfeminism can truly demystify. These are “nexing-forms” or Nexuses for short, that emerge at the interstices of nature and nurture, reorganizing and constructing the body and its traits to anchor certain positions and roles in the society in question. There are many nexing-forms: gender is just one. They are not adaptations; they are non-adaptive consequences of a historical process (ie, spandrels, from a Stephen Jay Gould and RC Lewontin perspective).

Societies exhibit multiple nexing-forms; in some societies two or more nexing-forms may play equally valent roles in stabilizing how groups and individuals negotiate the dynamics and conditions of their embodiment; in some societies, one nexing-form plays a more outsized role than the other nexing-forms. Oyeronke Oyewumi insists that Seniority rather than gender anchors the traditional Yoruba social world. If this is the case, then according to my hypothesis, Seniority constitutes a nexing-form in Yoruba material/power relations. A Seniority nexus stabilizes the way groups and individuals negotiate the dynamics of Yoruba society and thus of their embodiment. It’s the structural consequences of Seniority as a Nexus that get organized as age-differentiated positions in the Oyo-Yoruba context. Relations to the extended family are reckoned in terms of senior-junior dynamics according to Oyewumi in “Conceptualizing Gender.” Even the terms referring to spouses in Yoruba focus on differentiating between who was part of the kinship arrangement longer (from birth) and whose belonging is more recent (married in), that temporal distinction being an aspect of Age-nexing regardless of the biophysical age.

of queer/trans liberation theory both offline and online. And even more, the queer-associated abolition struggles of the 2010s came on the heels of organizing in the 2000s, the 90s, and the 80s against the so-called prison industrial complex that was led by Black feminists. And those abolitionist feminist struggles themselves came on the heels of Black Power struggles of the 60s and 70s—which, if you know your history, is the time period when Gay Power became visible. If we view modern transmisogyny in this historical perspective, it becomes clear why contemporary attacks on trans women has been accompanied by all kinds of laws aimed at repressing gender expansivity more broadly, and repressing abortion rights, and repressing radical theory and organizations. This is no coincidence. It’s all connected.

Interestingly, this “culture war” about gender can be traced in part to the Greeks. Not completely, but in some ways: for so-called modern Western civilization draws its gender norms from a range of ancient sources, most especially Greco-Roman societies and the Abrahamic religions. In his “The Pathology of Patriarchy,” Sanyika Shakur, former prisoner turned Black militant, discusses this:

“The same patriarchy which first oppressed women, (after having perfected the methods on animals) as ‘inferiors,’ went on to evolve into the judeo-christian and Islamic institutions or theology that have scorched the planet today. This is why in every major religion god is a he or him—Father, i.e. male (according to ‘gender’). The last messenger, prophet, offspring and the last one god supposedly spoke to—yep, you guessed it, men. Coincidence? Natural? Not a chance. To make matters worse, as if patriarchy could even be content with one form of oppression, Euro-Supremacists went a step further than some unseen spirit in the sky, they painted a picture of their god-father’s son in their image. They in effect became the prototype of the son of god image

and thus in the direct lineage from god himself. Plato, Aristotle's teacher created the idea of the Great Chain of Being this formalized the belief of the Greeks that they ranked higher than non-Greeks, women, slaves and of course animals."

Shakur defines Patriarchy as a "good ole boy network." He says it has roots in particular patterns of ownership. These patterns include property relations that domesticated animals and subjected children and their mothers to a so-called "husband" and "father." For Shakur, this "good ole boy network" has been flexible enough to adapt itself in numerous contexts across time: ancient Greece, Abrahamic faiths, capitalism, and even in under socialism. He uses the term "Grand Patriarchy" to describe how the "network" was first globalized by European colonialism and imperialism. He uses the term "Minor Patriarchy" to describe how the "network" evolved among those who became colonial subjects, who became "dependant" as it he calls it on Western empire. His definition of this network, however, is gender expansive:

"Women tell their sons to 'be the man of the house.' Men tell their wives to 'stay in a woman's place.' Men who show emotions are said to be 'acting like little girls.' Women who exert themselves as humans are called 'dykes and bulldaggers or butch.' Violence is masculinized and passivity is feminized. This is so because patriarchy has created two exclusive genders. Two neat little boxes to insert all of humanity."

Sanyika Shakur's view of Patriarchy includes not just the typical notion of sexism, which involves misogyny, but also heterosexism, which involves homophobia, and intersexism, which requires forcing human biological traits into to boxes (male-female dualism) and pathologizing any trait expressions which don't fit in or do

There are occasions where some TERFs will try to use this inverted paternalism to frame trans women, transfems, and TMA people as the new victims, with trans men, transmasculine folks, and other subjects of anti-transmasculinity as innately violent to us. This paternalism towards us as transfems, in contradistinction to transmascs, is still a racial-class project, and a facet of warfare in the imbrication of the dominant system. And just as paternalism towards transmascs limits their gender self-determination, paternalism towards transfems as a "protection" of us from trans men works against us too. See now how a Trojan horse is apparent with its dangerous though secret contents! And the wheels that help it roll its way into our struggle is anti-transmasculinity.

Paternalism, and its dualist fearmongering about gendered violence and victimhood, is only convincing because of how human societies evolve the social forms that "nex" our embodiment within local material/power relations. I "stretch" the Engels hypothesis in a Fanonian sense, which traces the development of the Family-Marital nexus from the demise of the clan under bourgeois society. Through Fanon's proclamation that "alongside phylogeny and ontogeny stand sociogeny," I overcome bioreduction, and can attend more complex processes of constructive development at a structural level, which the truncated view in Western Marxism fails to do. Thus, I propose a different hypothesis: a range of subsistence patterns, modes of social organization and production, and ways of reckoning the continuity of a group, tribe, nation, clan, and more can be observed of human societies across the world, especially outside the West. As these relations evolve, there are internal dynamics to each society (endogenous forces), including as per Cabral's "The Weapon of Theory," patterns of ownership and level of productive forces, themselves emerging vis-a-vis the metabolic and inorganic conditions of human life, as also, as per Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism*, the cosmologies, the metaphysics, the consciousness of a people (which, while not bioreduced, are biologically potentiated, to use a Gouldian term). These Endogenous dynamics

network.” Desirability politics, and how it anchors transphobic, colorist, ableist, and fatphobic “preferences” (that shape not just romantic and sexual relations, but how people approach friendships and familial ties): any critiques thereof get framed as on par with violation of consent/boundaries under racial-class paternalism. Even cis het men, if they are not in accordance to the standard of the Breadwinner and ideal masculinity, is met with gender paternalism by the hegemonic Nexus, framed either as a problem for national security, public safety, and the stasis of the family, etc or a victim of “emasculatation” by women, especially if he is non-white and particularly if he is Black. And in the TERF movement, that paternalism takes on a uniquely pernicious form, for they have begun to project so-called “femaleness” onto trans men and transmasculine folks and other subjects of anti-transmasculinity. This, too, is a form of gender paternalism: one that characterizes trans men as “victims” of an evil, satanic “agenda” led by trans women and trans-feminine people.

Paternalism works against trans men and transmasculine people, not on their behalf. Paternalism keeps trans men and trans-mascs from becoming conscious of themselves as such. Gender paternalism requires that anti-transmasculinity be an invisibilized mode of subjection and coercion. To acknowledge the existence of anti-transmasculinity would upset the “body-reasoning” built into how Paternalism constructs gendered violence (in contradistinction to gendered victimhood), which is about the imbrication of State power and the colonial-class system.

Many trans men and masculine people are abused by the false notion of innate victimhood projected against them. Paternalism will also invert the position of those subjected to anti-transmasculinity within its logics of victim versus violator. In those instances, the act of being a man or being masculine is framed as in and of itself “treachery” to the so-called “female” sex, thus a collaboration with the violent so-called “male” sex.

not approximate those boxes. Because of his expanded view of Patriarchy, Sanyika Shakur is able to describe the various ways men and women, straight and gay/lesbian people, are both oppressed by but also reproducing Patriarchy.

We can see through Shakur’s lens how sexual dualism then comes to “masculinize” and “feminize” all forms of embodiment, all behaviors, all emotions, etc—ie, a binary gender system. While he doesn’t use these terms, the oppressions known as cissexism and exorsexism are easily able to be acknowledged from the perspective of Shakur’s “good ole boy network.” Cissexism requires that all gendered embodiment must bend toward either a box of male or a box of female to be valid. “Male” women and “female” men can’t exist; hence, cissexism breeds transphobia. Exorsexism requires that binary gendered embodiment can never be mixed, crossed, fluid, hybrid, or even outside of “man” or “woman” altogether. Bigender, nonbinary, third gender people can’t exist; so exorsexism makes all gender/sexual identities rigid and mutually exclusive. A critique of exorsexism and cissexism using Sanyika Shakur’s view of Patriarchy would enable us to theorize transmisogyny alongside anti-transmasculinity, as well as the transphobias more broadly that have repressed gender expansive peoples who don’t fit categories of transfem or transmasc.

Western Body Reasoning and the Sidelining of Trans Struggles

Sanyika Shakur’s view is influenced by transfeminism. He uses terms like “gender outlaw” to describe transgender people, which can be traced to trans/queer feminist discourses of the last few decades. Sanyika Shakur is a rare example of a heterosexual cis-gender man actively engaging with theories of Patriarchy in general, much less theories that are gender expansive. Far too few men have synthesized analysis of Patriarchy with colonialism and

capitalism—a synthesis which the Third World Women’s Alliance spoke of as a theory of “Triple Jeopardy” and which the Combahee River Collective spoke of as a theory of “interlocking domination.” On the instance that they have, typically the interpretations have aligned with anti-feminist perspectives like Black Male Studies project of Tommy J Curry or the Africana Womanism project of Clenora Hudson-Weems. The problem with Black Male Studies is that it takes the racialization of so-called “male” anatomy at face value. This is quite unlike the “good ole boy network” perspective. Because Sanyika Shakur offers a materialist analysis of how reductions of the body are constructed and weaponized under class-colonial domination. And the problem with Africana womanism is that it takes the category of “woman” to be something universal in African traditions. This is quite unlike the “good ole boy network” perspective. Because Sanyika Shakur offers a materialist analysis of how gendered positions in society are a structural consequence of particular class-colonial relations.

BMS and Africana Womanism are not alone in taking biological reductions and the overall gendered positions under dominant society as a given. Every day, we see people viewing these things as evolutionary or God-willed. They say “men are from mars, women are from venus” and they tell us that “early humans had men as hunters and women as gatherers.” They have a falsely universal view of gender that is bioessentialist. Some people even claim to be Marxist and think that economic exploitation involves some degree of evolutionary adaption to biological “sex.” The radical feminist movement is also guilty of this, too, which is why they have produced a generation of so-called TERFs.

There is a term to describe the key theme in these very flat views of gender/sex. The term is “body reasoning.” Oyewumi Oyeronke coined this term, to describe the anchor of Western political thought:

the wheels of the West’s racial-class paternalism, still a form of warfare but not as visible and very secretive about its inner workings.

There is a dualist conception of victimhood and violence built into racial-class paternalism. The victim is almost always female, the violator almost always male; and if not, the violator is painted as masculine or unfeminine (as in the case of the Jezebel trope in the US under chattel slavery).

Racial-class paternalism is simultaneously misogynistic—towards both cis and trans women, especially Black women—and deeply oppressive to men who are either non-white or non-cis or both, especially if they are poor. It creates fear mongering about the sanctity of the family or family values, the purity of wives and children, the stability of civilization and human reproduction, while repressing bodily autonomy for those characterized as the threats to these things.

Racial-class paternalism will typically acknowledge the existence of sexual violence, but only as a means of controlling women, of painting racial/ethnic others as rapists, of accusing queer/trans people as a whole of preying on children, and upholding the Nuclear Family and Marriage as institutions.

Racial-class paternalism showed up during the AIDS epidemic as a means of characterizing bisexuals as a disease ridden threat to marriages; it showed up during Jim Crow in the lynching campaigns that were foisted into Black communities by white fascists through false rape accusations. When misogynistic straight men are speculated to be secretly gay: this is a symptom of racial-class paternalism too insofar as the construction of gendered victimhood is framed in contradistinction to forms of embodiment that are stereotypically pushed outside the Patriarchal nexus, the marital-familial configuration, etc. There are biases against polyamory and against sex education which also rely on a paternalistic framing of gendered victimhood juxtaposed against that which is positioned as incongruent with the normative rhythms of the “good ole boy

Racial-Class Paternalism and the Nexus Hypothesis

Now what does all this have to do with anti-transmasculinity? It is here we should return to the story of the Greeks' war with the people of Troy. In the story about the war with Troy, the Greeks pretended to sail away so that the Trojans didn't know that they were the architects of the wooden horse. What I've been trying to lay out is how in the Man's war with the Third World, transfeminist material analysis provides a fortress to be overcome. Homonationalism, feminist integrationism, bourgeois Black nationalism, and all the ways they relate to neocolonialism (and the dialectic of Grand Patriarchy plus Minor Patriarchy) have provided the wooden panels that could be constructed into a Trojan Horse while the Man pretends to back up off attacking the Third World.

To overcome the fortification of decolonization/class struggle that materialist transfeminism provides, the Trojan Horse arrives: a racial-class paternalism. We see it in how the West's war campaign has acolytes within the colonies ready to protect "civilization." The World Council of Families, for example, is openly embraced in the creation of laws while QTGNC orgs in Africa are repressed and any local efforts to secure protections are seen as violation of national sovereignty. In the midst of this, transmisogyny decorates the air waves, the media, the tongues of the citizenry, with trans womanhood made the hypervisible quintessence of a violence and threat to the nation because of how transfeminism unveils the basis of the Family-Marital nexus, the network of the household and gendered labor divisions, the patriarchy and all its imbrication of dominant (colonial and neocolonial) material/power relations. To protect the latter from the former, then, racial-class paternalism must begin misgendering trans men and transmascs. If transmisogynoir is the fulcrum of the West's patriarchal warfare, anti-transmasculinity is

"In the West, social identities are all interpreted through the 'prism of heritability,' to borrow Duster's phrase. Biological determinism is a filter through which all knowledge about society is run. As mentioned in the preface, I refer to this kind of thinking as body-reasoning; it is a biologic interpretation of the social world. The point, again, is that as long as social actors like managers, criminals, nurses, and the poor are presented as groups and not as individuals, and as long as such groupings are conceived to be genetically constituted, then there is no escape from biological determinism." (pg. 5, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender*)

Oyewumi Oyeronke points to "body-reasoning" to explain the way that research in the social sciences conceives of various subjects in civil society. While today, the academy has moved away from explicitly race based explanations of social outcomes, she insists that because the social is already assumed to be biologically reduced, racism is implicit to social theory. For Oyeronke Oyewumi, this "body-reasoning" also explains why feminist theories of gender fall short. Even as "gender is a social construct" gets popularized, social constructions are all still assumed to have a biological backdrop. This means that how reductions of the body is weaponized to justify gender hierarchies remains the starting and end point for contemporary sociopolitical thought. Similar to Sanyika Shakur, Oyewumi Oyeronke brings us back to ancient Greece:

"The category of the citizen, which has been the cornerstone of much of Western political theory, was male, despite the much-acclaimed Western democratic traditions. Elucidating Aristotle's categorization of the sexes, Elizabeth Spelman writes: 'A woman

is a female who is free; a man is a male who is a citizen.' Women were excluded from the category of citizens because 'penis possession' was one of the qualifications for citizenship. Lorna Schiebinger notes in a study of the origins of modern science and women's exclusion from European scientific institutions that 'differences between the two sexes were reflections of a set of dualistic principles that penetrated the cosmos as well as the bodies of men and women.' Differences and hierarchy, then, are enshrined on bodies; and bodies enshrine differences and hierarchy. Hence, dualisms like nature/culture, public/private, and visible/invisible are variations on the theme of male/female bodies hierarchically ordered, differentially placed in relation to power, and spatially distanced one from the other." (pg. 7, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender*)

From Oyeronke Oyewumi's perspective, "body-reasoning" is about Statecraft. The direct democracy of ancient Athens was organized in a sex dualist fashion, because the men who could vote were citizens, and to be a citizen required being a father-husband, ie owning property, including wives and children. So-called male anatomy came to explain why the father-husband, citizen-voter could be positioned as he was, because it harnessed a whole understanding of the cosmos into a rationale for the social order. Outside of ancient Greece, religions like Christianity would come to link the cosmos and reductions of the body in order to rationalize not a democracy, but rather empire, the aristocracy, and the feudal order. This is what Sylvia Wynter discusses in "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Truth/Power/Freedom." In that context, according to Wynter, the movement of the stars in heaven was associated with the power of God; and it was assumed that the earth didn't move

compete across and within themselves and contestations around the Patriarchal Nexus is a very real phenomenon that can take an ethno-supremacist sheen as well. This is why conservatives within Grand Patriarchy may castigate liberal pro-trans/feminist/pro-gay forces via both antisemitic rhetoric and also ingenuine forms of antiestablishmentism/populism. The latter, supposedly threaded with a Grand style Illicit (underground and semi-underground) Patriarchy might present itself as representative of the interests of the "common man" in the face of the supposed "liberal elite" who supposedly controls the threads of Grand style Official (above ground and semi-above ground) Patriarchy—even as the Official and Illicit manifestations overlap and converge in conservative agendas. This dynamic is also why liberals within the Grand Patriarchy tend to castigate conservative gender politics in very often ethno-supremacist and classist terms as well. In the US, for example, homophobia and misogyny is reductively associated with the so-called "trailer trash" and "backwater peoples" who supposedly live outside the industrial and metropolitan centers of the more developed coasts and larger cities.

Unique though similarly uneven dynamics of class, gender, race/ethnicity creep up as Western capital and its Patriarchal nexus rewrite the trajectory of non-Western peoples all over the world, interacting with the local (Minor) Patriarchal nexus of each given region. As should be clear, both progressive and reactionary lines on gender find a unity within this complex around the same institutions (marital-familial configuration) and "body-reasoning." Because Minor Patriarchy stands under Grand Patriarchy here, however, the appearance of cissexism and intersexism and exorsexism in this case will dress itself up as a critique of Eurocentrism. That is how "homosexuality is unAfrican" narratives creep up. It is also how we get African feminists like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie pushing the idea that Trans womanhood is a foreign hijacking of African women's struggles.

supremacisms under the auspices of a national self-determination project that remains inert and subordinated to foreign material interests and political power. The latter, coupled with an uneven nature of class formation in the postcolonial era, has meant that not only does the local intermediary (comprador) stratum have a reason to compete for limited resources, but those in other segments and sectors will as well, even if through bureaucratic structures alone. It is here that I find an analysis of the forms of Minor Patriarchy that are both Illicit and Official. Rather than speaking of these developments simplistically in terms of “political corruption in Africa” or “tribalism in Africa” as is commonly the case, atomizing the manifestations of the issues and flattening them into a statement on the supposed backwardness of the Continent, I think we need clarity on the manner by which these things emerge. Very often “corruption” and “tribalism” may take the veneer of ethnocentrism or religious conflict, but actually involve contestation vis-a-vis different tendrils of the Patriarchal nexus. What better opportunity than this is there for the Grand Patriarchy to swoop in like saviors for a problem that is in part caused by colonialism?

Investment from the Grand Patriarchy coupled with the inequalitarian and haphazard formation of the Minor Patriarchy must be factored into our analysis of neocolonialism. In this way, we can unveil how the Grand Patriarchy is not just about a liberal sheen; there is also a reactionary wing of Grand Patriarchy that unites around gender rigidity with the reactionary forces in the Minor Patriarchy. This is, in turn, convenient for the progressive wing of Grand Patriarchy and even within Minor Patriarchy can point to such right wing developments as an excuse for Western bourgeois human rights “interventions” that fosters further imperialist ends. The Grand Patriarchy also contains its own Illicit Patriarchy and Official Patriarchy, such as when political leaders and members of the mafia/gangs work together in secret in order to maintain control and accrue profit. Imperialist nations still

because humanity had cursed it with the Fall of Adam and original sin. This theology was harnessed in a “body-reasoning” where sexuality was the quintessence of sinful man, so it had to be regulated by the Church, the sacrament of marriage. In “Beyond the Categories of the Master Conception,” Wynter makes it clear to us that these regulations on sexuality and their religious mores were aimed at framing one’s status under the monarchy as God-willed, and rooted in the “purity” of one’s blood. The divine right of kings, the status of their inferiors, especially the peasants, was all “nexed” by these constructions of the body, of sex, of purity as organized within marriage. The point is, that even though today we have modern “secular” understandings of the cosmos, the natural and social sciences still uphold a body-reasoning, and this is because progressive movements are united with Western bourgeois Statecraft. Status might no longer be explicitly framed as an immutable characteristic of the blood, but body-based understandings persist in other ways, on behalf of the present capitalist-colonial Political order. This body-reasoning accompanies the “good ole boy network” Sanyika Shakur spoke of, now modified in even so-called liberal and revolutionary milieus.

Thus, in combating Patriarchy, we see the tendrils of its binary gender nexus go unquestioned, unaddressed, unexamined, and unchallenged. In another text, Oyeronke Oyewumi exposes the institutional component of these modern gender theories:

“Gender distinctions are foundational to the establishment and functioning of this family type. Thus, gender is the fundamental organizing principle of the family, and gender distinctions are the primary source of hierarchy and oppression within the nuclear family. By the same token, gender sameness is the primary source of identification and solidarity in this family type. Thus the daughters self-identify as females with their mother and sisters. Haraway in turn writes:

‘Marriage encapsulated and reproduced antagonistic relation of the two coherent social groups, men and women.’ (Haraway 1991:138). The nuclear family however is a specifically Euro/American form; it is not universal. More specifically, the nuclear family remains an alien form in Africa despite its promotion by both the colonial and neocolonial state, international (un)derdevelopment agencies, feminist organizations, contemporary non-governmental organizations (NGOs) among others.” (Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies)

As we can see, “body-reasoning” means that different relations to the Nuclear Family as an institution become homogenized as part of a natural antagonism between two inherently distinct groupings: man as male, woman as female, with both as heterosexual, expected to marry one another, produce children together. This homogenized, binary view is a smokescreen, but even feminist theories remain mystified about it, to promote the Nuclear Family under the guise of women’s emancipation. Rather than subverting the conditions of the “homemaker” the feminist movement makes this position its deictic center (reference point), and I argue that that is why TERF views have come to dominate in mainstream feminism. It’s also why TERFs have united feminist organizations with right wing organizations. Because, as Oyeronke Oyewumi insists, a range of institutional forces are invested in that particular institution: feminist NGOs, government agencies (whether colonial or neocolonial), and more. The “good ole boy network” remains, and trans liberation is to be sidelined.

businesses, and other formally recognized agencies and forces including “proper” families). But, barring a transfeminist analysis, these varied threads of the “good ole boy network” are unexamined, and so instability in neocolonial Africa is analyzed primarily in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, or class. Turning to Sam Mbah and IE Igariwey’s “Class Formation in Post-Colonial Africa,” this looks as follows:

“[the] pattern of investment generates and depends upon an inequalitarian pattern of income distribution. In turn, inequalitarian income distribution creates far more benefits for advanced capitalist economies than for neo-colonies. The dependent character of the local bourgeoisie restricts its members to servicing foreign capital or to competing among themselves for the limited resources available in the neo-colonial setting. This competition tends to take the form of a zero-sum game, modified by an arrangement in which the competitors define themselves in ethnic and religious terms—each seeking to protect his own interests. The crux of our analysis is that the process of class formation in post-colonial Africa looks haphazard and incomplete: it took place only in the commercial and distributive sectors of the various economics, while the agricultural and industrial sectors were left out. This should, however, be understood within the following context: while the comprador class is the foremost beneficiary of Africa’s neo-colonial political economy, various other segments of the local capitalist class also benefit through bureaucratic structures which entitle them to privileges.” (pg. 43, *African Anarchism: A History of a Movement*)

According to these authors, neocolonialism incentivizes the turn towards heightened ethno supremacism and ethno religious

problems,” austerity measures “exacerbate them leading to inflation, soaring cost of living, rising unemployment and more.” It is at this point where the role of the military and carceral forces becomes prominent, as the consequences of neocolonial economic conditions have meant that:

“class antagonisms, instability, and economic crisis confront the continent. As the crisis rages on and the prospect of the radicalization of the masses heightens, African regimes have been compelled to react. Some have turned into full-blown dictatorships and become openly repressive; other have tried one form of structural adjustment or another; and still others have experimented with various forms of electoralism. Yet all these are palliatives aimed at temporarily quelling restive workers and peasants, for whom daily life has become synonymous with misery” (pg. 79)

Now here is when I want to bring our attention back to the political economic role of Patriarchy in the neo-colonial context. A perspective on Minor Patriarchy as it relates to Grand Patriarchy is useful for bringing clarity to many of the forms of “instability” associated with Black/African communities in many racist narratives. Whether it be controversies around parental absenteeism, atypical family structure, gang warfare, child soldiers/exploitation, FGM, military dictatorships you find an interplay between pre-existing “nexings” of human embodiment among the colonized, whether they were antagonistic or not, and then absorption and transformation by Patriarchy in advance of entrenched class and Political relations. Typically this will happen in two levels: what I call an Illicit Patriarchy for underground or semi-underground manifestations (think black market, sex traffickers, and other illegal enterprises and economies etc) and the Official Patriarchy of the above ground or semi-above ground (think churches, government institutions,

Bioreduction, Assimilation, Integration, and the Nuclear Family

According to Marlene Dixon, citing Engels, the institution of the Nuclear Family dissolved the socially necessary labors in early human clan based societies. Dixon sought to challenge biological based explanations of the homemaker position forced onto women, by emphasizing the social character of reproductive relations. The labor of keeping the clan or kin together shifted from a collective responsibility to a “sex based” one, according to Dixon (“On the Super-Exploitation of Women”) as people were forced into households under capitalism. Her explanation, as with Engels’, is an overly simplistic one, but it correctly identifies that the modern Family is an alienated, atomized configuration of human embodiment, one that anchors particular material and power relations.

Similar to Marlene Dixon, there was Monique Wittig, in her essay “One is Not Born a Woman,” pushing back against biological reductionist views of how women were forced to be homemakers. Wittig also drew on Engels’ theory of the rise of the modern Family, capitalism, and the State. She insisted that the opposition between so-called males and so-called females masked a relationship to labor and to property. This was a class relation, not a natural one; it was therefore a social problem that required a socialist response for Wittig. Wittig and Dixon were among the materialist/Marxist feminists of the 20th century. So called “radical feminism” was an attempt to popularize Marxist feminist theory, but watered it down. Radical feminism would assume that labor exploitation, relations to property, and the embodied positions nexed within the Nuclear Family had constructed gender as a sexual dualism simply because the body was already binary beforehand.

The radfem misinterpretation is unfortunately not helped by the fact that Engels’ hypothesis, and the Marxist feminists who

built on him, had such a truncated view of the process they hoped to describe. To truncate means to cut down; they had a narrow conception of the relations being disorganized and reorganized by the Nuclear Family. This is because Engels' attention had been to the European context, where the Nuclear Family had dissolved already binary relations. If we decenter Europe, we find that the imposition of the Family/Household and monogamy nexus, and a binary configuration of embodied positions vis-a-vis labor/property: in various parts of the world, this has affected a range of pre-existing material and power relations, in dialectic with the rise of bourgeois colonialism and imperialism, and that this includes non-dualist gender patterns. The structural consequence of this is that a binary gendered embodiment, the marital-familial-patriarchal nexus, and associated relations to property and labor are not universal.

Maria Lugones called it a "coloniality of gender," building on Anibal Quijano, to describe how non-dualist gender patterns around the world were reorganized by Euromodernity, as part of the maintenance of the capitalist system, including monogamy and the nuclear family. For example, egalitarian gender patterns among some Native cultures, Lugones argues, were disorganized by the hierarchical gender system of the West, with implications for how capitalist modernity established settler colonialism in Turtle Island ("Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System"). Similar to Sanyika Shakur, Lugones' view grapples with homophobia and the oppression of intersex peoples; she also cites Oyeronke Oyewumi's scholarship when looking at the non-gendered nexings of human embodiment outside the West (the primary subject of Oyeronke Oyewumi's work). For Lugones, heterosexism is tantamount to the threads of gendered coloniality, its binary configuration, and the exploitation of domestic labor, as well as the subordination of non-Western gender patterns. Sylvia Wynter's ideas on how the organization of purity of blood in Christian feudal Europe would anchor the divine right of kings:

control petty commerce that was dependent on cocoa" (pg. 85). Alongside fraud, they also examine debt, especially after the mid-1980s IMF Structural Adjustment Program:

"Because of the economic crises facing them, many African governments have had no choice but to borrow from financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF" (pg. 87)

Neocolonialism is thus not just about internal corruption but also externally imposed contradictions. Citing a scholar by the name of Diagne, the authors highlight five characteristics of indebtedness among African states that range from the integration of African countries into the "international capitalist division of labor," the economic policies that are "followed within that framework," the forms of debt and "use of resources" borrowed from abroad, an "armaments rate into which Africa has been plunged by imperialism," and debt rescheduling policies. Mbah and Igariwey's outlook overlaps with that of Nkrumah's in some ways, although Nkrumah is not anarchist and does not privilege the State as the force which facilitates these contradictions. The anarchist view focuses on how Statecraft is used to negotiate the lower position postcolonial nations find themselves in:

"the IMF treatment is designed to help countries with strong industrial bases—countries that overcome liquidity problems through more competitive pricing of their industrial goods. But for African countries with weak or non-existent industrial manufacturing bases, the IMF solution does nothing but stimulate more raw material exports at low prices into a weak world commodity market." (pg. 88)

In response to this, the authors suggest that the only alternative to bankruptcy is austerity but "rather than ameliorate economic

threatened with possible collapse, contestations around the constitution, “and a bloody civil war.” After a “rapid succession of civilian and military regimes,” according to Mbah and Igariwey, a constituent assembly was held in the 1970s under Shagari. The authors, however, characterize this regime as a “showpiece of corruption” like the governments that preceded it. They specifically report that “ill-conceived bills slid their way through the national legislature lubricated by bribes.” One wonders if the sexual connotations of this imagery could be alluding to the role of Minor Patriarchy in threading these developments. But, Mbah and Igariwey’s analysis make no mention of gender/sexual contradictions, focusing more on examples of fraud committed by Nigerian state leadership to illustrate how the government system incentivizes the entrenchment of neocolonialism in Nigeria. On page 84 the authors argue that corruption is “directly associated with, and almost synonymous with, the state system.” Coup d’etat, they further argue, is often preceded by instability generated by manipulation of State structures and institutions “by the ruling elite for the (mis)allocation and (mal)distribution of public goods and services.”

Looking at Ghana under the CPP, which they suggest began as a divergent set of interest groups and independent radicals, the Mbah and Igariwey argue that there must be a distinction between leadership and membership. The leaders gained access to wealth, and their personal interests began to overtake differences in policy. By 1960, party purges occurred as state and foreign capital provided remaining leadership wealth. But the authors trace corruption to the 1950s where “the party began to consolidate its hold over the population and over the centers of economic and political power.” They say that the party established branches and auxiliaries and by 1961 president Nkrumah had denounced corruption; however, this had little bearing on the fact that the CPP had already been doing things like using the Cocoa Purchasing Company’s “control of agricultural loans, bulk purchasing, and transportation to enrich party coffers, to coerce farmers into joining the party, and to con-

this was deeply inspired by Lugones’ critique of heterosexism and the colonality of gender. It’s why, for Wynter, the modern notion of what it means to be human, is defined as “Man.”

Just as the radical feminists would water down Marxist feminist thought, the Gay/Lesbian movement would eventually fail to uphold decolonial feminist critiques of heterosexism. This is ironic, since the Stonewall Uprising, the Compton Cafeteria riots, and other mid-to-late 20th century rebellions that inspired Gay/Lesbian movements were largely led by Black and Third World people. But, ultimately, the Gay/Lesbian movement had an investment in the binary-marital-familial nexus. Much like the feminists. For example, the push to get homosexuality depathologized, and no longer considered a mental illness, often revolved around appealing to the idea that Gay men were capable of working and marrying and raising children just as anyone else. The Ableism that went into construction of homosexuality as a “pathology” (pioneered by Western sexologists in the 19th century, transforming an earlier religious bias against “abomination” into a secular-scientific bias): this was shifted to those populations who were outside the productive economy and outside the household configuration. It just so happened that these populations were Black and Third World folks who were gender expansive: disproportionately at risk of being forced out of work, out of the home, and discriminated against in other ways due to racial capitalism and the colonality of gender as a “good ole boy network.”

The Gay movement would eventually come to represent its “identity” in media and legislative campaigns that skewed bourgeois. And their focus was on assimilation into the nation through a fight for same-sex marriage. This became known as Homonationalism. Homonationalism would come to include including Gay people in the US army, as well as other technologies of empire, such as the police force. Dominant material and power relations would eventually expand their imbrication because of a now gay-inclusive Patriarchal nexus, anchored on assimilation

into the binary-marital-household configuration. Body-reasoning was ever present, because even if not made explicit, any discussion of the Gay movement came to assume white and cis, the main populations with access to the institutions that Homonationalism focused on. Thus, “Man” as the subject of liberal “human rights” was no longer just heterosexual but could be homosexual. But, intersexism, cissexism, exorsexism would remain, for Homonationalism was simply an expansion of the Grand Patriarchy. Sanyika Shakur describes this as follows:

“Under old colonialism gender outlaws were smashed on by church and state. Sharp shooting ideologues riled up the masses to reject ‘ab-normality’ for morals superior to such ‘deviance.’ Old colonialism, the general representative of patriarchy, used to push a line of gender authoritarianism. Even on a socio-economic level, old colonialism squatting dominantly over internal colonialism, however, has changed everything, but altered the perception of most things in order to continue to hold its empire together and reap benefits from oppression. The U.S. ruling class has, in its new and enlightened age of colonialism, come out as the main protector of civil rights against sexual, racial and religious discrimination. It bills itself as the force to make all ‘citizens’ equal. Of course the paradox here is what We must focus on to find the truth. You see because as the ruling class goes about claiming to be interested in protecting civil rights it is, in actuality, promoting and reinforcing patriarchy. It’s the tactic of problem-reaction-solution. It’s a Machiavellian ruse of traditional state craft. Patriarchy created ‘gender’ which begot sexism that leads to ‘sexual discrimination.’ Patriarchy created ‘race’ which begot racism and leads to ‘racial discrimination.’ Patriarchy

rise of the #ENDSARS struggle in the nation. They write: “FSARS is the Federal Special Anti Robbery Unit; and it is notorious for murdering, kidnapping, and generally brutalizing the people. FSARS reinforces the authority of the state and colonial interests.”

According to them, the UK supported SARS through funding and training, but ultimately SARS is a neocolonial holdover from the British carceral state imposed during colonialism. In 1872, they write, “long before [Nigeria’s] independence from British rule,” the first prison in Nigeria was built. In 1886, to enforce “the will of the Royal Niger Company that was carving up Nigeria for British colonial interests,” we see the first police forces established in Nigeria, according to these authors. In 1909, furthermore, Williams and Hawkins write: “the collective punishment ordinance... codified colonial authorities punishing entire communities for resisting.” Lastly:

“... the laws that structure Nigerian society then and now, that dictate who gets banished to those prisons, are themselves rooted in colonial logics. Nowhere is this clearer than in how police target, abuse and murder Black poor people, and Black people from marginalized genders and sexualities.”

Now, the slogan “Queer Lives Matter” is being declared in Nigerian social struggles. Building on the US born “Black Lives Matter” struggle, Nigerian gender/sexual minorities have been on the forefront of an anti-carceral struggle in similar manner as QTGN Black folks in the United States. SARS has been fueled by a recent bill from 2014 that began to heighten anti-LGBT repression in Nigeria, targeting queer and trans Nigerians in disproportionate and volatile ways. If we understand Nigerian history, it makes sense why Minor Patriarchy would be tied up with carceral repression, especially given the neocolonial conditions of Nigeria.

To that point, Sam Mbah and IE Igariwey remind us in *African Anarchism*, “shortly after independence,” the Nigerian state was

with is the Politics of so-called “human rights” in an age of flag independence and a post-Jim Crow/post-apartheid order. I view Sanyika Shakur’s analysis in light of those proffered by Robert F Williams’ *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*. From this text, one would glean that neocolonialism was also applicable to analysis of conditions emerging for the internal colony that is Black people subjugated in the US. In Africa, Minor Patriarchy has shown up in phenomena like the recent repression of queer/trans people in Nigeria and Ghana are needed case studies for pointing how the aforementioned relates to Minor Patriarchy. Patriarchy plays a role at the basic economic unit of the family, but also in the development of larger economic relations of the nation. In “Pan-African Revolt for a New Century,” AB Williams and Kamau Hawkins look at social unrest in Haiti, Nigeria, Ghana, and the US, pointing out the role of marginalized gender peoples’ resistance in the African struggles of recent years. Concerning Nigeria, they write:

“Nigeria is an oil rich country (specifically the Delta area), and numerous Western companies like Shell exploit the workers there.”

The authors also remark that US “security companies” are used to “guard” oil fields in Nigeria, and that these augment the local State’s security forces. On top of that:

“The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) was established October 1st, 2007, and dramatically expanded during the Obama administration. AFRICOM often trains the armed forces of partner states like Nigeria and supplies them to fight ‘terrorism.’ AFRICOM also maintains military bases in Nigeria and other parts of Africa.”

Williams and Hawkins use this expansion of US military power in Nigeria, alongside the economic interests in oil to explain the

created religion—male dominated theocracies—which leads to ‘religious discrimination.’ In other words, the very problems the masses are running to the state (representative of grand patriarchy) to solve, the state created and will then offer a solution to. Which without question will only strengthen the grip of patriarchy. It’s the symbolic reapplication of the ties that bind which keep the masses tethered to the machine.” (The Pathology of Patriarchy)

As it was way back in ancient Greece, body-reasoning today is a tool of Statecraft; it inflects how a modern Patriarchal “good ole boy network” anchors the reproduction of citizenship and nationhood. There have been historically violent implications of this for all those pushed out of the category of citizen or the nation and its social contract with the State, be they gender variant or gender conforming. This was especially because of regulations on the household configuration and institution of marriage, weaponized against not just gender/sexual minorities, but racial, ethnic, and religious minorities too. Homonationalism was not alone in appealing to the hegemonic institutions to overcome pathologization by the system; we already established that the feminist movement is concerned with the nuclear family/household configuration. But it’s worth noting that the civil rights struggles also became integrationist as well, and this also meant aspirations for inclusion into the marital-conjugal nexus. The rise of a Black middle class stratum pushing so-called “respectability politics” would come to fill police departments and mayoral seats around the US, often condemning the apparent “Black matriarchy” and the problem of “paternal absenteeism.” They helped the State transform Jim Crow into a “de facto” segregation edifice driven by mass incarceration and the creation of a criminal underclass.

Body-reasoning was ever present too: the domineering Black mothers and lazy Black fathers archetype would decorate media

and propaganda one day, and the next it would be implicit in the academic research about the “crime” in the inner city, about “test scores” and IQs and more. A celebrity stratum would emerge to encourage Black men to “pull up your pants” and to encourage Black women to “cover up,” and to decry the phasing out of corporal punishment in schools, wailing about Black children lacking “home training.” This Black bourgeois nationalism, making appeals to the sanctity of the Family and Nuclear Household, and to marriage, would come to join in anti-gay and anti-trans propaganda first pushed by the colonizer. Especially as the late 20th century and early 21st century became suffused with resistance to the police, destruction of property, and riotous social movements among Black people, the segments of our community least likely to be forced to the streets, having some sort of safety net through the church and the families that do exist in the Black community, would seek to shift the brunt of their own racial pathologization onto members of the community they considered deserving of that pathologization. Interested in protecting property relations, business and career interests, and the nuclear family model, they’ve heightened the level of cissexist, intersexist, exorsexist discourse in our community. This process would mean the expansion of both the Grand Patriarchy and the Minor Patriarchy. This means it serves the US empire and the West, specifically because of neocolonialism. The structural consequence of this is a global issue for those undeserved by both Homonationalism and Black nationalism, as well as feminism.

Neocolonialism, Grand Patriarchy and Minor Patriarchy

The term neocolonialism is most popularly associated in the Left with the analysis of Kwame Nkrumah, who authored *Neocolonialism: The Highest Stage of Imperialism*. Theorizing specifically

around the dangers and threat of world war in a politico-economic landscape where many formerly colonized nations are now independent, Nkrumah’s assertion was that:

“The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.”

Nkrumah put forth several examples of how neocolonialism could operate. One form is military: “troops of the imperial power may garrison the territory of the neo-colonial State and control the government of it,” but Nkrumah calls this an extreme case. The more common expresses, Nkrumah argues, are exercised economically or monetarily:

“The neo-colonial State may be obliged to take the manufactured products of the imperialist power to the exclusion of competing products from elsewhere. Control over government policy in the neo-colonial State may be secured by payments towards the cost of running the State, by the provision of civil servants in positions where they can dictate policy, and by monetary control over foreign exchange through the imposition of a banking system controlled by the imperial power.”

For Nkrumah, the imperial power may not always be the exact one which had formerly controlled a now independent nation under old colonialism, but regardless, monetary control, deepened exploitation, and more would often persist vis-a-vis the influx of foreign capital and investments from the developed countries to the underdeveloped countries. The role of Minor Patriarchy in neocolonialism takes many different forms, but what Sanyika Shakur starts