

The Persistence of a Stop-Gap Measure:

The weight of history, nationalism and the powerful combination of access and denial on the Secondary Entrance Assessment in Trinidad

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i. Abstract

The Secondary Entrance Assessment in Trinidad is a high stakes placement exam which has its roots in the colonial period. It was adopted from England in 1961 as a short-term measure, yet it endures to the present. This thesis uses post-colonial theory, which places Trinidad's historical development in general and its education system in particular in a global perspective and posits that a grand epochal change did not occur with the acquisition of independence. Rather the continuities and discontinuities of colonial patterns are explored and shown to be symbolized and facilitated by education and more specifically, the SEA. The contradictory combination of colonial racial ideology and post-colonial ambitions to eradicate it, is contained in this exam. Moreover, as the SEA still carries colonial meanings, it acts as an inhibitor to the state from realizing its own goals regarding the development of education.

ii. Acknowledgements

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Thanks to my father for his presence in spirit.

iii. Abbreviations

CAP	Continuous Assessment Programme
CE	Common Entrance
CIC	College of the Immaculate Conception
EFA	Education for All
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GOTT	Government of Trinidad and Tobago
MOE	Ministry of Education
OAS	Organization of American States
PNM	People's National Movement
QRC	Queen's Royal College
SEA	Secondary Entrance Assessment
UNC	United National Congress
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
EFA	Education for All

iv. Preface

I took the Common Entrance Exam (CEE) now called the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA), in 1976. The period of preparation was intense and gruelling with lessons one hour before school started and for 2 hours after it ended. I also went to school on Saturdays for 4 hours with the rest of my classmates. Occasionally, on a Saturday after we were certain our teacher had left, we would stay back to play a bit of cricket, an act of daring as we were supposed to go straight home and do the never ending mound of homework. Playing was a luxury for us.

When a member of the family, whether a sibling, first, second or third cousin, it did not matter who, was up for the exam, everyone waited anxiously to find out what happened. “Did he pass?” “What school did she pass for?” These questions were uppermost on our minds. For those who passed it was not always cause for celebration as the school to which the child was assigned, may not have been to which he or she aspired. Or worse, the one the parents wished for. For those who failed, shame and disappointment descended on them and it took some time for parents in consultation with the family, friends and teachers to figure out what to do, pull themselves together and make a decision for the way forward.

One of the puzzling aspects of the CEE experience was that everybody understood there to be certain arbitrariness about where children were placed. Regardless of how well your child performed in the numerous tests and practice tests, there was this looming possibility that he/she would be placed in a school for which the pass mark was supposed to be low and which generally were considered institutions which housed many social problems and turned your child into a misfit, a trouble-maker, an under-achiever or in the worse case a criminal. At least these were the perceptions. In those days the system was shrouded in secrecy. Teachers, parents and students were not privy to the mark which determined so much of life. Exam ‘results’ only conveyed the school students were assigned to and not the actual mark received. Years after, when I came to the realization that the CEE exam was instituted in Trinidad when it was in fact being already phased out in England where we adopted it from, I felt a sense of disappointment. I wanted to understand why we made this choice. I asked is it that we are not worthy of a better, fairer system as they implemented in England? I began to imagine a different system.

This thesis topic is inspired by these personal experiences and concern about the persistence of the central role of the CEE/SEA in education and indeed in life in Trinidad.

1 Introduction

National Assessment at the end of primary school with the purpose of selecting students for placement in a hierarchically structured secondary school system is a common feature in the education systems of former British colonies throughout the world including those in the Caribbean. The assessment procedures, whether inherited or opted for by newly independent states have become enduring and tenacious. In the Trinidad and Tobago, the most southerly, twin island state in the Caribbean, the Common Entrance Examination (CEE), and its derivative the Secondary School Entrance Assessment (SEA), though initially introduced as a temporary measure, has become a permanent fixture in the country's education system. This exam taken by the vast majority of children at age 11+, determines much of what they can make of their lives in terms of further education, jobs and income. This, even before children enter their teenage years.

Every year, there are complaints that that the exam is overly demanding, impossible to pass without a tremendous amount of extra tuition, requires hours of homework and drastically reduces recreational time. Students must go to school earlier and leave later to get extra lessons as well as attend classes on Saturdays. To make matters worse children need a substantial amount of support at home with their homework and to the dismay of the many parents, the work is often difficult to the point of being incomprehensible, or they have to "rack their brains" to remember mathematical formulae and rules of language long forgotten or worse, never learnt. In addition, the amount of time spent studying for the exam is increasing with preparation beginning from as early as age eight. It is recognized as a stressful time for students, teachers and parents. Although there have been intermittent, passionate cries, for its reform or outright elimination from some sectors of the population, and the observation that it is an obstacle to the state's promise of education for all, there is no public demand for its removal. In fact an alternative to a secondary school entrance exam seems inconceivable.

Having gained independence in 1962, the new nation moved quickly to expand access to education in which great faith was put as a means to select increasing numbers of students to continue on to newly built secondary schools. The idea of universal education, a driving force behind the decolonization project throughout the world, seemed attainable; it was a period of hope. Forty eight years later, the Common Entrance Exam, though reformed and renamed represents not hope but failure and despair for many. Reform of the exam in 2001 changed the name to the Secondary

Schools Entrance Assessment or SEA. Remarkably this reform eliminated the possibility of failing the exam while retaining the sense of failure for many. The smiling faces of the successful candidate cover the newspapers the morning after results announcements, never the tearstained faces of the disappointed.

1.1 The SEA

The SEA is a high stakes exam. Tracking is one of its main functions. In addition to deciding whether children are placed in either vocational or academic schools, results also determines the standard of the school with regards to facilities, staff, size of school and classes, discipline, etc. Therefore, the type of school a student is sent to affects his/her life chances. This tracking facilitates gate-keeping. According to Busby and Kambon (2000), the “best” schools are rarely accessed by students from the lower echelons of the society as poor and working class families lack both the financial and human resources; necessary for children to succeed. Moreover the socio-cultural and family environment of the poor and working class are not conducive to the structure, and culture of schools, thereby inhibiting teaching and learning. Equity, then an espoused objective of the Ministry of Education (MOE), from the first education plan to current policies, is compromised by the SEA, (see e.g. the Draft Plan for Educational Development 1967-1983, MOE Education for All Action Plan, 2007).

Preparation for the SEA also impacts negatively on the educational experience of children. Emphasis is placed on rote learning, teaching to the test is common practice and corporal punishment is widely practiced as a teaching tool (see for e.g. Kutnick et al. 1990, Jules 1994, London, 2002). There is little evidence that the exam is used to improve teaching and learning: only one evaluative document produced by the Ministry of Education was obtained (MOE, 2004) and there is also no apparent use of its findings in the implementation of reform for improvement of teaching and learning. Further, the Ministry of Education admits that there is no mechanism to “promote the necessary diagnostic, remedial and preventative interventions critical to the development of an effective and efficient education system” (Ministry of Education 1993, p. 3). The SEA then is an entrenched feature on which the MOE does not draw to extract data which can be meaningfully used to affect improvement in equity and quality in the education system.

Violence has reached crisis proportions in Trinidad. Citizens are pressing the state to address this issue with urgency. The fact that the MOE has taken steps to address this problem demonstrates that it is pervasive in schools:

Over the last decade violence and indiscipline have been increasing in our schools at an alarming rate. This phenomenon mirrors the situation in the society at large. The Ministry of Education has developed the Peace Promotion Programme to address this disturbing trend in the schools (http://www.moe.gov.tt/units_ppp.html)

However, as noted above, corporal punishment is practiced widely in all schools. In SEA preparation classes, it is executed for infringements such as not doing homework, not completing it, being distracted or talking. The culture of violence then is not entirely due to external elements, but rather it is systemic with teachers using it as pedagogical tool.

TTCrime (2010), an organization which monitors and records crime in Trinidad and Tobago, reports that in 2009 there were 509 murders. According to a World Bank (2007) report on crime and violence, guns are easily accessible and in could cost as little as 100TTD (approximately 16USD). Further, in Trinidad as is the case across the Caribbean, the majority of victims and perpetrators of gun violence are low socio-economic status young men with low level educational attainment with limited income earning capacity. These youth tend to live in “urban, densely populated and underserved areas with lower than national levels of most social indicators and standards of living,” (World Bank 2007, p. 152-153). Poverty then is a key factor in violence among youth in the country. In a report on Education and Poverty, Busby and Kambon (2000) demonstrate that poor students generally attend government primary schools which then track them based on low SEA results, into lower quality and substandard secondary schools. Much of the school-aged youth who engage in violent behaviour have been tracked through the SEA and concentrate in certain urban schools.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago website claims a literacy rate of over 90%”. According to a UNESCO (1999)report, “the percentage of primary school enrolment is ... used as a proxy measure for literacy, but this is not a reliable measure either. Primary schooling in the CC (Caribbean Commonwealth) countries may be efficient but its learning processes are not very effective” (UNESCO, 1999, p. 5). A joint Adult Literacy Tutors Association (ALTA) – UNESCO (1994) national literacy survey in 1995 found that 22-23%, or 1 out of 4 persons in Trinidad and Tobago, were unable to cope with basic everyday reading and writing. 15% (118,000) were

functionally illiterate and 8% (62,000) were illiterate. These persons tended to be in rural areas or low income urban areas and had the least number of years of schooling.

A MOE document prepared for the International Conference of Education posits that although millions have been spent on education, learning outcomes is not at the desired level and this is demonstrated by students' SEA performance. Annually, "between 10.3 and 13.5 percent of pupils score 30 percent or less at this examination" (MOE, 2008, p. 36). These figures are based on the 'cut off point' of 30% and "suggest that there are students in the system struggling to master basic numeric and literacy skills" (MOE, 2008, p.36).

Violence and literacy as urgent issues in education are used here to demonstrate the pivotal role that the SEA plays in the education system in Trinidad. This is not to argue that it is the cause of these problems but that it is a factor. The extent to which the SEA is a tracking system through which low-income, underperforming, young people end up in certain low-performing schools in some of which violence is increasingly a problem, reflects the role the SEA plays in social reproduction. Further, it compromises equity and educational objectives as articulated by the state.

According to Gipps and Murphy (1994), the CEE was designed in Britain as a means to increase equity in the education system. It emerged after a 1926 report which asserted that all students were eligible for secondary education although not the same type: some were more academically inclined while others were of the vocational persuasion. The exam essentially democratized the system by increasing access to secondary schools. Results determined whether students were placed in grammar, modern or technical schools. By 1938 the exam was entrenched. However, it was finally eliminated in 1971 after several reforms: by the 1960s for example, it included verbal tests. A number of reports examined issues of class, gender and opportunity and efficiency and fairness. It was found that there was middle class bias in the test and because girls did better than boys, the pass mark for them was raised. As Eckstein and Noah (1992) point out, during the sixties in Britain, exams were heavily criticized for contributing to an oppressive, overly demanding system which labelled children far too early. While at its inception it heralded change, it was now seen as backward, symbolizing the need for change.

Trinidad and Tobago essentially adopted an exam at a time when those who conceived of it in the first place had already deemed it to be socially costly. Further, despite the many problems

associated with it, the exam has remained in the system long after it was implemented as a short term measure.

1.2 Objective

The objective of this thesis is to determine the various political and socio-historical factors which have led to the secondary school entrance examination becoming a fixed transition point in the education system of Trinidad and Tobago when it was originally conceptualized as a short-term measure.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the historical factors which led to the adoption and retention of the CEE/SEA?
2. What is the function of the SEA?
3. To what extent does the SEA facilitate or inhibit the articulated education goals of the state?
4. To what extent does the SEA represent continuity with the colonial past or a break from it?

The approach is primarily historical and is rooted in the colonial experience. The concern is to see how history works in the present to preserve this aspect of the education system and its meanings. Post-colonial theory is used. It is well suited for this type of inquiry theory as it links the form, structure and experience of colonialism with the present always acknowledging that the end of formal colonialism did not mark the finite end of an epoch and the start of a new. Rather, post-colonial theory is concerned with continuities and discontinuities, resistance and transformations, setbacks and reforms as processes. The next chapter establishes the theoretical foundation of the study.

2 Theoretical Foundation

2.1 Comparative and International Education

The field of Comparative and International Education (CIE) has its origins in early 19th century Europe. Its main concerns were the role of education in European nation-building and how nations could learn from each other in the sphere of educational development (see Arnove and Torres, 2003, Crossley and Watson 2003, Arnove, et al. 1992). CIE has developed into a multi-disciplinary field with a variety of theoretical approaches. As Arnove et al. (1992, p.1) put it, CIE “is a loosely bounded field which is held together by a fundamental belief that education can be improved and can serve to bring about change for the better in all nations.” However, within this framework there has been considerable debate and re-conceptualization.

As Crossley and Watson (2003) argue, the idea that research in CIE must be informed by historical and cultural contexts is one of the enduring principles of the field. Indeed it is a major tenet that education develops in social and cultural contexts shaped by history. Sadler, an important early contributor to the field succinctly puts it as follows:

In the educational policy of a nation are focused its spiritual aspirations, its philosophical ideals, its economic ambitions, its military purpose, its social conflicts. For a German or for an Englishman to speak of his own country’s educational aims is to speak of its ideal, of its hope and fears, of its weaknesses as well as its strength. To attempt even this is not an easy task, but to speak of another country’s education system from the standpoint of a foreign observer is to hazard more and to risk understanding (Sadler, 1912, in Arnove and Torres 2003, p 8).

Internal and external historical contexts: economic, cultural and social, impact on the development of education systems. This principle has received renewed attention in recent times particularly by researchers who are interested in such issues as the comparison of different aspects of systems, local responses to globalization, the development of education in the colonial period and educational period (see e.g. Broadfoot, 2000; Hickling-Hudson, 1998).

Given this imperative of historical and contextual analysis, the study of education in the Caribbean must be placed within the context of the colonial project. In this work the SEA will be analyzed in its historical context. It is particularly concerned with the continuity of colonial ideas within the context of change. Historically, all aspects of education in Trinidad were introduced by colonizing

powers France and Britain. The objective was to provide the elite with a classical education and the mass of the population, with basic agricultural training. This was the clear policy of the colonial government and their local representatives (Brereton 1979, Campbell 1996, 1997, London 2002). Put another way, the objective was to reproduce the status quo.

This strictly dichotomous approach entailed the direct transfer of European educational traditions, philosophy and principles. So, to speak of historical-cultural contexts in the Trinidad, is necessarily to begin with an interrogation of what the Europeans had in mind and what they wanted to achieve: according to Sadler (1912, in Arnove and Torres 2003, p 8), their “spiritual aspirations..., philosophical ideals..., economic ambitions..., military purpose and social conflicts”. This must be the starting point but it does not constitute the entire narrative. Analysis of the decolonization project must follow. This study will enquire into the extent to which the spiritual aspirations, philosophical ideals, economic ambitions, and social conflicts of the new state are in opposition to that of the colonizing power, yet shaped by it. This is the fundamental contradiction of the colonial experience in most of the Caribbean. Already embedded with European ideas of race and class education must transcend itself and transform the society. The position here is that the Secondary School Entrance Assessment (SEA) in Trinidad more than any other aspect of the education system symbolizes this contradiction. At one and the same time it represents Trinidad’s educational revolution and a decision to adhere to the status quo. On the one hand there is a radical expansion of access to education and on the other, a mechanism was devised and entrenched to control and limit this access.

2.2 European Education Expansion and Colonial Education

According to Cummins (2003), the reformation, the consolidation of nation states and the concentration of resources, changes in military conflict and increased productivity all contributed to the development of modern education. “The unfolding of these ideological, political, military and economic changes differed from place to place resulting in distinctive settings for the birth of modern education” (Cummins 2003, p.14). He traces six modern patterns of education which emerged from Prussia, France, England, the USA, Japan and Russia. The concern here is with the French and English ones, particularly the English which heavily influenced education in the Trinidad.

The dominance of the Catholic Church in national affairs in Europe meant that the Church was very influential in the provision of education in Europe. The prevailing idea up to the period of modernization was that the state had little to do with education, which was left up to either the Church or to local communities. The modernizing period ushered in by the French revolution and the reformation, sparked reform throughout Europe. Before this change, education was the privilege of the elite and it was feared that “the spread of literacy to the common people might contribute to social disorder” (Cummins 2003, p. 84). In different ways and at different times each nation was inspired and inclined to address education as an important aspect of its development. In France it was nationalism and democracy, in England it was industrialization and an interest in technological innovation. In both but especially England the need to educate people to fill the ranks of an administrative sector both at home and abroad, to operate its expanding colonial project was an important factor. This did not result in mass education but limited expansion. Until then, as Cummins (2003, p. 78) notes, England “relied on the voluntary principle”. With the idea of limited state involvement in education already entrenched in England, the widespread inclusion of the working classes into a state sponsored education system was steadfastly avoided until the latter half of the 19th century. The tradition of privately run elite schools for which the purpose was to “nurture the polished individual who knows the great books, fine arts, style and is a sportsman” (Cummins, 2003, p. 20). Paradoxically, these elite institutions were and still are called ‘public’ schools although they are in fact, private. This type of grammar school as they are also called became very important in the development of education in Trinidad and remains a feature today.

According to Cummins (2003, p. 34), “each modern pattern [of education] is unified by a core set of ideals.” This refers to an idea of what the ideal citizen should be and how it should be reproduced in the nation’s education system. For example, in France the encyclopaedic approach and the polytechnic secondary schools developed to shape the technical elite. In England the comprehensive approach and the elite public schools trained the English gentleman. The most fundamental reform in education which causes greater expansion and access is conditioned by changes in the concept of the ideal citizen, but this change is shaped by the more or less greater extent of social and political upheaval in a nation. Once this shift in the sense of the ideal citizen is achieved, reform of the education system follows.

The pressures of modernization influenced educational reforms but these occurred differentially in various nations causing rapid reform in France from 1791 - 1870 and slower reform in England mostly between 1820 and 1904 (Cummins 2003). In France the reformed idea of ideal person was

at first an essentially democratic person, then under Napoleon, a nationalistic one, whose duty was the building of technologically and militarily strong France. The focus of reform was the expansion of secondary education and the *ecole politechnique*. In England rapid industrialization promoted the need for trained and skilled workers and the expansion of elementary education. The English ideal citizen became an illustrious and skilled one. Cummins argues that even with reforms, basic patterns in nations' education systems do not change completely. The ingrained elitist element of both the French and English systems proved resistant to change and only the higher echelons of the society had access to higher education. These elitist attitudes were transferred to Trinidad and indeed played an important part in the development of the education system.

By the time Trinidad, a Spanish colony dominated by French language and culture, was ceded to the British in 1797, the reformation was over, having shaped nations, through religious conflict. The reformation had already influenced the development of education to a large degree in England particularly primary education. But it had no direct effect on education in the Caribbean. The Islands of the Caribbean were being exploited by Europeans and were considered as a source of revenue for the various European states and a place to get rich quick by ambitious individuals and a good investment for the European gentry. The phenomenon of the absentee landowner prevented any real development in the islands for centuries. Slaves were not deemed worthy of education and the colonial elite born in the region was educated in the home country. In the post emancipation period, (i.e. post 1838) up to the late 19th century, the idea that the education of ex-slaves was of no social or economic value and that they were incapable of being educated was entrenched (see e.g., Campbell, 1996; Brereton, 2002).

It could be argued that there was a slow trickle-down effect of the ideas of the reformation. In the late 1800s, three centuries after the origin of the reformation, the attitude towards the education of non-whites showed signs of change. Taking the establishment of the Anglican church in England as a product to some extent of the reformation or perhaps better put, the English reformation, it can be said that in Trinidad the reformation came to be reflected in the religious conflict between the elite: the Catholic French- Creole on the one hand and on the Anglican British on the other. According to Campbell (1996), the British colonial state increasingly played an important role in the administration of education in its attempt to Anglicize the newly won territory. Education was seen to be a useful tool in making English not only the official but the widely spoken language.

The other theoretical issue to confront in terms of the development of an education system is that of the ideal citizen raised by Cummins (2003). The question, “what is the ideal Trinidadian citizen?” must be put in the colonial context. Therefore the question should be first put: “What is the ideal Trinidadian colonial subject and how did this notion of the ideal colonial subject in Trinidad shape education?” In the post-colonial context the question is put differently, it is not only a matter of defining the ideal citizen, but also asking how this person will build a nation. As theorists concerned with the process of decolonization such as Fanon (1963) and Hall (1996) have argued, the contradiction is that in shaping the post-colonial ideal citizen, the colonial subject must reject the notion of itself as an ideal colonial subject and redefine itself in post-colonial terms; the colonized mind breaking out of its shackles, must imagine itself as free, capable and determine and furthermore, must build this new nation. In the Caribbean, and in Trinidad in particular the anti-colonial movement shaped education in the independent state. The shift in the notion of the ideal citizen in Trinidad was created by social and political upheaval of the independence era. The paradox is that the anti-colonial sentiment is conditioned both by the desire to be independent as well as British ideas of education.

2.3 Globalization and Education

The term ‘Globalization’ represents a process whereby societies are becoming increasingly connected through historically unprecedented developments in communications and transport. This has made global trade easier, quicker and has resulted in the spread of ideas and culture and the transfer of various policy forms (see e.g., Arnove and Torres, 2003, Crossley and Watson 2003; Arnove, et al. 1992). It has resulted in an increased uniformity in the way institutions in various and diverse societies function. Bartolovich (2000) points out that, theories of globalization are fundamentally concerned with the global expansion of capitalism and its effects. They emphasize the power of global capital to blur national boundaries and to penetrate local cultures with the effect of global cultural homogenization. However, the extent of these effects and the way in which globalization is historicized are contentious issues.

Globalization theory permeates many academic fields. It is an inescapable reality of the contemporary period therefore its consideration is unavoidable. Research and analysis in the field of comparative and international education have paid much attention to the impact of globalisation on educational development and the international transfer of education policy, particularly in ex-colonies and new post-cold war nations. Arnove (2003, p. 1) argues that the “central workings of a

global economy and the increasing interconnectedness of societies pose common problems for educational systems around the world.” These global factors permeate many aspects of education provision but at the same time, there are local responses which then create a dialectic relationship between the global and the local. Further, he emphasizes that this process is in fact of such gravity that it is “central to recasting or “reframing” the field of comparative and international education” (in Arnove and Torres, 2003, p. 1). This point is echoed in Crossley and Watson who argue that:

it is increasingly clear that the emergence of globalisation as a focus for much research and scholarship, the dominance of marketisation and neo-liberal policy initiatives, and widespread international interest in ‘performativity’ and ‘effectiveness’, highlight the limitations of the nature and scope for many firmly established approaches to comparative and international research in education. A sustained reconsideration of the field and of the appropriateness and legitimacy of some of the most influential theoretical and methodological frameworks is therefore increasingly important (Crossley and Watson, 2003, p.52).

Globalization as a process and a theoretical approach has weight as it has pushed researchers in Comparative and International Education to take stock of their field.

As Crossley and Watson (2003) point out, globalization is a “complex and highly contested term – and one that is widely used but open to multiple interpretations” (Crossley and Watson, 2003, p. 53). The fundamental, contested issues are the extent to which globalization affects local realities, and whether it is an historical marker of epochal significance. In other words does it represent continuity or discontinuity?

According to Held et al (1995), the major problem with the ‘hyperglobalist’ stance which sees the new world era as dominated by the influence of the global market place is that it is ahistorical ignoring the continuing role of powerful international forces. Moreover, the connections between international corporations and national governments, only serve the national elites, while development remains illusive and the old divisions between rich and poor nations remain essentially intact. The sceptics see globalization as a “free-market ideology, perpetuated by the opponents of state intervention in socio-economic affairs (and) as a new phase of Western imperialism It is linked to the perpetuation of the economic dependence and marginalization of the poorer nations (and) such inequalities undermine the very notion of the globalized civilization envisaged by the hyperglobalist (Crossley and Watson, 2003, p. 54). In other words, not much has changed in terms

of international power relations: colonialism has transformed into the even more powerful imperialism.

The point in this study is to put globalization in the perspective of the development of ex-British colonies in the Caribbean and in Trinidad in particular. This will entail a critique of globalization as a theoretical approach, though not a complete dismissal of it, in favour of post-colonial theory.

2.4 Post-colonialism

In order to understand the nature and historical roots of education in the Caribbean and in this case Trinidad, the colonial context must be explored. Post-colonialism offers a theoretical approach which is pertinent and directly applicable to this exploration. It addresses the inadequacies of the globalization approach particularly with respect to its historicity.

Post-colonialism is a complex term with many nuances, much debated and criticized (see e.g. Ashcroft, 2001; Larsen, 2000; Quayson, 2000; Alessandrini, 2009). Its focus is the process of decolonization in the context of colonial representation. Post-colonialism posits that colonialism developed all-pervasive forms of knowledge and of knowing, which perpetuate European domination (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988). The structure and content of western academia internalized by the colonial world, was shaped by the colonial project itself. At its core post-colonialism is an interrogation of notions of race, ethnicity, and identity, forms of cultural domination, the notion binary oppositions and formulations of grand historical narratives, which have been propagated in European colonialism with the effect of the preservation of colonial power (Ashcroft, 2001; Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996; Said, 1978). It questions the idea of the all powerful colonial regime as it looks at power as diffused and multilayered. Further it is an exploration of how colonized resisted, negotiated and transformed their conditions in the colonial and post colonial era, in the context not only of the brute force of colonialism, but also its diffused and complex relations of power (Ashcroft, 2001; Hall, 1990, 1996; Spivak, 1988).

According to Schwarz (2000) Edward Said's *Orientalism*, written in 1978, is widely considered to be the foundation text in postcolonial studies as a field. According to Said (1978), Orientalism has several meanings: It is an academic field in which the Orient is the focus. It is a "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between "the Orient" and ... "the Occident" [further], it is a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the

Orient (Said, 1978, p.2-3). He contends, using Foucault's notion of knowledge as power, that Orientalism must be examined as a discourse through which "European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post Enlightenment period" (Said, 1978, p. 3). For Said, this body of knowledge and way of seeing the Orient "justified in advance" the colonization of the Orient (Said, 1978, p. 11).

Orientalism divides the world into binary opposites: the familiar and the strange, the developed and undeveloped, the pure and the political. The Orient is all that the Occident is not. These opposites are represented and embedded in an imaginative geography in which there is a "fixed, more or less total geographical position towards a wide variety of social, linguistic, political, and historical realities" (Said, 1978, p.50). Moreover, Orientalism reproduces itself; Its knowledge of the Orient widens as various disciplines are employed, but the basic tenets, and assumptions about the Orient is maintained, without question, with the strength and backing of institutions of learning, public administration and trade, and various forms of writing. Orientalism has "an epistemological status equal to that of historical chronology or geographic location" (Said, 1978, p. 205). All enquiries, analyses and descriptions keep "intact the separateness of the Orient, its eccentricity, its backwardness, its silent indifference, its feminine penetrability, its supine malleability" (Said, 1978, p. 206). The word Orient has acquired neutrality and objectivity. Its meanings, connotations and representations are taken for granted. It conveys ideas and information of the Orient which are understood to be inherent to it. It produces and reproduces the Orient as the Other. Indeed Said (1978) argues that this representation as the colonized as the Other characterizes colonial domination throughout the world.

This internalized knowledge of the world as divided into a superior West –Europe and an inferior East – the Orient extended into a demarcation between Europe and all non-Europeans i.e. between whites and non-whites. Said argues that "Orientalism reinforced, and was reinforced by, the certain knowledge that Europe or the West literally commanded the vastly greater part of the earth's surface" (Said, 1978, p. 41). It divided the world into "various collectives: languages, races, types, colours, mentalities" (Said, 1978, p. 227). These demarcations are powerful tools of domination reinforced by various disciplines like anthropology, linguistics and history as well as social Darwinism and humanism. Darwin's Survival of the fittest and natural selection theses and Humanism combined as powerful tools in representing the Occident as superior, learned and cultured and the Orient as inferior, strange and exotic and thereby creating a European 'us' and an

Oriental 'them'. Fixed notions of identity from the European point of view. The concept of the colonized as the Other justifies their exploitation and oppression.

In *Culture and Imperialism* Said (1993) demonstrates how history and literature relates and describes the empire. The colonizing class is prepared for its task. The business of empire building, management and maintenance requires justification in the idea of the empire. The empire must be imagined for it to be constructed. The durability of empire is understood in different ways by the ruler and the ruled so that each develops different sets of understanding of the history of colonization, different ways of seeing their conditions. From the colonized point of view, these different perspectives lead to resistance to European domination and Said is concerned with how durability is in fact challenged in the literary, political and philosophical writings both in the colonial period and the post-colonial.

Said's work has been the springboard so to speak for the further exploration and interrogation of the concept of representation in the colonial context. Post-colonial theory has critiqued the notion of colonial representation as a total and absolute silencing force. It explores ways in which colonial representation has been undermined, appropriated and resisted by the colonized. In other words the colonial experience does not begin and end with representation, but rather engages with it and transforms it in an historical process through which colonial power is resisted and identities re-imagined and expressed.

Spivak (1988), accepts Said's (1978) analysis of representation in colonial discourse in which the world is split into binary opposites. Her focus is on the Indian Other and their representation in nationalist discourse. She is interested in the subaltern i.e. peasants who constituted the force of the nationalist movement, but whose historical experience is not meaningfully represented in the official narratives of the nationalist movement written as they were by the elite leadership and the colonial rulers. Historians of colonialism can only source the experience of the colonized Other through official archives; those documents, memoirs, etc. produced by the elite. In fact, the subaltern is non-existent to the researcher. Thus in her essay by the same name, Spivak (1988) asks, "can the subaltern speak?" Her answer to her question is "no". She demonstrates how the construction of the Other in Western intellectual discourse mutes the voice of the oppressed. For Spivak, the Third World oppressed is not homogenous as the Western intellectual discourse frames it but rather it is heterogeneous and dispersed and finally, unknowable through this discourse. Western Intellectual discourse does not in fact capture the full scope of the Other. This intellectual

practice incorporates only those sectors of the oppressed that are knowable to them, within intellectual discourse. The construction of this 'Other' as monolithic with a pure form of consciousness which can therefore represent itself is particularly problematic for Spivak. She argues that "there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself" (Spivak, 1988, p. 80). The subaltern does not exist within the Western intellectual tradition, and thus it has no voice.

While Spivak explores the Other can come to be known through dominant discourses, Homi Bhabha explores the production of the Other in colonial discourse. He asserts that colonial discourse is dependent on the concept of 'Fixity' in the production of the 'otherness'. Fixity as the "sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 95). The stereotype of the Other, is the main discursive strategy of 'Fixity' and in a similar fashion it has to be constantly validated, its premises repeated. It "vacillates between what is always in place, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 95). On the one hand the Other is presented as a fixed stereotype, which by its very existence needs no proof of its inherent inferiority, but on the other, colonial discourse is always seeking to prove this difference, always seeking to refine its representation of the Other. Bhabha refers to this wavering as ambivalence, the force of which gives colonial stereotype its 'currency'. This is similar to Said but stresses that the stereotype produced in this ambivalent process must always be in "excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed [giving colonial discourse] one of its most significant discursive and psychological strategies of discriminatory power" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 95). This overindulgence in the production of the stereotype which renders it incapable of or very difficult to discredit, gives it a powerful life of its own.

Bhabha (1994) further argues that ambivalence is expressed in the 'book'. Colonial literature for example gets its authority from the extent to which it is "repeated, translated, misread, displace" and it always acquires its power of authority in the past, in a notion of an ideal, archaic place of origin, once the setting for cultural and racial difference has been created. Consequently according to Bhabha (1994, p. 146), "the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference." The significance of this, in this work is that while this ambivalence produces the discriminatory effects seen in the stereotypes of the Other, it also shows itself to the oppressed as weakness in its claim of authority

and domination. The very vacillation which produces ambivalence appears as a crack in the system of oppression which is from time to time, used in attempts at liberation.

According to Stuart Hall (1990), Caribbean identity is framed by simultaneously operating axes: similarity and discontinuity, and difference and rupture. He argues that founding of Caribbean societies on slavery and indentureship is characterized by violent ruptures of for example, culture, language and geographical location. But the uniqueness of Caribbean cultures is based on the creativity which necessitated the construction of new cultural identities, languages and religious forms. He argues that this traumatic rupture was already figured in the European imaginary in the idea of the 'Dark Continent'. This historical experience of rupture created a heterogeneous Caribbean through their varied African and Asian ethnic and linguistic origins as well as their varied European origins. But at the same time the Caribbean is unified by its diasporic nature, by the fact that transported peoples were cut off from their origins having therefore to reconstitute and re-imagine themselves on these islands. Hall (1996) argues that the term post-colonial is not merely descriptive of any particular society of past and present. Rather it re-reads colonisation as part of an essentially transnational and transcultural 'global' process- and it produces a decentred, diasporic or global rewriting of earlier, nation-centred imperial grand narratives.

History is important to post-colonial theory. It criticizes the teleology of Western European historiography, in which the linearity of time functions to pronounce and glorify the great achievements of European expansion, a story in which dominated peoples are at the margin existing only as servants to the progression of European power. As Ashcroft (2001, p. 98) puts it, "the most profound hindrance to colonial history is ... the dominance of the assumption and methodologies of the master narrative of History itself, as a way of conceiving colonial reality". The history of the colonized is more than the history of European conquest. Ashcroft is concerned about the ways in which the colonized challenged and resisted colonial power and how they incrementally transformed colonial relations thereby transforming society itself.

Hall (1996) also contends that "'post-colonial' is not one of those periodisations based on epochal stages, when everything is reversed at the same moment, all old relations disappear forever and entirely new ones come to replace them" (Hall 1996, p. 247). He explains further:

Colonisation, from (a) post-colonial perspective was no local or marginal subplot in some larger story (for example, the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Western Europe, the later developing 'organically' in the womb

of the former). In the re-staged narrative of the post-colonial, colonisation assumed the place and significance of a major, extended and ruptural world-historical even. By 'colonisation' the 'post-colonial' references something more than direct rule over certain areas of the world by imperial powers, I think it is signifying the whole process of expansion, exploration, conquest, colonisation and imperial hegemonisation which constituted the 'outer face', the constitutive outside, of European and then Western capitalist modernity after 1492 (Hall 1996, p.249).

The powerful forces of colonialism therefore did not completely retract and disappear at independence. Colonialism marked an irreversible rupture in human, social and economic relations. Post-colonialism is concerned with how the oppressed seeks to resist the continued and varied forms of colonial oppression often referred to as neo-colonialism. Hall (1996) argues that post-colonial theory is both epistemological and historical. It rejects the separation between power and representation. Power is exercised through representation. Thus in the post-colonial context with formal colonialism having receded, the remnants and effects of its power can be discerned and deconstructed through post-colonial analysis. The post-colonial goes after and beyond colonialism. It is about the creation of a future in the context of the past.

Ashcroft (2001) explains that in post-colonial theory, the solution to this problem in historical representation is not 're-insertion', but 're-vision'. By this he means that the point is to revise the historical method. The story must be retold with different assumptions of chronology and time. The starting point would be for example from the experience and the point of view of the slaves or indentured workers, or from an exploration of the relations of power that existed between African and Indian elites with European elites in the establishment of the slave trade and indentureship. This is a re-ordering of the teleological construction of history so that in effect our view of what history is, changes.

As noted earlier, binary opposites of power are deconstructed in post-colonial theory. Ashcroft (2001) explains that instead, power is seen to operate in a diffused, rhizomic way, spreading out laterally as in the roots of the bamboo plant. He argues that the "greatest advancement of cultural hegemony occurs when it operates through an invisible network of filiative connections, psychological internalizations and unconsciously complicit associations" (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 50). Seen this way, resistance to domination is complex, fluid and occurs in various facets of life, both in the conscious and unconscious. This process is referred to as interpolation. It describes the "range of strategies by which colonized people have historically empowered themselves though a calculated appropriation of aspects of the dominant discourse (which has) widespread effect

(Ashcroft, 2001, p. 49). For example in the appropriation of language lies the potential agency of subjects towards the transformation of their condition. The colonial subject has not been entirely subdued but rather engaged in a myriad of ways with the dominant culture in their aspiration to liberation.

2.4.1 A post-colonial critique of globalization

As Hall (1990) points out, the Caribbean is diasporic by nature. In fact the Caribbean came to be what it is, out of global forces in the 15th century. The Caribbean was conceived in a global context and was never outside but always in various ways oppressed by it, negotiating with it, trying to be part of it. The post-colonial concept of continuity and its critique of any sort of narrative which implies epochal changes are especially relevant here. The following points demonstrate a fact of the Caribbean, that its modern history, was determined by global impetus.

- 1) The “discovery” of the islands was prompted by events in Europe including the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the Spain, economic and political rivalries among European nations, advances in technology and the transfer of scientific knowledge from the East.
- 2) The enslavement and transportation of Africans and the establishment of the slave trade for the production of sugar for European markets following the decimation of the native population.
- 3) The establishment of a system of indentureship of Portuguese, Chinese and to a very large extent, Indian workers for the same purpose of sugar production
- 4) The constant flow of European immigrants and in Trinidad of Middle-Eastern and Chinese immigrants (see for e.g. Brereton 1979, Knight 1978, Williams 1964)

Colonialism was a European enterprise with global reach. The Caribbean was born in the global context. Its *raison d'être* was the economic advancement not of itself but of Spain, France, Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark in particular but also the wider Europe in general. Further, the process of decolonization, with the exception of Cuba, was marked by a considerable amount of continuity in terms of political and economic structures. Trinidad for example at once established a West Minister style system of government to which it was accustomed. In the case of the British Caribbean, the various territories came up with their individual constitutions which were presented

to the colonial government in London and peacefully negotiated the terms of their independence. At this point all were entrenched in a global economy through the production of sugar more than a hundred years after slavery was abolished. Moreover, Trinidad was an oil producing nation, with multinational companies operating and with which the new independent government had to contend (Singh 1994).

The point here is to demonstrate the continuity of the global thrust of colonialism in the contemporary world not to deny that globalization is a multifaceted fact of modern life, with which all nations must contend and which carries the same contradictions of exploitation and development as colonialism and imperialism for former colonies. Bartolovich (2000) discusses the discourse between globalization and post-colonial theorists. She points out that for the critics “not only is globalization not new, but the elements which characterize it are not new either – as long as you look in the right places. What is (seemingly) new to the “First World” is not new to the oppressed. What had changed is not so much the process of globalization but the distribution pattern of the deleterious experience of it” (Bartolovich 2000, p.135). According to Ashcroft, “we cannot understand globalization without understanding the structure of global power relations which flourishes in the twenty first century as an economic, cultural and political legacy of Western imperialism” (2001, p. 208). He demonstrates how imperialism and globalism are rooted in the concept of modernity, which is both a European historical phenomenon as well as a discursive formation. Its historicity is represented by the changes in European social organization, technological innovations and the expansion of European power, which occurred during and as a result of the Renaissance, Reformation and the discovery of the Americas. As discourse, it is derived from European sentiments of superiority; an awareness of its position of power, which arose out of the dominance of, oversees colonies. The non-European world began to be conceived of as outside of inferior, uncivilized and pre-historic, that is, outside of history.

Ashcroft explains that imperialism had within it the capacity to be transferred into (as opposed to replaced) the twentieth century global economy. Contrary to classic definitions of imperialism as a binary relationship between a powerful centre with distant subjugated territories, the circulation of power and the complexities of cultural exchanges within the imperial relationship, gave way to globalization: a further diffusion of the control and an intensification of circulatory powers.

At precisely the time that many of the British Colonies in the Caribbean including Trinidad and Tobago were establishing themselves as independent nations, this transfer described above, was

taking place. Trinidad and Tobago came to being as a nation, as its constitution was worked out, its developmental policies conceptualized, its educational programmes spelled out, the “constitutive energies of globalism; ...circulatory and diffused,” were forming (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 213).

Crossley and Watson (2001) argue that the field of Comparative and International Education is being challenged by globalization and therefore needs to be fundamentally reconceptualised. For example, the nation-state as a unit of analysis is brought into question by the increasing interconnectedness of the world. More importantly there is growing criticism of the pervasiveness of positivism in educational planning. Crossley and Watson, demonstrate that the critique of educational transfer really grounds the field back into its historical essence, that is, that context and difference matter.

An analysis of the colonial experience in Trinidad however makes the critique of educational transfers more problematic and demonstrates how the colony was already influenced by global forces in terms of education. Education policies from the inception of the education system in the post-emancipation period were heavily influenced if not directly imposed from Britain. For example, as Campbell (1996) notes, in the late 19th century, the British policy of competition in education was introduced in Trinidad. Teacher salaries and the disbursement of school funds were based on the performance of teachers and students. The practice of having to pass exams to move on to higher grades in primary school as well as that of the competitive exam known as the College Exhibition for entry to secondary school were introduced. The curriculum mirrored the British approach to education in form and content with the ‘bookish’ method typical of the time. Moreover, in the late 1920s and 1930s, attempts to modernize education in Trinidad were heavily influenced by what was going on in England. The concepts of secondary school types, i.e. the grammar school and the technical vocational school as two separate types of education and the idea that schooling should be divided into two distinct phases; primary and secondary marked by age 12, were introduced. These features endure and in fact remain part of the problematic of the education system with which this thesis is concerned.

All investigations into the state of affairs of education in the colony up to independence were conducted by English commissions or of individual Englishmen who were experts in education. The fact that by the early 20th century all university scholarships administered by the elite schools, sent successful candidates abroad to either Cambridge or Oxford, further embedded local education with the global.

But education in Trinidad was also connected to the global economy. In the 1880s to 1890s the competition from European beet sugar, was cause for the Secretary of State for the Colonies to insist that agriculture be taught in the Caribbean. Agricultural education in fact became imperial policy. The objective was to improve the efficiency of cane sugar production through a general agricultural programme in primary schools. The threat to the sugar industry was perceived to be immediate and warranted an increase in education grants as well as the establishment of the Imperial Department of Agriculture in Trinidad. This move was supported by the planters but rejected by the masses who perceived it to be a mechanism to keep them in menial labour.

These points demonstrate the historical global context of education in Trinidad. As will be discussed later, issues such as the stratified nature of the system and the competitive high school entrance exam survived long after independence and indeed characterise the system acting as obstacles to the implementation of reform.

2.4.2 Fanon

Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is an analysis of the process of decolonisation as historical, cultural and political experience and illuminates the substantive problems of the establishment of the new, free nation. This will be examined now. It must be noted from the onset that Fanon wrote about decolonization as it was occurring in the African context, Algeria in particular, with violent eruptions at its core. Colonialism created a Manichean world split between the 'superior' European and the 'inferior' Other. It is this split which the violent uprising of the colonized must eradicate as it was itself violently created. He demonstrates that violence is in fact essential to decolonisation. But violence does not lead to liberation; it is only part of a process. It is not possible to "pass without transition from the status of a colonized person to that of a self-governing citizen of an independent nation... no progress will be made along the road to knowledge. Consciousness remains rudimentary" (Fanon, 1963, p.110).

Fanon clearly demonstrates the uneasy relationship between the nationalist leaders and the masses. The nationalist leaders first respond to the calls of the people for liberation from oppression in their spontaneous uprisings, and embarks on political campaign with the support of the masses. But these Westernized intellectuals who represent the nationalist parties and organized labour, are in fact part of the colonial machinery. A liberation discourse develops from which the urban and rural

masses are left out. In time, the political campaign becomes a “means of private enhancement” (Fanon, 1963, p138). The leadership is now estranged from the masses.

Nationalism is a step towards national consciousness. It merely represents the urge of the people to liberate themselves and cannot be the goal of the anti-colonial struggle. Fanon (1963) explores the possibility of creating a truly liberated people and nation for which the development of national consciousness is crucial. National consciousness emerges out of the struggle against colonialism and is the “all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people ... the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people” (Fanon, 1963, p. 119). It is through national consciousness that nationhood is created. But the “unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness ... their cowardice” are obstacles to nationhood (Fanon, 1963, p.119). Effectively, the nationalist parties lead the bourgeoisie (not fully developed) to independence when it “could carry out its mission in peace and quiet” and the national leadership retires (Fanon, 1963, p. 127). So after independence is formally achieved the masses perceive a slowing down of momentum as far as their needs is concerned while such outward, superficial signs of nationhood such as the flag buildings and monuments are erected.

According to Alessandrini (2009), Fanon attempts to write a “history of the present, [in which] he critiques the nostalgia for lost origins [and] the tendency to posit an essential moment of emergence towards which history is progressively headed” (p. 72). Fanon (1963) argues that the “immobility to which the native is condemned can only be called to question if the native decides to put an end to the history of colonization – the history of pillage – and to bring into existence the history of the nation – the history of decolonization” (Fanon 1963, p.40). For Fanon the agency of the people through which national consciousness develops, makes the way for the nation. But this is not an end in itself. It is not the result of a descent from an ideal past and an inevitable conclusion of a struggle to reclaim that past. It is the action of the people towards liberation, which makes the nation. The issue for Fanon is how the nation can become rather than what it can become. Fanon is concerned with what colonialism is, the lived experience of the colonized and how that experience is an historical force which potentially can be creative. This creative force is national culture. National culture “is not a folklore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover the people’s true nature. It is not made up of the inert dregs of gratuitous actions, that is to say actions which are less and less attached to the ever-present reality of the people” (Fanon, 1963, p. 24). In its liberating form, i.e. the form which evolves through the process of decolonization, national

culture is not designed and implemented by nationalist leaders, nor nationalist intellectuals, but by the thought and action of the people.

Fanon is claimed by proponents and critics of post-colonial theory alike as representing their different positions on history, nation, otherness and culture, particularly as these are articulated in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* (first published 1961). Critics such as Schwarz (1996) see Fanon as having theorized on decolonization and its after effect – neo-colonialism within a clearly conventional historical and humanist analysis, of which post-colonialist theory is highly critical and suspicious. For the proponents (Alessandrini, Fanon is considered a precursor to post-colonial theory particularly in his concept of the Manichean world that is the world divided in to the European and the Other. He is also seen to disengage from a grand narrative approach to history. For example, Said (1993) argues, that Fanon understands that Narrative itself is the representation of power. Fanon was the first major theorist of anti-imperialism to realize that orthodox nationalism followed along the same track hewn out by imperialism, which while it appeared to be conceding authority to the nationalist bourgeoisie was really extending its hegemony” (Said ,1993, p. 273). The Manichean world is represented through colonial discursive power and maintained by violence. For writers like Alessandrini (2000) and Pithouse (2003) Fanon’s humanism is not contradictory to post-colonial theory. Fanon is concerned with the universal concept of ‘man’. But it is not universalizing in the enlightenment sense in which the European ‘man’ is the ideal in a world divided between the learned and cultured European and the infantile, unknowing, native Other. Fanon’s humanism argues Alessandrini (2003) is “an emergent transnational humanism (in which) the anti-colonial struggle (is placed) not only in the context of national liberation but of human liberation” (Alessandrini, 2003, p. 438 - 439).

How is Fanon relevant to the Caribbean and in particular education in the Caribbean? The most obvious point is that the Caribbean as noted above is also defined by the Manichean world described by Fanon, although nuanced by ethnicity (particularly due to the large presence of Indians) and colour. The second point is not so obvious. Fanon wrote in the midst and context of the violent upheaval which was the Algerian war of independence. His approach to an understanding of liberation was very much an attempt to develop a theoretical foundation for the grasping violence in the decolonization process. However, he did recognize that while his subject matter was geographically located his theoretical approach was applicable to the condition of the colonized anywhere. In his discussion on some real gains of the Algerian revolutionary experience, he writes:

If we have taken the example of Algeria to illustrate our subject, it is not at all with the intention of glorifying our own people, but simply to show the important part played by the war in leading them towards consciousness of themselves. It is clear that other peoples have come to the same conclusion in different ways. We know for sure today that in Algeria the test of force was inevitable; but other countries through political action and through the work of clarification undertaken by a party have led their people to the same results. In an under-developed country, experience proves that the important thing is not that three hundred people form a plan and decide upon carrying it out, but that the whole people plan and decide even if it takes them twice or three times as long (Fanon, 1963, p. 156).

In the Anglo-Caribbean, independence was not wrested from the colonizer by armed uprising. It was negotiated by a few nationalist leaders and intellectuals, but within the context of political action and clarification to which Fanon refers (see e.g. Palmer 2006). In Trinidad, the national leader and the intellectual leader was embodied in one person Eric Williams who became the first prime minister and remained in that post till his death some 25 years later. Williams was passionate about decolonization and famed for his oratorical abilities. His speeches were the foundation of his political education thrust. He “did not restrict his scholarly expositions to the literati who flocked to hear him at the public library. To reach a larger audience, he renamed Woodford Square in Port of Spain the University Of Woodford Square, creating a large open-air lecture room for the “students” who came in the thousands to hear him speak” (Palmer 2006, p. 9). In Trinidad and indeed in other parts of the Caribbean, the nationalist party and their leaders and the intellectual leaders, inspired by the people, took political action necessary at the time to realize independence.

This leads to Fanon’s analysis of the nationalist party and its leadership, Westernized intellectuals, bourgeoisie and the masses, and the roles they play in the development of the nation and national consciousness. Fanon (1963, p. 137) warns that after independence the nationalist party “sinks into an extraordinary lethargy” then degenerates into the handmaiden of the rather under-developed bourgeoisie and the middle class. It becomes alienated from the people, and the national leader descends into authoritarianism or dictatorship. The party becomes indistinguishable from the government and grows into an administrative machine in the service of itself. The leader is now the facilitator of the bourgeois class. In fact, the “bourgeois dictatorship of under-developed countries draws its strength from the existence of a leader” (Fanon, 1963, p. 133). This transformed leader becomes increasingly distant from the people, mistrusts them becomes isolated and reverts to closer ties with the bourgeoisie, becoming its fierce defender.

As some have observed (see e.g., Schwarz, 2000; Alessandrini, 2000), there is a prescience in Fanon. To be sure these scenarios can be observed in Trinidad. For example, the nationalist party, the PNM (People's National Party), which ushered in independence in 1962 was lead by Williams who was the leader par- excellence. According to Campbell (1997) although the party was "far from being the creation of one man ... its philosophy and its plan of action emanated from Williams; and there was no one of his stature or charisma in the party" (Campbell, 1997 p.71). But by the early 1970s Trinidad was wrought with social unrest. The black power movement emerged as a protest to slow rate and extent of change in the first few years after independence. In other words, it protested the lethargy of the state that Fanon (1963) predicts. It was still the case that the white upper class controlled the commercial sector and the racism and prejudice which characterized the colonial period were still operating at will to maintain the status quo. Williams' rhetoric had begun to feel like hot air. To the people, it seemed that the only beneficiary of independence was the old white elite who prospered from the economic growth which occurred at the time. To quell the unrest, which came to include mutinous soldiers, Williams employed a series of repressive measures (see e.g. Campbell, 1997; Palmer, 2006).

As Campbell points out, "for all Williams' rhetoric against colonialism he was ready to work with foreign capitalists" (Campbell, 1997, p. 71). By the 1976 elections, the country was in the midst of an oil boom but wrought with corruption and financial scandals in high places, and the PNM 14 years after independence was already campaigning on its past accomplishments. By the end of the 1970s Campbell contends that Williams was increasingly isolated and the PNM was still the party in power, "but no longer was it occupying higher moral ground over political groups" (Campbell 1997, p. 79). The point here is that according to Fanon (1963) nationalism with all the good intentions of its leadership cannot be an end in itself. The process of decolonization, spurred by the thought and action of the people and led by the charismatic person, must continue to have at its core the liberation of the people in every sense. The establishment of the nation is not the end of the road.

2.4.3 Education in the Post-colonial context

In Trinidad, the SEA contains the tensions of the education system. It symbolizes the interwovenness of the colonial past and the postcolonial present. It is an attempt to reshape education in a postcolonial nation, at the same time retaining the colonial structure and form. It represents the emancipatory thrust of Trinidadians in the colonial period as well as their desire for development

after independence. At the same time though, it symbolizes the irreversibility of the 'transculturation of the colonising experience'. The form, content and function of the SEA largely remains as that of its predecessor the CE which was imported from England: preparation is intense, the exam conditions are tense and stressful, the curriculum is narrow, teaching to the test is the norm and it is highly selective with the prestigious English style grammar schools the pinnacle of achievement and local dialect is regarded as improper in the English Language and essay writing components. But, attempts to modify the exam to reflect local culture and needs have been made: social studies with attention on Caribbean family structures was introduced then removed, general science with agricultural content was included, but then removed, and essay writing through which local issues could be reflected, is presently included. The function of the SEA represents the interconnectedness and the discontinuities with which postcolonial theory is concerned. The education system set up by the colonial government was elitist with very limited access to secondary school. The few poor and working class children who did access the elite secondary schools did so, on a highly competitive basis. Primary education was by and large rudimentary. The SEA on the one hand, continues the competitive nature of access to the various strata of secondary education while at the same time expanding access. It retains the emphasis of academic achievement as achievement par excellence while at the same time creating access to vocational training.

How could post-colonial theory address the choice made by the new independent government to institute the Common Entrance exam (the SEA's precursor), at a time when it was being phased out in England based on criticisms of class bias and inequity? Here Said is instructive: "the durability of empire was sustained on both sides, that of the rulers and the distant ruled, and in turn each had a set of interpretations of their common history with its own perspective, historical sense, emotions and traditions" (Said, 1993, p.11). The dominant discourse reproduces itself and this reproduction does not simply disappear after independence. Rather it is engaged in a different way. To some extent the colonial discourse is challenged with the discourse of independence and liberation and steps are made towards transformation. But post-colonial theory insists that a total epochal change does not occur. The attitudes, ideas and prejudices in colonial discourse in this case colonial education discourse, linger and influence the process and rate of change. But the situation is further complicated by the fact that not all aspects of colonial education may need to change, some aspects may be useful to the ex-colonized. Transformation of education is not to be accomplished outside of European ideas of education, but rather within a Trinidadian conceptualization of Education, a conceptualization which has to be drawn in keeping with the post-colonial approach, not from a

sense of a pure pre-colonial ideal or from a European ideal, but in the hybrid articulation of both. Hence the secondary school entrance exam has within it a transformative element in that in its original implementation it immediately opened up access to secondary schools, but at the same time it contains the very limitations of an education system shaped by the colonial discourse of containment, selection and elitism.

In the context of an analysis of the development of the education system in Trinidad, the postcolonial theoretical approach is useful. It can place the development of education in the colonial era as part of the dominant colonial discourse in which the Trinidadian is positioned as “the Other”. It can demonstrate that education is part of the rhizmoic rather than binary reality of colonial relations in which the colonized position themselves to use educational opportunities albeit that of the dominant colonial power and all it contains, for their own advancement. In other words, it reveals the transformative thrust and agency in the efforts and sacrifices made by Trinidadians and Tobagonians to gain secondary school education particularly after the Second World War. Post-colonial theory also be used to understand how a society, newly independent from colonial rule, engages in a “two-way gaze”, that is adopting colonial structures and ideas but adapting them at the same time with the intent of creating a society poised to confront the future.

According to Hickling-Hudson (1998) post-colonial theory is useful in showing the relationship between the postcolonial present with the colonial past. In the process of decolonisation, colonial institutions are challenged, but while some are restructured, others keep their colonial form. All are however characterized by the tensions left by the imperial power. The legacies of colonialism remain. Further, Hickling-Hudson writes, “many of these legacies, including the stratified Eurocentric curriculum, have been challenged and tinkered with, but rarely comprehensively rethought or reshaped” (Hickling-Hudson, 1998, p. 329). In other words, a brand new unproblematic hybrid is created. Rather, the tensions between the colonised form and the post-colonial ideals and aspiration produce a highly problematic education system. Issues of access, quality and inclusion and the role of education in producing the skills and training required for economic development.

The system is also stratified in terms of school type (Jules, 1994). Students must take the SEA, a placement exam which determines the type of school: those with emphasis on academic subjects, and those which emphasize the vocational, 3 year, 5 year or 7 year. This stratification is an elaboration of the colonial structure in which there was limited access to elitist secondary schools

through a highly competitive exam. Hickling-Hudson (2003) argues that post-colonial education systems remain in a 19th century Eurocentric mould in terms of this stratification as well as the way schooling is organized along lines of:

“Age-grading, subject fragmentation and psychological manipulation. We continue [in the Caribbean] to require students to specialize in Western modes of knowledge and give them little of no opportunity to explore alternative epistemologies. In other words, discourses of neo-colonialism are extremely deep-rooted and difficult to change” (Hickling-Hudson, 2003, p. 382).

The classroom experience of children is dominated by drill, repetition and extreme focus on discipline and control and further, their ability to move from one stage of education to the next is determined only on academic performance (Hickling-Hudson, 2003). In Trinidad, teaching methods for the preparation for the SEA which exemplify these characteristics have been observed in the classroom (Kutnick et al. 1990) and in the test papers (Mackenzie, 1989).

Bhabha’s concept of ambivalence is instructive with regards to the SEA. Not only is the preparation for it repetitive, but it is itself repeated every year almost in the same drill like manner. In a post-colonial context, it could be argued that the SEA acts in the capacity of representation as it is always generating the stereotypes of the Other. The poor and working class children are destined to be placed in certain school types by writing an exam set up to place them there already and in advance as Said (1978) puts it. In the actual writing of the exam, they are being represented by its difficulty, by its use of Standard English and by its form. In other words, they are being produced as the Other, to be then put in the place of the Other.

2.4.4 Fanon and Education

Fanon argues for political education “for in the end everything depends on the education of the masses” (1963, p 159). This is not about political speeches or about the glorification of the political leader or his accomplishments but to:

“try relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and that the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people (Fanon, 1963, p. 159).

One of Fanon's fundamental concerns is that of the double role of leadership as progressive and as oppressive in the period after independence. In this crucial moment political leaders must do their part not by espousing doctrine but by releasing the people from their hold, i.e. so that national consciousness can be built. Education then as a means to an end such as developed status is illusive. The fundamental thrust of education is to bring the people closer to knowing themselves so that the need for political leadership is diminished, the gap between leaders and led is narrowed and the people stake a claim in the nation.

In post-colonial nations the role of the nationalist leader in formulating a new education of and for the people is often seen as an urgent goal. In pre-independence Trinidad according to Campbell (1997), Williams campaigned widely for a national curriculum, with West Indian history, rather than literacy at its core. He was also extremely concerned with the political education of the people but also with education as a means to development. The politics though outweighed the political education and the national curriculum became superseded by demands for qualifications to fill the ranks of the civil service and jobs in light manufacture. Immediate expansion of secondary school access was necessary and the Common Entrance Exam (the precursor to the SEA) was the means. It was a controlled opening up, one which contained the promise of development but at the same time retained Manichean aspects of the world it tried to eradicate.

Post-colonial theory offers a different perspective on education in Trinidad in general and on the SEA in particular. In this study it will be used in a text based analysis in which data is derived from the texts. The following chapter will discuss the methodology used to obtain data and interrogate the texts used.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Strategy

This research is based on documents: official Ministry of Education documents and policy papers, historical texts and data based on the research by others. It does not entail either the procurement of either quantitative or qualitative data directly, but rather the analysis of such data already collected. In other words the documents and texts are the data. The research strategy is qualitative in the sense that the qualitative methods would be used to analyse the material.

Epistemologically, an interpretivist approach rather than a positivist one facilitates the qualitative method (Bryman, 2004). The interpretivist approach is based on the view that an inquiry into the social sphere requires different methods from those employed in natural science inquiries, because the actions of people are not governed by strict and immutable laws (of motion for example), but rather they are influenced by a myriad of factors which are in turn shaped by human action. As Bryman (2004 p. 13) puts it, interpretivism “requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action.” Meaning is constructed by social actors; therefore, to come to terms with these meanings, the researcher must engage methods of interpreting these meanings. Bryman (2004) goes on to argue that the hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions are important aspects of interpretivism. The former is concerned with interpreting human action from the point of view of the actors and the latter with the meanings of social actions and how those meanings are acted on. Post-colonial theory is anti-positivist as it draws attention to role of positivist discourse in creating a binary world and generating and supporting the idea of Europe (and the West) as superior. The hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition is facilitated by a qualitative research strategy and is the epistemological position in this study.

The ontological position is constructivist. According to Bryman (2004 p. 17), constructivism “asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision.” All aspects of society are constructed by human actors. Social organizations and institutions are not objective with the power to shape social action without being themselves influenced by people. Culture is also not static with only an influencing effect on people, but rather it is constantly being formed. Post-colonial theory entails a constructivist view of the world to the extent that it uncovers the processes by which colonial

discourses and narratives construct the non-European or non-Western Other, through binary opposites. Post-colonial theory is also concerned with transformation that is how people reinterpret these oppositions and construct new potentially liberating meaning in their lives.

An inductive approach is used in this study. This rather than the deductive approach is best suited for qualitative research based on documents and texts such as this. As Patton (2002) argues, an inductive approach is not concerned with formulating causal, linear relationships using operationalized variables as does the deductive approach. Nor does it require the research to begin with a specific hypothesis before the collection of data, instead it begins with “specific observations and builds toward general patterns. Categories of dimensions of analysis emerge from open-ended observations as the inquirer comes to understand patterns that exist in the phenomenon being investigated” (Patton, 2002, p. 56). This study begins with and is guided by research questions. These inform the theory and analysis and findings should inform the theory. If findings do not lead to a resolution of the research questions the questions could be reformulated. The inductive approach is dynamic and iterative, in which there is a “repetitive interplay between the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2004, p. 399). The researcher should be open to the possibility of modification as the data may dictate. Strictly speaking, according to Bryman (2004) the inductive approach is one in which theory is the outcome of research. However, this is thesis is text based and does not entail the acquisition of new data. Hence the inductive process in the strict sense does not occur and is outside the scope of this work. Nevertheless, post-colonial theory is guided by the research questions and is in turn informed by the analysis to the extent that new questions and interpretations of post-colonial theory arise, which it is hoped could be useful in further research in this topic.

3.2 Research Design

As a qualitative text based study, purposeful sampling is most useful and effective in the procurement of relevant materials. According to Patton (2003, p. 230) “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry.” The objective is not to draw generalized conclusions but rather to shed light on the research questions and to understand how a social phenomenon is experienced in a given context. In this study, the goal is to examine the CE/SEA in the context of the process of decolonization using post-colonial theory as the guiding principle of analysis. While analyses may

or may not answer research questions, they may serve as a means for comparison with other Caribbean education systems which maintain the same structure and a similar English style high school entrance exam. In this study then the various documents and texts are the data selected purposefully according to their relevance to the historical development of the education system in Trinidad and the role and meaning of the SEA in that system. The data; documents and texts, are selected for their potential ability to reveal the issues, relationships and problems with regards to the SEA, in the context of the main research questions. The texts and documents are themselves the source of “rich” information and include the following:

- I. Ministry of education research, policy and other official documents such as strategic plans, policy papers, legislative documents and reports.
- II. Qualitative and quantitative research documents and reports from the University of the West Indies, UNESCO and other like institutions which deal specifically with education in the Caribbean and Trinidad and Tobago. These include monitoring reports on the state of primary and secondary education from UNESCO, and research papers on the placement process, and on the role of politics in education and in the exam.
- III. Texts which focus on the socio-historical context of education in the Caribbean and in Trinidad.

Snowball sampling of texts and documents was the approach used in the first instance. According to Patton (2002) in qualitative field research, it refers to the act of the researcher seeking out information-rich sources before the research commences. This is done by talking to people close to the context so that they could direct the researcher to rich sources. In time the researcher may find that certain names are repeatedly recommended and these become key informants. Prior to beginning this thesis, various people were contacted for guidance on texts and document, including a Caribbean historian and two education academics at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad campus. Discussions with them led to historical texts and ministry of education documents, which have become important sources of historical, statistical theoretical and analytical information.

With this type of research, emergent sampling is inevitable. As Patton (2002) points out, in qualitative field work, it refers to the choice of the researcher to go to new sources of information and data as the opportunities arise after field work has begun. The researcher makes decisions on the spot regarding interviews and sites for example and understands that it is not possible to be

prepared in advance for every eventuality. In a text based study, the same principle can be applied in which revealing, interesting and unexpected information and analysis in certain sources lead to other sources, thus enhancing the research. Here references in key texts sourced at the beginning were procured and discovered to have important insight and in some cases criticisms thus contributing to a deeper understanding of theory and circumstances.

3.2.1 Trustworthiness

The quality of quantitative research is judged according to the degree of reliability and validity in a given study. However, in qualitative research different criteria must be used to judge or evaluate the quality of the research. According to Patton (2002), qualitative research is concerned with human actors, who express various perspectives and accounts of a phenomenon. Thus reliability and validity are not very useful concepts. Firstly, the detailed accounts given by interviewees or the detailed descriptions written by participant observers for example cannot be replicated in other research contexts, so that according to Patton (2002), generalizable findings which establish reliability are not produced. Secondly, validity, that is the certainty that the correct constructs were measured, cannot be determined in the same way since “in qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument. [Therefore validity] hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence and rigor of the person doing the research” (Patton (2002, p. 14). Thus in qualitative studies, the concept trustworthiness is used instead of reliability and validity. According to Bryman (2004), to achieve trustworthiness the researcher must attend to several key points: credibility which corresponds to internal validity in quantitative research, transferability which corresponds to internal validity, dependability which corresponds to reliability and confirmability which corresponds to objectivity.

In this study these concepts have been incorporated so as to form a basis on which the quality of the research can be judged. One aspect of judging credibility is the degree to which the research was carried out according to established procedure. Another is verification. In qualitative research, the researcher’s account of reality, is only one of several and therefore needs to be verified. Here triangulation which will be discussed next is the method used to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

3.2.1.1 Triangulation

According to Bryman (2004), the method for verification is called triangulation and in qualitative field research it is achieved by cross checking with those observed or interviewed to verify if the

researcher's report corresponds to how they (respondents) perceive their own social experience. Moreover, as Patton (2002), points out, it is in data analysis that triangulation proves most fruitful "not only in providing diverse ways of looking at the same phenomenon but in adding to credibility by strengthening confidence in whatever conclusions are drawn" (2002, p. 556). In other words triangulation is a way of getting the reader to trust the content and analysis of the research by making it convincing and believable.

Patton (2002, p.556) insists that in triangulation, "the point is to test for consistency" not to prove that they do not occur. If they are detected, this should serve to enrich the research process as they may highlight certain other phenomenon and offer a different yet important perspective to the researcher. Consistency was tested for in this work by crosschecking findings in quantitative and qualitative research as well as the interpretations used in historical texts. This is revealed in the analysis in which for example, data concerning placement patterns in one quantitative research is corroborated in another. Also while different historians may focus on different aspects of Trinidadian history, consistencies in the historical account and analyses of Trinidadian society as well as the development of education have been observed.

Texts and documents are accounts which are produced by various authors and institutions and therefore there exists the possibility of inconsistencies with data as well as analysis. Triangulation is therefore a useful method to apply to a text based study. Patton (2002,) describes four kinds of triangulation the following three of which are relevant here:

- I. *Methods triangulation*: Checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods
- II. *Triangulation of sources*: Checking out the consistency of different data sources within the same method
- III. *Theory/perspective triangulation*. Using multiple perspectives or theories to interpret the data" (Patton 2002, p. 556).

In this study triangulation is done on Ministry of Education documents particularly out of concern regarding the intention and purpose of the production of these documents. Since this is a purely textual study, methods triangulation was performed by comparing qualitative and quantitative documents. For example Ministry policy (qualitative) documents and other qualitative research documents are triangulated with other quantitative ministry documents as well as those from other

sources such as academic papers and institutional reports. In a similar fashion, triangulation of sources is carried out by comparing Ministry of Education policy papers with research papers from the same ministry, with academic research papers and with research papers from other institutions such as UNESCO.

Triangulation of sources is also applied to the history texts used in this study in order to verify consistency in various historical accounts. In addition, the autobiography is triangulated with the historical texts for the same purpose of verifying the historical account, but also to compare the interpretations of events and processes in which the author played an important part, with those of the accounts in the history texts.

Multiple perspectives within post-colonial theory were used in this study for their variation in emphases and concerns. For example, Said (1977) was used to discuss representation through colonial discourse and Spivak for her concern of the limitations of representation. Bhabha was used for his concept of ambivalence and Ashcroft (2001) for his focus on resistance and transformation. Hall was used for his discussion of historical ruptures and transculturation and Fanon was the source the role of the nationalism, the nationalist party and national culture in the decolonization process. These theorist share the general thrusts of post-colonial theory and indeed overlap and refer to each other and this in itself in an inbuilt triangulation.

3.2.1.2 Selection of documents and texts

According to Prior (2003), texts and documents are products which are manufactured according to certain rules and in particular social settings. The process and context of the manufacturing of texts and documents inform their content and use. Also, the concept of authorship is problematic in the sense that certain documents such as books, plays and research papers require an identifiable author-subject while others such as acts of legislation and committee reports do not, referring instead to the institution or committee as author. In some cases, authorship is assigned to an institution. For example, MOE reports and documents while written by one or a few individuals are 'authored' by the Ministry. This gives them a certain legitimacy or sense of credibility of which the researcher must be aware. For example, a Ministry document may make certain claims about steps taken to implement certain policies and the researcher may be tempted to accept these claims as given, but again the method of triangulation with non-Ministerial documents can reveal inconsistencies. This method was employed here.

Prior also argues that the social science researcher should regard descriptions, images and explanations contained in documents as mere representations of the world and that the “world is actually constituted in and through documentation” (Prior 2003, p. 167). Texts and documents often function as tools to emphasize particular versions of phenomenon or visions of the world.

Prior (2003) then makes the point that whereas in quantitative studies, representative sampling and random section of data are used to ensure validity and reliability. These methods could be applied to the selection of documents in certain types of inquiries (for example correspondence between immigrants and their families). However, in text based case studies, representativeness is not required since the purpose is to explore a particular episode or phenomenon through which theoretical insight is expected to be gained. In text and document based research, purposive selection of texts and documents replace random selection. Prior (2003) argues that as part of the method of purposive sampling, the text and document based researcher must “specify in detail why it is that the cases selected for study have been so selected, and what the limits of the selection process might be” (Prior 2003, p. 155). Careful selection of documents and texts guided by research questions occur at the start of the research, but the explanation of the selection is also part of the methodology, as it ensures that the issue of trustworthiness is attended to. In this study, the following criteria were used to select documents and texts:

- I. Relevance – Texts which explored the historical development of education and the social history of Trinidad were selected. Main education policy documents from the MOE were selected. They were determined to be relevant and of central importance to the course of education planning by the references made to them by other research documents and texts. MOE documents were also selected if they dealt directly with the SEA as were quantitative and qualitative research papers and documents from sources other than the MOE.
- II. Research Data – Texts based on primary qualitative and quantitative research relevant to this work were chosen as it was important for the credibility of this work which did not itself gather primary data. It would not have been sufficient to use only secondary analysis or historical texts.
- III. Cross-referenced texts – Texts were chosen also if they were referenced in other texts with frequency and if the references were made in such a way as to recognize a certain authority in those texts. Brereton (2002), Knight (1978), Campbell (1996) and Campbell (1997) are

examples of such texts as Jules (1994), De Lisle et al. (2005), Kutnick et al. (1997) are examples of primary qualitative and quantitative research documents.

3.3 Sources of Documents

3.3.1 State and Organization Statistics

Bryman (2004) points out that official statistical data such as those put out by state agencies and ministries, and statistical data generated by non-governmental organizations have several advantages. As they are already collected the researcher obviously saves time especially as the sample base is usually large and often national in scope. Also the use of this type of statistics constitute an unobtrusive method in which the researcher is distanced from what is being studied thereby removing the problem of reactivity. According to Bryman (2004), reactivity occurs when the fact that people are fully aware that they are being studied through interviews or observation, influences them to behave or respond in an untypical manner. This affects the validity of the study and could be avoided in the use of state and organization generated as there is no direct involvement of respondents. In this paper reactivity is not a direct issue but one which is likely to have occurred in the secondary qualitative research documents used such as Kutnick et al. (1997).

Another advantage of using this type of statistics is that sample sizes are usually large, which allows for cross-sectional analysis using variables as class or race for example and for analysis of trends over time. Finally comparison with other national statistics is possible. In this study, official statistics from the Ministry of Education were used as well as from UNESCO and PIRLS Progress in International Reading Literacy Survey. They give a picture of the certain aspects of education for example, the administration of the SEA exam, the numbers of children taking it, distribution of results by schools, gender and region, breakdown of performance by individual subjects in the exam and enrolment and literacy rates in primary and tertiary education.

By and large official statistics offer a wealth of reliable information and an unobtrusive method, which give credibility to the study.

3.3.2 Ministry policy documents and research papers

Several Ministry of Education policy documents and research papers are used in this study. These were also procured from the ministry of education in Trinidad. As Bryman (2004) warns, official documents tend to be clear and comprehensive but they may be biased as they are depictions of reality and thus subject to the particular interpretations of the individual researcher. As with any other texts, such documents and papers must be approached critically as the ministry may wish to represent the organization in a particular light, downplay certain issues and highlight others as well as to demonstrate the accomplishments and goals of the ministry. When these discrepancies occur, they affect the credibility of the data and to avoid this triangulation with other non-ministerial sources is applied.

3.3.2.1 Secondary Analysis

According to Bryman (2004) secondary analysis is that carried out on the data collected by other researchers. These researchers may not have been involved in the procurement of the data, but have used and analysed them. All research papers from state and non state sources will be subjected to secondary analysis. Some of the advantages are similar to those outlined above (see section 6.3.1) for example the researcher has access to good quality data without having to personally procure data thereby reducing cost and time, the samples are usually representative and national in scope. This is particularly useful for researchers like students for whom it is difficult to obtain such representative samples. There is the opportunity for longitudinal and cross cultural analysis and since the data is already collected, the student can spend more time analysing rather than collecting.

Secondary analysis may also consist of reanalysing the interpretations of other researchers. In other words, a researcher may have analysed data have come to certain conclusions. But this analysis and conclusion when reviewed may yield different interpretations by a researcher who is approaching the material with different interests, different background information, different theoretical persuasion and different research questions.

Bryman also points out some limitations with secondary analysis. For example a lack of familiarity of the data requires the new researcher to “come to grips with the range of variables, the ways in which the variables have been coded, and various aspects of the organization of the data” (Bryman 2004, p. 205). This could be a time consuming process as the volume of data could be large and the researcher must make decisions about what material to use as well as how much of the original

analysis to engage. Finally, key variables may be absent and the “inability to examine the significance or otherwise of a theoretically important variable can be frustrating” (Bryman 2004, p. 206). In such a situation, the researcher may have to adjust the research questions or explicitly state this as a limitation of the study. This study would have benefited from the inclusion of several variables. These include:

- I. The point of view of the children who have taken the SEA and have been placed, would have illuminated the lived experience and would have addressed research question numbers 2 and 3
- II. The perspective at the time of independence, of education officials and intellectuals on education and development and on the adoption of the CE from England would have addressed research question number 1

These perspectives were, however not available in any of the material obtained. This could have been as a result of the non-existence of this material or shortcomings in the purposive sampling method used. Since in this method the researcher has to seek out specific documents and texts considered relevant, it is possible that if they exist, the researcher did not find them. Also in this case, the researcher is based in Norway and had only limited opportunity to procure documents from Trinidad.

3.3.3 Historical Texts Books

According to Mertens (2010), postmodernism and post structuralism have come to influence the field of history, which is increasingly relevant in social research in general and in research in education in particular. She argues that an historical approach may be necessary as the researcher may feel the need to gain an historical perspective of how conditions developed. This gives context and allows for a better understanding of the present. Mertens (2010) also suggests that the interest in history developed as researchers became directly concerned about the “lack of representation of oppressed groups in historical accounts” (Mertens, 2010, p. 268). Researchers therefore get a better grasp of the lives of oppressed people and can better envision and argue for a way forward. In other words they use history as a transformative tool.

An historical interrogation is imperative in this study as it is concerned with education in the post-colonial context and guided by post-colonial theory in which transformation is explicit. This necessarily requires an examination of the development of education in the colonial period and in

the context of decolonization immediately after independence. Its major tenet is that there is an important, enduring relationship between the colonial past and the post-colonial present. Accordingly, several Caribbean and Trinidad history texts have been used.

As is the case with documents and statistical data, historical texts are approached with the knowledge that they contain researcher bias and the selective use and interpretation of archival material. The historians' analyses are based on data which is primarily formal, state-generated documents. As such, they represent the official view of events at the historical period which must be filtered by the historian in order to come as close as possible to the lived experience of the historical subject. These challenges of the historian are never really overcome (Cohen et al., 2000; Mertens, 2010). Thus the researcher has to verify the credibility of a particular text by triangulating with other texts. If this is achieved, then it raises the trustworthiness of a text. In this study, credibility of history texts was verified by triangulation of historical texts with other historical texts

3.3.4 Autobiographies

Autobiographies are a form of personal documents and must be assessed according to the same principles. Prior (2003) argues that the consumer of texts, that is, those who read them, are active in the production process from before a word is written and this is especially true of producers of diaries, letters and autobiographies. Writers of these texts are acutely aware of their audience and this awareness influences what they write and may result in overstating, misleading and lying. Moreover Prior (2003) makes the point that although autobiographies are "normally presented as first-hand and individual accounts of personal experiences, it is clear that such texts are always the result of collective action – of editors, data gatherers, publishers, translators and so on" (Prior, 2003, p. 97). These factors could affect the authenticity of the texts.

According to Bryman (2004), the researcher must look for, authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning in autobiographies. The one used here; Williams (1968) was written by the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago who was a renowned historian and prolific writer. It would not be unreasonable to rule out lying as a compromising factor to authenticity. As an historian he would also have been aware that the historical content of his text would be scrutinized in detail. Authenticity could be affected by the fact that like any other autobiography this one has elements of a collective action as Prior (2003) pints out. Credibility is potentially an issue to the extent that the researcher is never absolutely sure that the writer conveyed

his/her own true feelings, and since autobiographies are generally written by well known individuals or those with high social status, the knowledge that their work may be widely read is likely to affect what they write and how events and the writer's role in them, are portrayed. In this case the writer's desire to highlight his accomplishments as Prime Minister particularly those in education and moreover one that has negotiated the terms and conditions of independence, is likely to affect credibility in that the book focuses on his intellectual positions and roles and largely excludes those of others. Also he may have downplayed the role of the people in bringing about change in education in particular.

Representativeness may be limited if for example, the document was written in a time when literacy was primarily the luxury of the privileged class. What is written then may be representative of a small group in the society. As far as this autobiography is concerned, representativeness is not a major issue as it is used not for its ability to represent widespread sentiments or experiences but rather to illuminate the following:

- i. The thinking of the first Prime Minister in terms of development in general and education in particular
- ii. The justifications for decisions made in education
- iii. The historical context in terms of decolonization
- iv. The matter of the role of leadership in the process of decolonisation
- v. The view of national culture by the leadership and of the ruling party

However, representativeness comes to play in the sense that there may have been other dissenting and alternative voices within the leadership which do not penetrate the Prime Minister's writing. Hence the analysis must be viewed in this light.

Meaning may be compromised to the extent that writers leave out certain information as they are assumed to be understood by the readers who share the writers' values and world view. This is difficult to determine, but is somewhat covered by the researcher's careful reading of the text which entails always being alert for assumptions made by the writer and implicit meanings in the text.

This potential is always bourn in mind in this study and addressed with comparison with other documents, i.e. triangulation is carried out.

3.4 Method of Analysis

Based on the above discussion, it can be stated that in this study, texts serve the following purposes: i) they provide historical context, ii) they provide relevant historical information, iii) they provide statistical data from official and non-official sources, iv) they provide analysis of data by other researchers, and v) they provide pertinent autobiographical information. In other words, the texts are sources of data, are themselves data and require interpretation. Where data are not explicit they have to be uncovered by a search for meaning, a process, which is facilitated by the hermeneutic approach.

As Patton (2002, p.498), contends “hermeneutics reminds us of the interpretative core of qualitative inquiry, the importance of context and the dynamic whole-part interrelations of a holistic perspective.” The key feature of this approach is that it is interpretive. It is based on the idea that all meaning is interpretive and contextual and as Mertens (2010 p. 16) put it, from a hermeneutics standpoint, “all knowledge.... is developed within a pre-existing social milieu, ever interpreting and reinterpreting itself, [and the method is used] as a way to interpret the meaning of something from a certain standpoint or situation.” For Patton, (2002, p. 113), the foundational question for this approach is “what are the conditions under which a human act took place or a product was produced that make it possible to interpret its meanings?” The researcher must become grounded in the context in which the texts were produced. This entails becoming familiar with the textual material as well as the social and cultural environment so as to better be able to engage in the process of interpreting the intention of the producer of texts. Themes can be drawn from the data based on the knowledge of the context. This approach is holistic in which the whole must be grasped in order to understand the parts. Such an approach brings the researcher closer to meaning.

This study benefits from the hermeneutics approach as it is particularly applicable to the study of texts. Hence the colonial and post-colonial experiences were explored in order to contextualize the data: statistical, analytical, autobiographical, and the research questions themselves.

4 Analysis

4.1 Historical Rupture – the establishment of the ‘Other’

At the time of conquest by the Spanish in 1498, Trinidad was home to native Carib and Arawak populations for more than 2,500 years. As with the rest of the Caribbean, European colonialism was characterized first by; the near obliteration of the native populations; conflict and wars over claims to the territories as they became increasingly lucrative; the plantation economy based on slave labour for the production primarily of sugar, coffee and cocoa for the benefit of European economies; and by various manifestations of colonial rule. By the 18th century, the plantation economy was firmly established. After the abolition of slavery in 1838, slave labour, Trinidad, then a British colony, experimented with indentured labour from various places but finally settled on a system of Indian indentureship in 1845 (see e.g. Brereton, 1979; Campbell, 1996; Williams, 1964). The geographical, cultural, linguistic and familial displacement of people was the basis of the plantation economy and as Hall (1990) argues the genocide, the slave trade, slavery and indentureship represent the violent ruptures which initiated the founding of the modern Caribbean.

During the 17th and 18th century sugar production was extremely profitable business. As a sector it contributed greatly to European economies. As Campbell puts it, through the plantation system, the Caribbean became “articulated into the Western European international economy and politics” (Campbell, 1992, p 87). Plantation owners wielded considerable political power and in Britain became known as the West India interest. This in turn became increasingly dependent on a distinct, free and wage - earning labour force for production and consumption. By the early 19th century, slave labour had become obsolete, Caribbean sugar uncompetitive and the British economy was “no longer narrowly Atlantic and subservient to the domineering West Indian interest” (Knight, 1978, p. 125). Further, a mounting humanitarian movement revealed the horrors of slavery to the European public and gradually received considerable support. These factors led to the abolition of the slave trade in 1806 and finally to the abolition of slavery in 1838 in the British West Indies.

Slavery and the plantation system functioned on the basis of an unyielding social hierarchy in which slave labour was the backbone of sugar production. The social construction of slaves as the “Other” was critical to the maintenance of this hierarchy of production and social order. As Knight points out, “the colonial slave society existed under enormous social tension. (This) resulted from the nature of the slave society (which) presented the spectacle of a small minority of whites dominating

a large mass of black and mixed persons. Race, ethnicity, and color were facts of everyday life; the indelible badges of status and condition” (Knight, 1978, p. 129). A fundamental division between slaves and whites was formed and as a result of miscegenation, there emerged a third sector; the free coloureds. The structure was pyramidal, with the minority of whites occupying the apex, the free coloureds below followed by the free blacks with the mass of the slave population at the bottom. But the pyramid represents a complex and overlapping three-tiered system, the legacies of which remain.

The creation of the colonial “Other” was supported by the legal system. According to Campbell (1992), in slave societies, each of the major groups; whites, coloureds, slaves, were subjected to a special body of laws. Harsh slave laws defined slaves as chattel. This distinguished them diametrically from whites and to a lesser but still significant extent, from free coloureds and free blacks. As chattel, restrictions and prohibitions characterized everyday life for slaves but whites were subjected to ordinary law as European subjects. The legal status of free coloureds and blacks was somewhere in the middle. They were subjected to separate laws but also to some slave laws and some ordinary laws. Neither slave nor free, they occupied an ambiguous social middle ground subjected to more complicated, often modified laws which restricted (but did not altogether deny them) their political rights, their right to own land and freedom of movement.

This social pyramid with its three layers did not undermine the Manichean world split between the ‘superior’ European and the ‘inferior’ Other (see e.g. Said, 1978). The reference to good and bad was that of black and white, hence the place of the coloureds was always ambivalent and insecure. The laws were often revised always keeping the coloureds in a context of ambivalence and insecurity. The laws firmly established that they were not white (see for e.g. Brereton 1979, Campbell, 1992, Knight, 1978). But the rigid social stratification reinforced by slave laws was not absolute. The slave period was in fact characterized by a myriad of modes of resistance to oppression from revolution in Haiti to uprisings throughout the rest of the region from Cuba to Trinidad, from various forms of cultural resistance to burning of plantations, from infanticide to insolence and the frustration of the production process (see e.g., Mintz, 1985; Patterson, 1975; Trotman, 1986). As subalterns according to Spivak (1988), slaves do not speak through the written record. Rather they speak through their actions often recorded in the official record as set-backs and problems experienced by the oppressor class/race, but which are in fact as Ashcroft (2001), acts of resistance and attempts of transformation.

Trinidad – some distinctions

The social structure of Trinidad represents the three-tiered character of Caribbean societies but it has developed into a more diverse and culturally complex society than in other islands because of the various waves of immigration to its shores. The plantation and slave system took root in Trinidad due to an initiative of the Spanish government called the “Cedula,” to entice planters from the French islands to settle in Trinidad. According to Campbell (1992), the distribution of free land based on the number of slaves brought, was incentive enough for large numbers of white planters as well as free coloured planters to come in large numbers to Trinidad. Free coloureds though got less land than the whites because they were not white

The “Cedula” affected a permanent and important shift in the pattern of social development in Trinidad. It introduced the first influx of people of Africans to the island as well as the French. The still Spanish owned island quickly became a mix of Spanish, French and African culture and language with French becoming the language of the elite and a patois that of the mass of the population. Trinidad was captured by the British in 1797 but its social structure remained and as in the rest of the Caribbean, the enslaved Africans remained at the bottom and constituted the majority population. In other words, the Manichean world that Fanon (1963) discusses remained intact. The opposition set up in the Manichean world is in relation to whites so that all non-white people constitute the other.

But the three-tiered structure in Trinidad became even more complex in the post emancipation period. Again, immigration for the purpose of the plantation economy changed its demography with significant and permanent social effect. After experimenting with Irish, Scottish, Portuguese and Chinese indentured and even “freed” African labour the colonial authorities looked to India. From 1845 to 1917 Trinidad received a steady flow of Indian indentured workers, whose working and living conditions were not far removed from slavery. Nevertheless, most of them became permanent settlers and today make up about 42% of the population (see e.g. Brereton 1979, Campbell 1992, and Lawrence 1994).

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, immigrants also came in large numbers from Venezuela and neighbouring islands like Barbados, Grenada and St. Vincent to find work. To them, Trinidad was a new frontier, a contrast to the old colonies which were now experiencing economic decline. The

Venezuelans in particular filled the need for workers in the cocoa and coffee plantations, adding to the cultural diversity of the island.

Trinidad's cultural diversity was produced according to Hall (1996) by a transnational and transcultural 'global' process. The history of its peoples is therefore not rooted in a nation-centred grand narrative, but rather in the way in which they encountered colonialism and the way in which through this encounter, a society was forged.

Another important historical difference between Trinidad and the rest of the Caribbean is that up to the turn of the 18th century, the white elite was divided along political, social and cultural lines. In fact the society had the "unusual experience of bitter conflict among the composite elements of the White population throughout the second half of the 19th century" (Singh, 1994, p. 2). The island was now a British colony but it would be in the unique position of being owned and governed by the British but with Spanish laws, French language and customs, a dominant Roman Catholic religion and an established Creole culture among the African slave population. The second half of the 19th century saw the Anglicization of the island during which, British laws replaced Spanish and the English language became official and with English cultural norms becoming more dominant. Education played a pivotal role in this process. This distinct aspect of the white experience in Trinidad gives a slightly different perspective on the transnational, transcultural global process in that the various European elite encounter each other in a context of power within the Manichean world. The process of overcoming the tensions in this encounter contributed to the nuances of the social makeup of the contemporary period and played an important role in the development of education.

By the second half of the 19th Century the heyday of the sugar industry and the plantation system was over but the social fabric woven by slavery and indentureship was firmly in place. To reduce administrative costs of the West Indian islands which had now become a liability, Britain moved towards the political amalgamation of its territories. In 1897 Tobago was united with Trinidad to become the Colony of Trinidad & Tobago. Later in 1899 it became a ward of the colony. French planters in Trinidad had turned to cacao and coffee production which by the early 1800s had become very profitable. After the decline of agriculture on a whole, the twin island colony would rebound with the discovery of oil in Trinidad. According to Kelvin Singh, between 1911 and 1936 the oil industry had expanded dramatically, with an increasing amount of state lands leased to oil companies accompanied by increased production and a total of 18 companies operating in the

colony (Singh 1994, p. 158 - 159). Trinidad and Tobago now became an oil economy, with great implications for its development.

4.2 Colonial Education

4.2.1 The period of slavery

According to Campbell, “slavery and the formal education of slaves were considered incompatible by the slave owners of Trinidad” (Campbell 1996, p.1). The function of slaves was to fulfil the labour needs of the plantation economy and nothing else. Represented as the “Other” in the Manichean world that was colonialism, slaves existed in binary opposition to the European colonizers: child-like at best, savage at worst and incapable of benefiting from civilizing forces such as education. Slaves being chattel were what Spivak (1988) refers to the subalterns, i.e., without a political voice through which their consciousness could be articulated as is the case for the ‘working class’. Indeed theirs is not the consciousness of the working class but one that is determined by the specific conditions of slavery in the Anglo-Caribbean context.

There were only two primary schools run by the state. It is not clear who they served, but one can speculate that it was a few upper class children. Campbell (1996), points out that there were a few private schools run by individuals for the education of white children and free coloured children. There was also a board which acted as a watchdog to “ensure that such schools did not violate the social principles of the subordination of all non-white to whites, and of slaves to masters” (Campbell 1996, p. 246). No system of education was developed in this period, but the social principles in which ex-slaves were seen as fit only for menial agricultural labour would dominate the discourse around education for decades after emancipation. By virtue of its absence and the vigilance against its inception as a means of breaking social barriers, access to education was established as a marker which divided the Manichean world into the ‘superior’ and civilized whites and ignorance with the inferior and uncivilized blacks. The absence of education in the slave period is the precursor to limited primary education in the post-emancipation era and later, to the distinct separation between primary and secondary education. In the slave period, education is established as a site of the reproduction of the Manichean world.

4.2.2 The Churches and the State: Setting the Stage for Post Independence Structure

Attitudes towards education of blacks did not change immediately after emancipation (see e.g. Brereton, 1979; Campbell, 1996). There was no decisive epochal transformation. Sugar production for export to European markets was still the basis of the economy to which the now ex-slaves were still tied either as wage labourers or as peasant farmers. The social structures did not come tumbling down, but change did come incrementally, as the masses began to seize opportunities for uplifting themselves socially and politically and as colonial attitudes altered, and vested interests began to wane. As post-colonial theory posits, great epochal changes do not mark the history of decolonization (see e.g., Ashcroft, 2001; Hall, 1996). Emancipation did not eradicate the Manichean nature of the society but cracks were beginning to appear in its once formidable walls. Colonialism's ambivalence, once powerful in its production of stereotypes (Bhabha, 1994), begins slowly to lose some of its power of representation through for example, education. Education as opportunity began to displace education as the state's and elite's means to fill in those cracks in the walls, to maintain the colonized as the Other; uncivilized, uneducable.

According to Brereton (2002) in the post-emancipation period the elite's hostility towards mass education was matched by the state. The education of both urban and rural workers was seen as an exercise in futility. The fear was that children would refuse to perform manual labour and despise agricultural work or that they would look to education for social mobility. The idea was that education should function in the service of the hierarchical society not to change it. Moreover, policy that education was not the business of government prevalent in England at the time was reflected in the Trinidad. This left a space for the Christian churches to firmly establish themselves as the main providers of education, however flawed in terms of quantity or quality. The state only began to play a role in the provision of education in mid-19th century when attitudes in England began to turn more positively towards mass education and by that time the churches, especially those run by the French Catholics, had become a force to be reckoned with. By this time, the Presbyterian Church had established itself as the only provider of education for the Indian indentured labourers, isolated in the plantation barracks. The idea that the Churches were in the best position to provide moral and spiritual guidance to the population became firmly implanted among many and became a point of contention between those for and against the denominational schools (see e.g. Brereton, 1979; Campbell, 1996).

By the end of the 19th century, education in Trinidad was divided along racial, class, color and religious lines. It not only mirrored social divisions, but actively sought to reproduce them. In other words, it was an arena in which the concept of the colonial “Other” was reproduced (Said, 1978). The grip of the denominational churches in education according to Eric Williams (1969) in 1911, the government had left education almost entirely in the hands of Christian churches. This abdication of responsibility resulted in the “total absence of uniformity in the school system. Instead of the school helping to obliterate the differences of race, religion and nationality inherent in the demographic structure of Trinidad, it helped to accentuate them” (Williams 1969, p. 22). The Churches therefore played an important role in maintaining colonial structure. Williams’ objective was to challenge the power of the Churches as arms of colonialism. Moreover he felt that it was the role of the modern state to provide and manage a nation’s education system (Williams, 1968; Campbell, 1997). Religious instruction often constituted the bulk of primary denominational education, with bible often the only book used particularly in rural schools (Brereton, 1979; Campbell, 1996).

4.2.2.1 The state-Church conflict in education

A predominance of Roman Catholic schools operated in French and to a lesser degree Spanish, and a few Protestant schools in English. There was no uniform education system and religious instruction was the main focus. The issue of language of instruction symbolized the continued dominance of French culture and the Catholic Church in a British colony. As Campbell (1996) argues, to address this, the colonial government embarked on a mission to undermine the role of the Catholic Church in education through a policy of anglicizing the provision of education by instituting a system of free primary, secular education in English parallel to that provided by the various churches. A rift was thus created between state and the Catholic Church the repercussions of which are still felt today.

However, as Campbell (1996) notes, because of a lack of local revenue, few new schools were built and the secular system never gained ground over the denominational system. Further, school attendance was chronically low. The rigors of life and the paucity of any meaningful teaching and the almost non-existence of opportunities to be derived from education, were deterrents to parents. It could be argued that parents not unaware of the type of reinforcement of the Manichean world which the religious and rudimentary, education offered resisted it by keeping their children at home. One major and long-lasting repercussion of this period is that ‘denominationalism’ was imbedded in the education system; although religious instruction was banned from the state schools, the

denominational boards were allowed and encouraged to offer religious instructions in the ward schools. The thinking was that lower classes needed a moral code based on Christian beliefs (Campbell, 1996). The role of education was to contain and repress the culture and religious beliefs of the population of ex-slaves, constantly reinforcing the position that anything African needed to be but in fact could never be completely exorcised. This cultural cutting off of the colonized is what Hall (1990) refers to as the irreversible rupture of colonialism. But this constant reinforcement is what Bhabha (1994) refers to as ambivalence, which produces stereotypes through the 'book'. In the case of denominational schools, the 'book' is the bible. Religious instruction through the bible served the purpose of consistently reproducing the colonized as the Other, maintaining its difference and marginality to European culture and civilization. The dominance of the view that religion was central to education was one of the challenges faced by the independent state as it tried to wrestle control from the denominational boards (Campbell, 1997).

According to Brereton (2002), pressure from a report by the British Inspector of Schools in 1870, resulted in the first education reform in the colony. This resulted in the establishment of the *dual system* in which the state funded both denominational and state schools on a competitive basis so as to curb government expenditure. With the state's education policy increasingly becoming one of "economy and retrenchment", as Brereton (2002, p.76) puts it, the role of the denominational schools in the provision of primary education in Trinidad became further entrenched. By 1920 when free, compulsory education was legislated the position of the denominational churches in the provision of education was consolidated and as Campbell (1996, p. 33) puts it, "they became morally, socially and politically the norm". Significantly, denominational schools were funded by the state, but not under its full control.

London (2002) argues that in the period 1930 – 1960, the curriculum and teaching practices implemented in Trinidad were based on aspects of British pedagogical ideologies which represent convenient convergence of knowledge and values deemed appropriate for the colonised: Mental discipline in which rote learning and repetition was considered important for forming the colonial mind: a kind of drilling into submission; Humanism in which knowledge of British heroes and English literature was seen as necessary in shaping the colonial character into beholding and admiring all things British. Child study in which the childhood stage of development matched that of the cultural development of human beings, thus stories, myths and fables all from European cultures were used in teaching; Social efficiency in which obedience to the law and social norms was the focus and in which it was believed that it was wasteful to teach children anything more

than what they required in the world of work, which in the case of the colonized, was primarily agricultural work and basic numeracy and literacy skills (London 2002).

These dominant forms are pedagogical methods of creating the colonial “Other”. However, what is important here is that this is never an absolute, uncontested process. As Ashcroft (2001) argues, resistance is multifaceted and occurs in all the rhizomic ways that oppression occurs, not only in a vertical line but horizontally and in a myriad of interactions. Low attendance where school places are available, demonstrates in part a resistance to these attempts at shaping and moulding the consciousness of the colonized into the “Other”. The idea of taking advantage of educational opportunity only became prevalent when it was perceived by the oppressed, that opportunity was indeed present, that there was something to be gained. According to Singh (1994), after WW1, Trinidad experienced increase in revenues which boosted the local economy and increased the availability of jobs outside the agricultural sector. Also attitudes of the colonial government as well as the British government towards expenditure in education became more favourable. The post WW1 years then, as Campbell (1997) points out, saw massive increases in enrolment due not to population growth alone but also to the “expansion of aspiration” (1997, p.35). Aspiration grew when opportunities and perceived benefits grew and with aspiration came demand for education, which the colonized were now more than ever before determined to take advantage of.

At this point education came to represent not the attempts of the colonial government and the elite to gain hegemonic control over them, or to shape their minds and hearts, but rather opportunity for a better life. A post-colonial theory argues that the oppressed are constantly engaged with their oppressor in ways to resist, to define themselves in their own terms. From the point of view of the colonized, education is one tool of liberation. Education was no longer resisted but rather a site for resistance and transformation.

The creation of the secondary school bottle neck

Competition between churches for the flock, the attempts of the colonial government to anglicize the religious and culturally diverse colony, changes in the attitudes towards mass education and the expansion of aspiration and demand by the oppressed, resulted in a primary school system which ran the length and breath of the island. The opposite was the case with secondary schools (Campbell, 1996).

In the 19th century and well into the 20th, secondary education was limited to the upper class whose children attended exclusive primary schools. According to Brereton (1979), the state established the first boys' secondary school in 1859; the Collegiate School which was "intended for the education of the upper-class white boys whose parents could not afford (or chose not) to send them to British public schools" (Brereton 1979, p. 71). A Catholic secondary school was set up in 1863 by the French Order of the Holy Ghost called St. Mary's. St. Joseph's Convent for girls was actually set up in 1836. These were the exclusive domain of catholic boys and girls of French descent. These first secondary schools were modelled after the elitist English grammar schools. Graduates filled the ranks of the firms which would only hire whites, operating in the colony and of the civil service, the purview of the white elite. A few upper-class coloured boys were educated here too. They prepared students for entrance exams for Oxford and Cambridge two elite universities in England. Serving a tiny minority of the population: Almost all white girls and boys and a few coloured boys, they established affirmed and entrenched the idea that secondary education was the purview of a tiny minority.

The exorbitant fees charged endured that blacks and Indians (and many coloureds) were kept out. The state school, however, accepted 4 boys per year from poor families who passed an annual entrance exam called the College Exhibition. These 4 places were called "free places" and the boys who got them were "freeboys". Girls from poor families had no opportunity for secondary education.

The free places in the Collegiate school reserved for 4 boys from poor families was a point of contention and represented the negative attitude toward mass education by the elite and the hurdle which had to be overcome later on when universal free education came on the agenda for the independent state. According to Brereton (1979), in 1893 the issue of removing the state support of the "free boys" was debated in the legislative council and a hot debate raged in the press. Arguments against this practice range from the fear of contamination from immoral elements, to the belief that the boys did not have the mental capacity to proceed to secondary education. The fact that a liberal voice argued that the places should be increased to 3 per 100,000 shows the extent to which the mass of the population was denied secondary school education. The College Exhibition then was the gatekeeper to secondary school exam and was the precursor to the CEE and later the SEA. Also the notions that primary school education should be final at age 11 and entrance to high school should be determined only by competitive exam remained a fixture in the education system (Campbell, 1996).

A bottle neck was created at the secondary level of education. According to Campbell (1996), by the onset of the 20th century, the demand for high school education increased. An expanding commercial sector needed high school educated employees and the state and denominational boards began to require secondary education for primary school teachers. An increasing number of people from poor and working class families who now perceived real tangible benefits from education, wanted to give their children the opportunity to attain secondary education. This new demand was met by the establishment of a number of affordable private secondary and commercial schools by some of the educated blacks and coloureds which catered for the youth in those populations. Though these students did not write university entrance exams reserved for the elite high schools, they did take Cambridge exams which granted certificates. Importantly, none of these high schools gained the prominence of the original two which were elitist then and termed “prestigious” now. However, they performed the important role providing that educational opportunity which the people demanded and which neither the state nor the boards were willing to provide. In fact, these private schools, not the state, were the first to open up access to secondary schools. Here again is an example of the transformation thrust in the actions of the oppressed. They had to innovate and be persistent so as to meet the financial and human requirements to open these schools. For those who sent their children there, though the fees were far less expensive than the elite schools, they were still exorbitant to the poor and working class families. Sacrifices had to be made to send children to secondary school based on the belief that education could change their lives. In effect, the poor and working class claimed education.

Here Ashcroft’s (2001) analysis of interpolation is relevant. The fact that only a few boys got access to secondary schools constitutes colonial oppression. Power is often diffused so that no law prohibited poor, black and Indian boys from going to these schools, but the fees kept made it impossible for them to attend and the College exhibition acted as a gate-keeper allowing only a handful of boys on a yearly basis, ensuring and maintaining the racial imbalance. But boys did pass the exam and increasingly voices were heard making the argument that these schools should offer more scholarships (Campbell, 1997). By always sending boys up for the college exhibition but more than that, by believing that they deserved a place at these elite institutions people were resisting. This was a strategy of resistance or interpolation. The same can be said of the insistence of blacks to start their own schools: Humble institutions at first, but intent of sending children to take exams. In fact passing exams became the measure of achievement as well as opened possibilities for better jobs (Campbell, 1997).

The 20th century would see a slow improvement as more boys and girls of lesser means accessed an increased number of elite denominational secondary schools as well as to the newly established private ones through the College Exhibition scholarships. All secondary schools were fee-paying. By the time of independence, the social structure of Trinidad and Tobago was largely unchanged, but with a somewhat larger black middle class in Tobago and black and colored middle class in Trinidad.

From the mid 1800s to well after independence, reforms of education in Trinidad would be shaped and influenced by pressure from the elite Catholic lobby, the colonial government's position on state funding of education, the aversion of the state and the elite to mass secondary education and the state's wish to dampen the denominational boards' control over education. Up to the post independence era, those against denominational schools argued that they were socially divisive and financially wasteful; that they fermented religious rivalries and hardened cultural differences and in the case of the new independent leadership, that they inhibited a sense of nationalism (Campbell 1996, p. 5). These debates persist in varying degrees, and are inextricably linked to the SEA, which is the mechanism for selecting students for the various levels of secondary schools.

4.3 Education & Independence

4.3.1 The education context at the eve of independence

Although by the late 1950s the colonial education system allowed free, fairly widespread primary education to parts of the population, it still resembled in form and content, the system of the early decades of the 20th century. Its focus was on the development of agricultural and home economics skills with a heavy European emphasis. Christian denominational boards operated the majority of schools both primary and secondary in a multi ethnic and multi religious society. The system then was fractured, minimal to the majority, prejudicial and elitist with the denominational boards playing a major role. Secondary education was a privilege.

Eric Williams, the leader of the PNM and the country's first prime minister and a Caribbean historian, demonstrated in his *Education in the West Indies* that the secondary school curriculum was far removed from the real needs of the population. He stressed that

it is so severely restricted to the few that the English education that it provides becomes a sign of class distinction. It is so little an integral part of any national

system of education, so little articulated with the primary system, that the director of education for the British West Indian colonies is responsible only for primary education (Williams, 1968, p. 31).

The secondary schools ran their own affairs. Williams was writing about the British Caribbean colonies as a whole and this was exactly the situation in Trinidad. Secondary school had no relationship or connection with primary school. Its curriculum, social milieu and function were distinct and constituted a separate, elite segment of the education system.

Independence was obtained in 1962, but the party in power the PNM had won previous elections in 1956, the first under universal adult suffrage. As Campbell (1997) points out on the eve of the 1956 elections, there were 336 denominational primary and 68 government primary schools. Secondary schools were divided as follows: 12 denominational, 21 private and 3 government schools. In 1961, the Common Entrance Exam, developed in England in the 1920s, was introduced “as a device for allocating eligible primary school students to secondary schools” (London 1997, p.66). It was one of the earliest reform undertaken by the government and indeed the first major reform in education.

4.3.2 Egalitarian and Nationalist Objectives in Education

Education for all was on the immediate agenda for the independent government of the PNM. The party had won pre-independence elections in 1956, in which universal education was its main promise. Like many post-colonial regimes, education was seen as an imperative to development and to becoming truly independent actors in the world stage. Trinidadians had come to understand that education stood as a barrier between the haves and the haves-not and this agenda was fully supported. As outlined above, part of the legacy of slavery and indentureship in the Caribbean is its social structure, “pyramidal in shape with light skin color and wealth converging at the top and black skin color and poverty at the bottom” (Pantin, 1996, in Busby and Kambon, 2000, pg. 23). For those at the bottom: blacks and Indians, education, particularly secondary school education was of particular concern, their ticket out of poverty. Secondary education was perceived as a means out of menial labour which was constant reminder of the Manichean divisions created in colonialism. Secondary education represented to the oppressed, the possibility of challenging the Otherness inscribed to them.

Education was the main vehicle for the PNM’s nationalist agenda. Expansion in access to secondary school in particular was the milestone with which this could be judged. As noted earlier,

secondary education was elitist and only a small minority of working class blacks and Indians had the privilege of education beyond post primary. While commercial private schools played an important role in filling the gap, still the vast majority of the islands youth could not afford secondary education. The degree of control of education wielded by the denominational boards had created racial, cultural and religious demarcations within the system. To a large extent, this both reflected and reproduced the divisions of the society. The objective of the PNM heavily influenced by Williams as scholar and historian with special interest in the effects of colonialism on education was to foster a national consciousness which meant confronting the divisiveness in the society. As Williams (1969, p. 156) put it, “the principal battleground in this nationalist struggle was the school.” Control of the education system had to be wrested from the hands of the clergy. The government of the independent nation had to harmonize its education system in terms of its management, curriculum and structure. An important aspect of this impetus was the construction of secondary schools to increase access for the marginalized black and Indian youth. With limited resources, the new PNM government (which has only spent 2 terms out of office since 1956) began to expand the education system. Primary and secondary school enrolment increased and a massive school building program was initiated to facilitate its promise of education for all. This was a monumental task. Rapid expansion occurred particularly by the government. By 1963, there were 20 denominational, 77 private and 15 secondary schools (Campbell 1997).

A few months before departing to London to present the independent constitution, Williams, then Chief Minister, argued the following to the Legislative Council, the body of elected and nominated members of government:

As long as our Constitution does not seek to import into our life any of these prejudices and irrationalities; as long as our Constitution does not seek to turn the clock back; as long as we are on this road to progress; as long as our Constitution does not prevent the free secondary school from being the cradle of the new nationalism of Trinidad and Tobago assimilating all the different cultural stocks and racial strains in this society; as long as it does not do that, then we, as a whole.... Can sit down and argue about the powers of the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, and let the society go. It is on the right line; let the locomotive of society proceed on that track, knowing perfectly well that it will not be derailed.

Let the secondary school be the cradle of the new society which has one aim in view – the repudiation of the absurd and irrational prejudices imposed on it from above (Williams, 1969, p. 283).

Education, in particular secondary education was the mechanism by which nationalism would be achieved. It would potentially eradicate the colonial ideologies which had a stranglehold on the society. Race, religion, colour and class, the categories of identities, propagated in colonialism and at the same time justified and maintained by it, would be dealt a clean blow by secondary education (Williams, 1969).

Fanon (1963) warns of the Western educated nationalist leader who at first passionately arouses the people with anti-colonial rhetoric, but later he becomes authoritarian and betrays them and finally he becomes isolated. As Palmer (2006) contends that Williams denounced colonialism as the enemy of the people in all aspects of national life and his anti-colonial stance drove him to action. He used the power of his oratorical skills to gain the attention and trust of the people turning education into a nationalist cry. In his famed 'Massa Day Done' speech given as part of his independence campaign, which according to Palmer (2006, p. 23) "will go down in the historical annals as one of the strongest indictments of the psychological impact of colonial rule made by a head of government anywhere", Williams extolled that Trinidadians were not beholden to anyone, they were free to steer the course of their country. He spoke of an educated people who would no longer do the menial labour for the Massa (White slave owner). In an address to school children on his return from England to an independent Trinidad, he told the children that the country's future depended on their education. Education was the weapon to attack the colonizer; it was a tool for nationalism. Fanon's (1963) fundamental critique of nationalism is that it is conceived as an end in itself as if it constitutes liberation. Nationalism for Fanon is instead a short-term stop on the way to national consciousness.

Education for Fanon (1963) is the servant of national consciousness. To educate the masses is to empower them with the understanding that liberation depends on them and not on a great leader. Education of the masses must not be in the service of the nationalist party or the nationalist leader, who often plays a double role of promoting education as a liberating force and at the same time using it for self-aggrandizement or to justify the rule of the nationalist party. Williams and the PNM played this double role in the post-independence period. Once secondary education for all was *almost* achieved, this accomplishment was always used by Williams to rally the nationalist agenda. Williams became the man who fulfilled the promise of free education to an independent people, and when he became that man, the shortcomings of that free education for example were downplayed, ignored or even spun into a gain. The fact that there was never enough secondary spaces for all children in the 11+ age cohort; that the system remained intensely stratified, keeping

the elite in elite schools; that the new schools built for the masses quickly began to seem inferior were all left out of the speeches and the lectures.

Williams' objective was also to make the curriculum more relevant to Trinidad and the Caribbean. In his book on education in the Anglo-Caribbean, he examined various problems in education provision in the region, including access, curricular, agriculture in schools, technical and vocational education and tertiary education (Williams, 1968). His main concern was as Campbell (1997, p. 67), puts for the "sweeping West Indianization of the curriculum [and] to improve knowledge of West Indian affairs, impart pride and impart the cultural basis for decolonization and nationalism." The curriculum in Trinidadian schools as with those throughout the Caribbean resembled that of England. English texts, poetry, stories, teaching methods, and exams were intricately woven into the system. As Williams (1969, p.33) points out "Be British was the slogan not only of the Legislature, but also of the school". West Indian history was not taught in primary schools and only to the lower classes of secondary schools. Nothing of the culture of Trinidadians made its way to the school system, instead, images of snow, empire, knights and European wars.

Williams expounded on this gaping discrepancy in the education system in his books and public lectures. He argued that:

the teaching of history should not as hitherto, present the British West Indies through British spectacles as so many annexations and by-products of European power politics. Rather it should emphasize the history and development of the islands and peoples themselves and if it is properly presented, much light will be shed on British world history by approaching it from the British West Indian angle.... Literature should draw on the wealth of descriptions of the local West Indian scenery... the bird, insect and animal life, the flowers and the vegetation which West Indies have in such profusion (Williams 1968, p. 53-54).

As London (2002) points out, humanism as a pedagogical practice imposed from Britain emphasized the exposure of students to Western history and culture so as to inculcate reason. History and grammar and literature were especially important. Human will and choice it was believed should be informed by historical understanding and the structure of language was supposed to reflect the structure of thought. Literature helped the student understand the essentials of human qualities. In Trinidad, this method was actively pursued particularly in the period 1930- to 1959. Textbooks like the Royal Readers contained excerpts from the "great English novelist such as Charles Kingsley, Dickens, Goldsmith and Swift [and history lessons focussed] on 'heroes'

of Western civilizations and the Vikings, Napoleon, Charlemagne, and Odysseus and the Cyclops (Polyphemus) are examples. Additionally, topics such as the Magna Carta, the Roman Empire and the Conquest of Ireland received considerable attention” (London 2002, p. 11). Inspectors of schools judged performance according to the degree to which these were met. For the decolonization project headed by Williams then, there was a lot to be done with education and a lot was to be accomplished through it.

Methods of teaching and forms of knowledge constituted the dominant colonial discourse and were an intrinsic part of the education system in which the colonial “Other” was constantly defined through the curriculum. The hybridity of colonial existence was also created within and in the experience of the curriculum in which according to London, (2002, p 298), “the colonized experienced a kind of trauma as they come to realize that they will never attain the whiteness they have been taught to desire nor shed the blackness they have learned to devalue”. This is an example of what Bhabha (1994) calls the ambivalence of colonial discourse in which the split between the colonizer and the colonized is produced. Through literature, the colonizer represents itself, always looking back to justify colonial domination through literature in constant repetition. The concept of the Other is constantly reproduced and this gives discourse its power. But the question must be asked: what is the colonized producing? Is the colonial discourse a unidirectional oppressive tool in the hands of the colonizer? Hall (1996) argues that the colonialism is encountered in different ways so that cross-fertilization takes place in which the colonized culturally reconstitutes itself a process through which the identity of the “Other” is rejected. While children were going to school to learn about British accomplishment and might, their parents were reshaping their world, one example of this is the invention of the steel-pan possibly the only musical instrument invented in the 20th century. This is an instrument created with discard oil drums, the symbol of great wealth which did not reach the mass of the population. Other local hybrid musical and dance forms were developing in contra-distinction to the concept of the Other. These forms represent the emergence of national culture which Fanon (1963) discusses, in the sense that they are the expressions of the action and thought of the people, not of an ideal lost African, Indian or, any other place, origin.

4.3.3 The Common Entrance Exam CEE

The CEE was instituted in Trinidad in 1961. It was considered a “democratising thrust capable of exerting equalising pressure on the society” (Campbell 1997, p.71) because it was the mechanism for increased access to secondary school education promised by the PNM.

The Common Entrance Exam was implemented as a levelling tool in the movement to expand access to secondary school. As Nagy (2000) points out, when control of education moves from private hands to the public realm and access is expanded, it takes on transformational potential. Rather than supporting the status quo it is now a means for change. This was certainly the case in Trinidad. It is clear that the exam was instituted as a democratizing tool. According to London (1997, p. 67) many saw it as a “key component in attempts to establish an egalitarian society in Trinidad and Tobago” and that it offered fairness in the transition to secondary school.

New schools, primary and secondary but particularly secondary, were constructed and old ones repaired. By 1968 in keeping with a 15 year educational plan developed under the guidance of UNESCO, the task of building schools began. Focus was to be on establishing new secondary schools called New Sector schools reflecting the fact that they were conceptualized to have a different role from the elite grammar type schools. During the period “1968 to 1983, 21 Junior Secondary Schools were built to accommodate the 12,960 students coming from Primary Schools.... (In total) 43,660 spaces for primary school leavers were created... In 1968 5,278 primary school leavers were awarded places in public secondary schools on the basis of the CEE; by 1983.... that number had risen to 19,086, an increase of over 250 percent” (Alleyne 1996, ch. 6¹). In 1966 Eric Williams made the following statement:

I think we could look forward with a certain amount of pride and confidence to the fact that the secondary school today, with free secondary education and the common qualifying examination, whatever may be said against it by the persons who are familiar with teaching and pedagogy, the fact is that the free secondary school, entrance to which is determined by the common qualifying examination, demonstrates better than anything in this society, now or in the future, the equality of opportunity for all people irrespective of racial origin, irrespective of colour, and irrespective of one of the fundamental considerations in our society, one of the most potent and vicious forms of discrimination in this society, family status (Williams, 1981, p. 283).

The PNM would consistently refer to its successes in expanding the education system and the fact that an increasing number of children had the opportunity to write the exam was, itself promoted as an example of this expansion. For example, according to Williams, in a 1966 parliamentary debate on education:

¹ This is from an internet publication without page number. See Bibliography for website address.

They pointed to the fact that 30,000 children sat the common Entrance Examination and only 6,000 were found free places in secondary school; so that, they claimed, for every child being admitted, five were left stupid.

The Minister of Education and I gave the principle replies to this propaganda. We showed that it was PNM's egalitarian policies which were responsible for such a large number (30,000) of entrants to the common entrance exam (Williams 1969, p. 334).

The government was very successful at focussing attention on the exam as the facilitator of expansion. The CEE became the symbol of the fulfilment of the promise of free secondary education for all and this symbolism was often evoked to appease any criticism of the government's programme. Schools continued to be built, although this would always lag behind the number of places needed. Campbell (1997) argues that government promises with regard to education expansion seemed always to be based more on the demand of the people, i.e. political considerations than on what it could realistically accomplish. Thus, between 1964 and 1972 there was a slowing down of the rate at which secondary school places were being supplied compared to the numbers of 11+ year olds taking the CEE. This "necessarily meant a slowing down in the rate of growth of students entering secondary schools via the Common Entrance Exam" (Campbell, 1997, p. 107). In other words a bottle neck was created which resulted in a high failure rate. In other words, the failure rate depended on the availability of secondary school places. By 1987, according to MacKenzie (1989), 5000 out of 20,281 students had failed the exam. Mackenzie interviewed an official from the Measurement Section of the MOE, in which she declared:

We have not reached the stage when we have secondary schools for everyone. There is a downturn in the economy. I don't see new schools being built in the immediate future. So the Common Entrance examination is here to stay because there is a need for selection (Interview with Shirley Clarke, 1987, in Mackenzie, 1989, p. 285).

The failure rate in any given year would correspond to the number of available places. This is corroborated by Jules (1994) whose study showed the arbitrary nature of placement patterns.

In the first few years after its implementation, the CEE had come to resemble in many aspects, the College exhibition it was meant to replace: The competition was so stiff that teaching to the test became the norm. Teachers blatantly ignored the primary school curriculum and began preparing students for the exam early. The CEE had become the *raison d'être* for going to primary school. This gap continued right down to 2001 when reform made it possible for every child to be given a

place in a secondary school. In 1985, for example, according to Alleyne (1996), approximately 20% of the CEE candidates failed and had to find their own alternatives outside of the free public system as well as the fact that the shift system remained intact.

The government had stated its intention from very early to remove the CEE. In the face of criticism from the opposition and the growing concerns of others, it periodically reiterated this intention. Eric Williams himself contended that:

High up in the agenda for the next few years, is our new Education Plan for the period 1968 – 1983. This involves cutting off Primary School education at the age of 11, elimination of the Common Entrance examination for the 11-plus children and their automatic movement from Primary school to a New Junior Secondary School (Williams, 1969, p. 342).

The PNM in fact never fulfilled its promise to remove the CEE. Instead as Hickling-Hudson (1998, 2003) demonstrates the stratified structure of colonial forms in terms of curricular, age-grading, and the separation between primary and secondary school at age 11 are entrenched. The post-colonial promises of quality education for all is in fact compromised by the inability of the state to break from the 19th century English education mould.

Williams and his cohorts must have been aware that the CEE was at that time being phased out in England where it was first designed and tried for a number of decades. According to Gipps and Murphy (1994), the CEE was designed in Britain as a means to increase equity in the system. It emerged after a 1926 report which asserted that all students were eligible for secondary education although not the same type: some were more academically inclined while others were of the vocational persuasion. The exam essentially democratized the system by increasing access to secondary schools. Results determined whether students were placed in grammar, modern or technical schools. By 1938 the exam was entrenched. It was finally eliminated in 1971 after several reforms: by the 1960s for example, it included verbal tests. A number of reports examined issues of class, gender and opportunity and efficiency and fairness. It was found that there was middle class bias in the test and because girls did better than boys, the pass mark for them was raised (Gipps and Murphy, 1994). As Eckstein and Noah (1992) point out, during the sixties in Britain, exams were heavily criticized for contributing to an oppressive, overly demanding system which labelled children far too early. While at its inception it heralded change, it was now seen as backward, symbolizing the need for change.

4.3.4 The Concordat

Although the PNM initially wanted state control of education, it succumbed to the pressure of the denominational boards, which in the end retained their place in the provision of education. Their role in education was negotiated in 1960 with the end result being The Concordat (1960). This is the agreement between the denominational boards and the state in which the relationship between the Churches and the state was defined with regards to the provision of education. The boards maintained property rights to their schools, the right to employ teachers of their own faith, the right to regulate the books and equipment and to alter the curriculum where they saw fit and the right to have their religion as the only one taught at their schools. The state took control of the process of all matters concerning the appointment and dismissal of teachers, but any board could refuse the appointment of a particular teacher if it was felt that he/she did not meet the moral standards and religious sentiments of its faith (see e.g. Jules, 1994; Campbell, 1997).

The most controversial aspect of the Concordat, however, allows the boards to retain the ability to handpick 20% of the intake group to their schools, based on their discretion and not necessarily on the CEE results. This agreement has never been modified and remains the basis of the relationship between the denominational boards and the state in the education sector.

But having conceded to the boards, the state then sought to consolidate the power it had retained by establishing the first independent education act was established in 1965 (Williams, 1969 p. 317). It sought to unify all aspects of administration of the system under the ministry of education, thereby reducing the power of the denominational boards, to eliminate discrimination against children on the grounds of race, religion and ethnicity and important, to outline the regulations for admission into secondary schools on the basis of the CEE. This last point further reduced the power of the boards, as the state now had considerable though not full control over the placement of children. According to Williams (1969, p. 318), “the act was a necessary measure of integration of our society, a necessary national system for an independent country.” However the ability of the boards to choose 20% of the intake at their discretion remained untouched and obtains to the present. It is a point of contention which is publicly aired from time to time with arguments to remove this right from the boards (see e.g. Spence, 2006).

Fanon (1963) discussed the degeneration of the nationalist party from attempting to create a path to national consciousness, into becoming the handmaiden of the under-developed third world

bourgeoisie. He argues that this is the shortcoming of a conceptualization of nationalism which does not include the people, which in fact uses the passion of the people to liberate themselves for the advancement of the national party and a narrow sense of national liberation. The Concordat can be seen to represent the national party capitulation to the ruling elite as it is through the churches that they wielded power. The 20% translates into short changing the promise to the people, and their demands for educational opportunities.

In the next section, the first Draft Education Plan will be analyzed. It is the framework for all other documents which were produced subsequently. It also laid the philosophical foundation, the developmental goals and objectives of education. Since it is a standard-setting document, it may be regarded as a blueprint according to which achievements in education may be judged.

4.3.5 The First Draft Education Plan: the common entrance exam at the centre of reform

To execute the promise of EFA the government felt that an education plan was necessary. In addition to presenting a rational, efficient course of action, an education plan would demonstrate that the state had in fact taken control of education. The bottle neck at the end of primary school was cause for much anxiety and The First Draft Education Plan 1967 – 1983 (1967), was the first education planning document of Trinidad and Tobago. By the time of its publication in 1967, the CEE was already in existence for eight years.

The first education plan asserted the urgency of reconceptualising the content and form of the education system to be implemented by the independent state. The objective was to reform the structure, form and content of education provision. Education was to be contextualized in the Trinidad and Tobago setting as well as in the broader Caribbean. In its introduction, the plan stated that:

Full national independence and identity will be achieved and secured only on the basis of an education system which does not rely on foreign assumptions and references for its existence and growth. The education revolution which is required is a thorough one – not merely the substitution of a local examination in place of a foreign one nor the substitution of tropical architecture, locally produced books and such things in place of foreign equivalents. The education system needs to be reformed in every aspect of its operations by the philosophy of service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, recognising, of course, the Caribbean setting and international role of Trinidad and Tobago. Every component of the system would require to have, as the foundation of its

validity, its relevance to the needs of the people which it serves (GOTT, 1967, p. 5)

These foundational ideas reflected the thinking at the time that education was the vehicle for forging the ideals and aspirations of the new nation and were the basis on which all aspects of the draft education plan were drawn. Education was to be the “foundation and catalyst of change” (GOTT, p. 5). This type of education has the potential to foster national consciousness as Fanon (1963) articulates. But as shown earlier and as will be seen later still, the preservation of the status quo was never subsumed by such progressive ideas

4.3.5.1 Education For All

The main objective of the plan was to spell out how the state’s promise of secondary education for all was to be realized. Though there is no detailed discussion on what quality education is, there is reference to certain indicators such as a balanced, general education, improvement in curricular, the type of citizen which education should produce. Also, the government had stated its intention to remedy colonial education in terms of both quantity and quality. The plan outlined in detail how its objectives were to be achieved. Attention was to be concentrated on:

The very crucial issue facing developing countries, namely, how to provide quality education in sufficient quantity as to meet the demand and the need (GOTT, 1967, p. 6)

On the purpose of education, the plan asserted that the country is:

Supposed to produce citizens who are intellectually, morally and emotionally fitted to respond adequately and productively to the varied challenges of life in a multi-racial developing country and to the changes which are being brought about rapidly in the economic and foundations of civilisation (GOTT, 1967, p. 6)

The extent of the control which the denominational boards exercised in education was seen as an obstacle to the objective of quality education for all. The elite grammar schools run by the boards provided quality education for a few. The state had already signed the Concordat in its attempt to provide education for all as well as to create a more unified system in which the state determined the direction and philosophy of education. The plan stated:

We accept the responsibility of providing a balanced general education for all persons (GOTT, 1967, p. 5)

The question here is to what extent did the state meet its objectives of quality secondary education for all and of dealing with the multi-racial society. The problem of unplaced children persisted until 2001. The figure varied from an all time low of 10% to a high of 20%. The following was compiled from a World Bank (2003) report on educational performance in the Caribbean

Coverage of the Trinidad and Tobago System 1999/2000

	Primary School	Secondary School
Net Enrolment Rate	95	64
Gross Enrolment Rate	106	71
Gross Completion Rate	94	62
Expected Completion Rate	95	54
Out-of-School Population (%)	1	26

Source: The World Bank, 2003, p. 82

These figures show the significant difference between the gross completion rate of high school students and the net enrolment rate of secondary school students. The difference between the two figures represents those who have not secured places via the CEE. Those who complete primary are not necessarily going to secondary. Here completion refers to having finished all the required 6 years of primary schooling not to passing the CEE.

Jules' (1994) study of placement patterns in the CEE revealed that in addition to the fact that a number of children were still not gaining access to secondary schools, this was often not due to their grade, but rather to factors such as race, religion, geographic location, class and gender. Also, in a given year:

Thousands of placed students had scores which were equal to or lower than the score made by the top scoring unplaced student viz. 9,555 among the 1988 intakes; 6,324 in 1989; 11,128 in 1990; 8,208 in 1991 and 8,305 in 1992 (Jules 1994, p. 22).

So, many children "failed" the exam but with scores higher than other children who passed, some of whom passing for the prestigious 7-year schools with lower grades.

The distribution of Concordat schools by religious denominations was as follows:

Roman Catholics – 14
Presbyterians – 5

Anglicans	– 5
Muslims	– 2
Hindus	– 1
Baptists	– 1

As noted earlier, historically, there is a certain degree of correspondence between type of denominational school and its racial composition. The first Roman Catholic secondary school CIC has its origins in the drive of the local French Catholic elite to provide an alternative English style grammar school, to QRC, the one which was run by the state. As the Catholics built more schools, they continued to provide for the elite, but as the black and coloured middle class expanded, they too became part of the catchment population to access those schools. The same is true for the Anglican schools. They too became primarily the schools accessed by the burgeoning black and coloured middle and upper middle classes. The Presbyterian, Muslim, and Hindu schools all catered similarly for the middle and upper classes of the Indian population. The important point here is that all denominational boards built highly academic, grammar style schools which were accessed primarily but not exclusively by the middle and upper classes of the racial groups they represented. As Jules's study reports:

The majority of Concordat placements each year were drawn from middle and upper income backgrounds....[Also] there was for each year a clear direct relationship between income level and the mean Common Entrance score of students selected via the Concordat to 5-Year schools, (Jules, 1994, p.20).

Therefore in terms of children meeting the challenges of a multi-racial developing country as the Draft Plan aimed at, the reality is that the secondary school intake through the Concordat tends to maintain the relationship between race, denomination and class. School boards particularly Muslim, Hindu, Baptist and Presbyterian tended to maintain homogeneity.

Denominational schools selected students through the Concordat in the following race group proportions:

- I. Muslim schools: 2.4% Africans, 5.4% Mixed race and 90.9% Indians.
- II. Hindu school: 91.9% Indians, 8.9% Mixed race.
- III. Baptist school: 61.3% Africans, 6.8% Indian, 31.8 % Mixed race.
- IV. Anglican schools: 43.3% African, 0.7% Chinese, 19.0% Indian, 36.0% Mixed race and 0.2% White.

V. Roman Catholic schools: Africans – 20%, Chinese – 3.5%, Indians – 18.5%, Mixed Race – 45.5%, Syrian-Lebanese – 1.1%, Whites – 1.9%

The aim of the Draft Plan was to reduce if not eliminate the homogenous composition of the “prestigious” denominational schools which the state had attempted to consolidate into a national system. The state had assumed control over salaries, curriculum and had insisted that students not be discriminated by religion. The figures show that the denominational boards used their ability to decide on 20% of the intake to in fact maintain this very discriminatory practice.

Here again, the continuity with the colonial past is observed. The SEA particularly in the context of the Concordat could not act to fulfil the state’s promises of quality education for all nor could it become a mechanism for positively dealing with the multicultural environment in terms of integration. In fact the colonial divisions remained and the boards retained control over their schools and to a large extent to access to their schools which were still the much coveted elite secondary schools. The fact that they retained the power to choose 20% of the intake created a negative ripple effect throughout the system, causing children to be placed unfairly, thwarting the state’s attempts to equalize access. The 20% represents the persistence of the colonial past. Further the SEA, as Hickling-Hudson (2004) argues, it plays a role in maintaining the 19th century rigid, stratified education mould in which children are tracked based on a number of factors other than ability and merit.

In 2000 (during one of the two terms that the PNM was not in office²) the UNC (United National Congress) government changed the name of the CEE to the SEA and took a bold step and implemented what the PNM suggested in its 1993 – 2003 White Paper on Education: it guaranteed that every child would move on to secondary school by removing the possibility of failing the exam, and raising the age limit for compulsory education from 12 years to 16 years. This was done by buying places in the private secondary schools which those children who failed the exam would have paid to attend. Though there were a few voices warning of the deterioration of education that such a move would cause, it was generally welcomed by the population. Now every child “passed” the exam regardless of his/her grade. If a child got 20%, he/she “passed” for one of those schools in which places were bought. The point to note however is that the children who fail with very low marks are the ones who “passed” for these schools. Also these private schools were entirely unregulated with no consistent standard. In fact many of them had poor standards with a cadre of

² The PNM lost a snap election in May 2010. This is therefore its third term out of office.

untrained teachers. 'Passing' for the exam for these schools carried and continue to carry with it the same heavy burden of failure as it did before the reform.

The First Draft Plan laid the foundation for all further educational planning initiatives. Several MOE planning documents followed. The Education Policy Paper stands out as an attempt to lay down the philosophical basis of education in terms of the development of the individual and begins with the declaration of beliefs. The following are some of these beliefs:

- That every child has an inherent right to an education that will enhance the development of maximum capability regardless of gender, ethnic, economic, social or religious background.
- That every child has the ability to learn and that we must build on this positive assumption.
- That every child has the an inalienable right to an education that facilitates the achievement of personal goals and the fulfilment of obligations to society
- That education is fundamental to the overall development of Trinidad and Tobago.
- That a system of 'heavily subsidized' and universal education up to age 16 is the greatest safeguard of the freedom of our people and is the best guarantee of their social, political and economic well-being at this stage in our development (MOE, 1993, p. 1).

Emphasis is also put on the holistic development of the individual, the importance of constructs such as decency, justice, love, equality as determinants to the survival of the multi-cultural society and the importance of adapting to the needs of the individual learner. The concept of the 'ideal citizen' who is a "spiritually, morally, physically, intellectually and emotionally sound individual" is mentioned (MOE, 1993, p.1). This is an extension of what was portrayed in the First Draft Plan in which it used only the words 'intellectually', 'morally' and 'emotionally'. The notion of the 'ideal citizen' is being developed and these descriptors would be used in all other documents which followed.

But these are universal ideal qualities as espoused in international documents such as the UNESCO (1990) EFA and in fact do not reflect uniquely Trinidadian attributes. Hall (1990) has argued that the violent ruptures from which Caribbean societies are formed, have set the basis for the

construction of new cultural identities which are uniquely Caribbean. In her discussion of the Ideal Caribbean person, Louisy (2004) makes the point that the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity which characterize the Caribbean has given rise to an accommodating, integrated and creative people. All aspects of development should incorporate and make use of these attributes. Louisy (2004, p. 289) argues that the “concept of the ideal Caribbean person may serve as inspiration for a quality education, nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit, and developing a business-like approach to life.” However like the education plans, this position does not suggest how the ideal Caribbean person would be nurtured by his/her educational experience. The role of education in actually building this character as Cummins (2003) suggests occurred in the development of European education is unclear. The notion of an ideal connotes that its antithesis must exist. If the ideal Caribbean person is in fact articulated in general terms, which are written up in international manifestos and declaration, then this ideal is necessarily conceived outside of its context, and the question must be asked “what is its Other?” Who are the un-ideal people? Are they being produced or are they included in the education system to be transformed into the ideal? Further, if it is that the education system should produce this ideal person or citizen, how is this possible given the conditions under which students are being prepared for the SEA? As will be shown later, the study by Kutnick et al. (1997) of the classroom experience of SEA students is characterized by repressive teaching styles, rote learning, extreme competitiveness, gender bias, corporal punishment and disparaging remarks. These qualities are hardly likely to foster the spiritually, morally, physically, intellectually and emotionally sound individual that the MOE hopes the education system will produce. This is not to say that such individuals are not produced in the society but that the SEA rather acts as an obstacle along the way in their development.

The question must also be asked if the SEA is in fact producing the un-ideal citizens. According to the placement pattern by school type, students with low grades populate the certain schools in which many social problems, including violence exist (Jules, 1994). There is a perception in the society that these schools are inferior and breed delinquents and social misfits.

Using Fanon’s analysis, it may be argued that a nation’s ideal citizen or person, is the embodiment of national culture, which is the “whole body of efforts made by the people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which the people has created themselves into existence” (Fanon, 1963, p. 188). National culture is therefore not static as actions are multiple and vary according to social and political conditions. The ideal person or citizen is therefore also necessarily a fluid concept, inseparable from national culture. In fact in keeping with Fanon, it is

the ideal citizen, who should be informing education, thus education should be constantly adjusting to its needs.

The 1993 Education Policy Paper contends that there were no diagnostic, remedial and preventative measures in place in the education system and that:

Performance in one major test [CEE] in the primary system supersedes genuine learning achievement (MOE, 1993, p. 3)

The document points out that transfer to secondary schools was 70% of the age cohort at this time (MOE, 1993, p.9). Given that 30% of the population eligible for secondary school according to the promise for education for all, had no access, and given the indictment of the CEE in the statement above, it is clear that the CEE was an obstacle to attaining the rights of the child to education stated on page one. Also, as noted earlier, given that the Concordat maintained divisions of race, class and religion, it acted to compromise the beliefs regarding the rights of the child in a multi-cultural society an 'inalienable right to an education that facilitates the achievement of personal goals and the fulfilment of obligations to society'. One of the measures suggested for accommodating the 30% who were left out, was the:

State purchase of additional places in private secondary schools (MOE 1993, p. 10)

As noted earlier, this option was not adopted till 2001 not by the PNM, but the UNC. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of what measures should be taken to bring these schools into the folds of the public school system in terms of building, curriculum, teaching and administrative standards. However, the MOE Revised Green Paper on Standards and Guidelines for the Operation of all Schools (2007) explains in detail, the application procedures for the establishment of private schools. All teachers now have to be registered with the MOE. The schools must accept supervision from the MOE and discipline standards. Such matters as attendance reports and transfer are detailed and an application form is included. The form stipulates that the school must be functioning before the application and certain approvals such as from the electricity and water supply companies and the Fire Services must be supplied. No mention is made about equipment, student-teacher ratio or anything pertaining to the philosophy and goals of education in the country.

According to Jules (1994), these schools tend to house children with the lowest scores, and from the African and Indian communities thereby maintaining class and racial bias. Further, keeping the

private schools in a sub-standard state, effectively cements the stratified nature of the education system inherited from the 19th century and which according to Hickling-Hudson (2003) is an inherent part of the inequities in the system and its inability to fulfil its own objectives. Moreover, since these schools seem to occupy a place in between the private and public sector so that they are not exactly within the purview of the education system, do the students who are sent to these schools therefore constitute a kind of subaltern group in education, to use Spivak (1988). Further is the SEA producing the subalterns of education, i.e. those who are written out of the script, the official record, particularly pre 2001 when the students who failed would have been either in those private schools or not in school at all?

The CEE was changed to the SEA in 2000, therefore all documents after this refers to the SEA instead of the CEE. With the exception of the Education Policy Paper (1993-2003), all documents are based on the tenet, Education for All (EFA), the declaration made at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien, Thailand, to which Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory (MOE, 2007). Trinidad and Tobago was also a participant in the Dakar World Education Forum in which it reaffirmed its commitment to EFA and pledged to monitor progress in partnership with UNESCO, toward the goal of EFA (MOE, 2007). Since then MOE documents have been produced with the intention of demonstrating the accomplishments and intentions of the state in providing EFA. The concerns and thrusts of the international community in general and of UNESCO in particular are reflected in these documents especially in the use of certain ‘buzz’ words such as ‘inclusion’, ‘seamless education’, and ‘Millennium Development Goals’.

The MOE seems to be more concerned with representing itself to the international community rather than portraying the pressing issues which affect its ability to fulfil its objectives. Inclusion, seamless education and development goals do not address the fact that children with special needs, whether educational, emotional, social and economic, have to go through an exam which will place them as a result of these needs. These children are excluded from the discourse. Brief mention is made for example of those who score 30% or less (MOE, 2004; 2008). But there is no discussion about what happens to them. In effect they are produced as the Other or subaltern of education, outside of the accepted discourse.

Documents produced from about 2004, have added the principle of ‘inclusion’, which was one of the guiding principles for achieving EFA. Participating countries in preparing their reports on EFA in 2004 were required to demonstrate measures taken towards inclusion (see MOE, 2004, 2008). It

seems as if the EFA declaration though signed in 2000 only became an intrinsic part of education planning in 2004. The Strategic Plan 2002 – 2006, is based on the Government's 2020 vision development plan through which Trinidad and Tobago is supposed to reach developed nation status. The underlying goal of the Strategic Plan was to modernise the education system with a focus on the development of human capital. The vision of the MOE as outlined in the plan was to be:

A pacesetter in the holistic development of an individual through an education system which enables meaningful contributions within the global context (MOE 2002)

EFA is mentioned as one of the four strategic objectives:

- Accessibility to educational opportunities for all
- Delivery of quality education to citizens at all levels of the education system
- Sustainable policy development for the education sector
- Continuous alignment of the strategic direction in the education system with objectives set for National Development (MOE, 2002, p. 7)

In 2002 secondary education for all had already been achieved. Secondary school places are now available for everyone. There is no data on the placement of students. In fact the SEA is hardly mentioned at all. Access is no longer an issue therefore the SEA is no longer problematic.

The MOE (2008) report on the development of education focuses on inclusion. It explains that with EFA as its overall objective, and with premises and aims of earlier policy papers, reform of the system in terms of curricular, and infrastructure to accommodate inclusive education is essential. Some of the Ministry's initiatives the programme to increase access to dropouts, the implementation of a Continuous Assessment Program (CAP) so as to identify areas of intervention and readiness to the next stage, and the training and employment of reading specialists. Two points worth mentioning here is that though no mention is made of it, there is a link between those children scoring less than 30% (and this is an arbitrary cut off point) and those dropping out in secondary school. The CAP and the intervention programmes must stop at the end of year three before training for SEA begins. At this point the SEA curriculum becomes the focus of teachers, parents and teachers at the expense of any other pedagogical programme. Unless it could be demonstrated

that these programmes reach completion at the end of year three so that no further intervention is necessary in year 4 and 5, then it is highly likely that the SEA is an obstacle to achieving the inclusion aspired to by the MOE.

4.3.5.2 Curricular: Balance and Context

A balanced education was based on the definition set by the UNESCO-ECLA Conference on Educational Planning held in June 1966. This is quoted as follows:

General educationshould endeavour to develop a responsible attitude towards work, stability in relation with others, adaptability to change, the ability to think objectively and a sensitive approach to culture beyond the limits of specialisation

This requires that balanced attention be paid to the following: the development of physical aptitudes, sound health, a mastery of the mother tongue and in addition, knowledge of a foreign language that will allow of subsequent cultural and professional advancement; mathematical skills; and understanding of the physical world, of persons, social groups and forces, economic relationships and cultural contributions, both within his own society and in other past and present societies and cultures; and an appreciation of the fine arts (UNESCO-ECLA 1966, in GOTT, 1967, p. 5)

The idea of a balanced, contextualized education was a basis for reform of curricular at all levels. This reform would correspond to the changes in structure i.e. how and what ages the distinctions between primary and secondary were to be made. The draft explained that:

This sort of general education is a basic social responsibility. Specialised training would follow most logically and profitably after such a foundation had been laid [with the intention of bringing the curricular] in line with modern trends and the needs of the country as a whole (GOTT, 1967, p. 6).

- 1) The plan asserts that the primary and secondary level curricular should be integrated to allow for smooth transfer from one level to the next. Additionally, the curricular design should cater for difference in interests and aptitude in both levels also with the effect of smooth transfer.

To fulfil developmental thrusts, the following needs were pointed out: the importance of math and science, agriculture, social studies in a local context, foreign language, use of the experimental method and libraries, physical education, cultural arts and focus on the cultural scene (GOTT, 1967).

Despite these defined needs for the primary school curriculum, the subjects tested in the CEE remained Math and English by multiple choice, thereby inhibiting the application of the curriculum and its development. This is not the basis of a general and balanced education; rather it is unbalanced and specialized. There was no agriculture, no art, social studies or physical education once students began the preparation for the CEE. Preparation for the test became even more intense than before and the practice of skipping grades so as to get to the preparatory class earlier became common practice through which students missed out on the regular primary school curriculum. There was an obvious lack of continuity between the general curriculum and the curriculum of the CEE, the result was the neglect of the primary school curriculum, teaching to the test and the students being subjected to numerous practice tests. In fact as Campbell (1997, p. 146) points out, “testing became very frequent, sometimes becoming a substitute for teaching [and the CEE] became a suffocating stranglehold.” The *raison d’être* for primary school education was to win places to secondary schools, to sort out the “winners and losers of the Common Entrance” (Campbell, 1997, p. 144). This was in contravention of the aims of the Draft Plan and indeed of the philosophy of education as a whole.

By the late eighties high failure rates could be observed at all levels of the system and as Campbell points out, “to many frustration, not success and self-esteem, began to be the predictable outcome of primary schooling” (Campbell, 1997, p.2 04). The problems of literacy among first form secondary school students was testament to the inadequacies in primary education and demonstrate the shortcomings of the education system in accordance with the goals and objectives of the planners.

The Strategic Plan 2002 – 2006 (2002) refers to educational opportunities and quality. The idea seems to be that since EFA is already accomplished the issue at hand is how to get people to take advantage of these opportunities.

For improved quality, the following areas were seen as critical:

- Curriculum Development
- Pedagogy
- Critical Thinking
- Technology Integration
- Teacher Development
- Student Assessment (MOE, 2002, p. 42)

Within these categories, priorities were set to modernize and transform the education sector. These include for example, reform of the curriculum, the testing and assessment process, etc, the

introduction of continuous assessment for creating a seamless system. Moreover it also advocate curriculum which was diversified and able to prepare children for life (MOE, 2002,).

Quality in schools was to be obtained by “creating a harmonious and peaceful environment at schools and Central Administration [and] appropriate school security” (MOE, 2002, p. 58). Other documents refer to curricular reform or improvement as well as such constructs as harmony and peace and creating an environment conducive to learning. For example the Draft White Paper, produced in 2007 states that:

The curriculum shall be broad in scope and shall provide a wide range of opportunities that accommodate differences in student rate, readiness and potential for learning through a balanced programme of skills and knowledge

Quality curriculum shall be accessible to all students (MOE, 2007, p.33).

Again, these ideas and goals, challenges in any education context, is particularly inhibited by the insistence of high stakes exam at age 11, in which only two subjects, math and English, are tested and which constitute the curricular for the two years of preparation. The various MOE documents attempt to articulate ideals in a language acceptable to the international community when in fact they merely reproduce colonial continuities. According to Hickling-Hudson (2004), the stratified curriculum cannot be modified because a tracking system depends on it. Further, she argues that the curriculum functions to produce various “literacies” through which people are “initiated in different ways into society’s discourses and competencies, according to their economic and cultural status. The literacies they acquire both reflect and perpetuate their status in society” (Hickling-Hudson, 2004, p. 296). This is how the curriculum in fact functions to maintain the status quo. The CEE/SEA ensures that the various literacies are acquired in a hierarchical way. The hierarchy is shaped by different domains of literacy which are inculcated through the curriculum. These domains taught along deeply stratified lines of class, gender and ethnicity, are:

The epistemic domain of academic knowledge
The humanist domain of narratives of culture and gender identity
The technical domain of procedural skills
The public domain of socio-political knowledge (Hickling-Hudson, 2004, p. 296)

In Trinidad, the SEA captures the different literacies of children. They are then initiated into various domains in the different type schools to which they are tracked. As mentioned earlier, there

is a general pattern of children from certain racial and religious background to be placed in certain type of schools. Placement patterns will be examined in the next section.

The MOE experimented with broadening the curriculum of the CEE in 1987 by introducing an essay writing component (MacKenzie, 1989). Up till then the exam consisted only of multiple choice questions. This was then removed after only a few years, due perhaps to the general low quality of the writing. This component was reintroduced in recent years and remains part of the exam today. In a high stakes exam where in some cases students will score equal marks in multiple-choice questions and in which competition for places (pre 2001) and for places in certain school types, it may be necessary to incorporate in the test, an element of subjectivity so as to more effectively differentiate students. Multiple choice questions are marked objectively by machines (MacKenzie, 1989), whereas essay writing requires the subjective interpretation of the marker and this gives room for variation in scores.

The unwillingness to address the SEA given that it stands in the way of achieving the goals of the MOE is indicative of the staying power of colonial structures in the post-colonial period. The exam component of the exam serves to further entrench the hierarchical and arbitrary nature of the placement practice. This is hardly different from the College Exhibition in the colonial days which served to grant only a few children access to secondary education. Now the exam serves to track children into different school types, clearly facilitating the continuities and discontinuities of colonialism.

Further the MOE (2007), argues that the curriculum will foster the characteristics of the ideal Caribbean person: emotionally secure, strong work ethic, responsible, spiritually aware. While the document recognizes that there is “an increase in indiscipline in schools and indeed the whole society,” (MOE, 2007, p.42), it advocates the following climate in schools:

The school climate shall be conducive to teaching and learning. In this respect teachers need to establish a relationship of trust and benign authority between themselves and their students

The school authorities shall establish a climate in which a culture of mutual respect among stakeholders can be fostered (MOE, 2007, p. 39)

No mention is made in this or any other document of the Concordat or of the type of environment that the SEA being a high stakes placement test, fosters. Kutnick et al. (1997) in their study of

gender relations and performance in primary and secondary schools in Trinidad reveals the authoritarianism of teachers, the lack of a harmonious atmosphere, fear, embarrassment and archaic teaching methods practiced in both primary and secondary schools. The study focussed on the then CEE class in primary schools and revealed a tense, competitive, oppressive atmosphere. Students were repeatedly punished and embarrassed to the point of tears for incorrect answers or not being able to participate in the way the teachers expected. The following observations exemplify classroom conditions and are likely to exist today:

[There was a] lack of praise for correct work and lack of help offered to pupils who have trouble with their work. Speed of questioning and need to provide the correct answer dominated the classrooms (Kutnick et al., 1997, p. 32).

When children did not pay attention in class or misbehaved, teachers were quick to identify who was misbehaving. A range of punishments were threatened or used. The teacher in school 2 threatened to use a boy's own belt for corporal punishment (Kutnick et al., 1997, p. 32).

The predominant teaching style was didactic: through the use of question and answer sessions and information presented from the teacher (on the blackboard or dictated). There was little or no evidence of alternate techniques that arose from (child centred) pupil interests/ideas. Pupils were placed in a passive as opposed to active learning role (Kutnick et al., 1997, p. 44).

The study was also conducted in secondary schools where the type of atmosphere was found to exist with the extent matching the level of the school in the hierarchy of school type. Junior secondary children for example were exposed to more embarrassment and threats than those of 7 – year schools (Kutnick et al., 1997).

The study (Kutnick et al., 1997) clearly shows that the CEE/SEA undermines stated goals and objectives of the Ministry of education. Preparation for the exam is preparation for a competition for selection to a hierarchical system. Repetitious teaching to the test is the dominant pedagogical practice and indeed entrance into the preparation class mark the end of the exploration of any other subject besides Math and English. According to Hall Caribbean societies are characterized by a unique creativity. This is a creativity which was necessary in the aftermath of violent ruptures or people from their known environment. It required the creation of societies, out of difference and out of the unknown. Surely, an education system which boils down to math and English does not nurture this characteristic nor makes use of it. The SEA rather like its colonial predecessor the college exhibition, denies the creativity of the people. It may be argued that in the Essay writing

component, only those who master English – a minority have a chance to excel or to truly express their creativity.

In a class with children from the type of family background and support which does not enable the type of learning at the rate and pace required for the SEA, it would be very difficult for them to keep up with children whose background and family situation can support their educational activities. Further, it can be argued that the nature of education at this point in the system in fact as mentioned earlier, produces a kind of subaltern of education; a group which cannot follow, keep pace, are punished for not knowing, i.e. for not being part of the discourse of learning required from them. The SEA is annually reaffirming and demarcating those who are part of and excluded from this discourse as the reality of literacy demonstrates.

These examples also show the process of inculcating different competencies in children. It is obvious that they are already initiated into different competencies and this seems to be the purpose of the classes. Very little teaching seems to take place, but rather a constant testing of what the children picked up, and a preparation for entrance to a school type which focuses on one or two. Hickling-Hudson (2004) calls for a curriculum and educational design which nurtures literacies across all the domains. To believe that a certain level of competency can be acquired by all in the four domain is to necessarily eliminate the stratified structure of the system.

In the 2006 PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Survey) Trinidad and Tobago scored below the average in reading literacy skills in the 10 year old age cohort. When compared to the set international benchmark in reading achievement for example, 38% of students were characterized as intermediate and 64% were deemed to be in the low (PIRLS, 2006, p. 69). This age group are the children about to enter the SEA preparation class or are already in it. At this stage all focus is on the test, with no attention paid to teaching literacy, so with so many children already performing poorly in reading it follows that 13 – 16% score less than 30% in the SEA as revealed by the MOE (2004). Intervention programs to improve literacy (MOE 2008) are hampered by the SEA, during which time all students in the 11+ age cohort must focus on the exam regardless of the level of literacy skills. The MOE pays no attention to the role that the SEA may have in the persistence of what it considers to be substandard literacy levels given the amount of resources spent on education. Rather the exam seems to be regarded as a norm.

The SEA is the post-colonial version of the College Exhibition in which ‘Otherness’ is produced. Those children who score less than 30% are relegated to the ‘Otherness’ of education, placed as they are in a school type, one that evolved in a de facto way. In other words, the schools with bought places were not part of the MOE’s planning. They did not constitute a school type within the MOE’s understanding of the role of school type in the education of children with differential aptitude and persuasions, nor its philosophy of education. A number of questions need to be asked: what are the attributes which should be nurtured in the children who are sent to these schools? Can they become ideal citizens? The extent to which the variables of their educational existence are explored and interrogated is unclear. In other words what efforts are made to know them? Are they in fact the subalterns of education, existing as they are somewhat outside of the system. They are brought in again when they write the O’Level exam at the end of secondary school, that is, those who stay that long.

De Lisle et al. (2005) in a separate study on gender achievement, demonstrate that there is a gender gap in performance in the SEA preparation class, with girls scoring better in Math and Language Arts and Creative Writing which was added to the exam in 1987 (MacKenzie, 1989). Moreover, there distinct variations in this pattern were observed depending on whether the school was urban or rural with the gap in performance being considerably less or negligible in urban areas. Also the biggest difference in scores was in Language Arts and Creative Writing in which boys performed considerably lower than girls. De Lisle et al. (2005) argue that:

The influence of the high-stakes SEA on teaching approaches must also be considered a factor, with teachers emphasizing teaching styles which they believe will ensure success of pupils in the SEA, notable rote learning and memorization. In these circumstances, males may find themselves at a severe disadvantage (De Lisle et al., 2005, p. 412).

Jules (1994) also demonstrates that more boys than girls pass for their first choice –the school requiring the highest score – implying that there is some level of discrimination in the placement practice in favour of boys. If girls are out-performing boys, there are many implications in the fact that every effort seems to be made to equalize the male-female intake ratio. This is another example of the inherent discrepancies and unfairness in the system set up with the intention of eliminating injustice.

4.3.5.3 Stratification, Performance and Placement

The draft plan outlined the structure of the education system which it divided into three levels: primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary. The mechanism of accessing any secondary school was the CEE taken at age 11. The Junior Secondary school was to offer three years of secondary education for those who passed the CEE. The draft plan proposed the Junior Secondary school as a:

Three year course for the age group 12-14 after which a National Examination will be used for determining both whether and where the students will continue in the full-time public education system (GOTT, 1967, p.18).

At this point the state offered secondary school education for all but only up to age 14, i.e. the end of the Junior Secondary programme. It would therefore move the “bottle neck from age 11+ to 14+” (p. 18). In keeping with the stated goal of a balanced education, the Junior Secondary School level was intended to expose students to a broad curriculum which included general technical/vocational training. Therefore, this level would provide the following advantages:

- a) Those who cannot continue in full-time schooling are better equipped to continue in part-time education and are closer to the age of employment
- b) The years of primary schooling are freed of the tensions and distortions deriving from such early selection (GOTT, 1967, p.18)

In the long term after the elimination of the CEE, the Junior Secondary level was to accommodate all students age 12-14. The plan states:

In 1977 when there will be accommodation for an intake of 77.2% of the 12+ age group, the Common Entrance Examination will cease to have meaning as a test for selection for Secondary Education and might be retained only for Educational Guidance, Research and Standardization ((GOTT, 1967, p.18)

As to what would happen to the remaining 22.8%, of students, no mention is made, but it is assumed that the CEE would no longer be require at this rate of intake. With the new structure, there were to be now two exit points from formal education, the first being those who failed the CEE and then those who failed the 14+ at the end of the Junior Secondary tier. The next level, the Senior Comprehensive for ages 15-17, would take those who passed the 14+ exam at the end of the Junior Secondary level and would require them to write the GCE O’Level at the end of this tier.

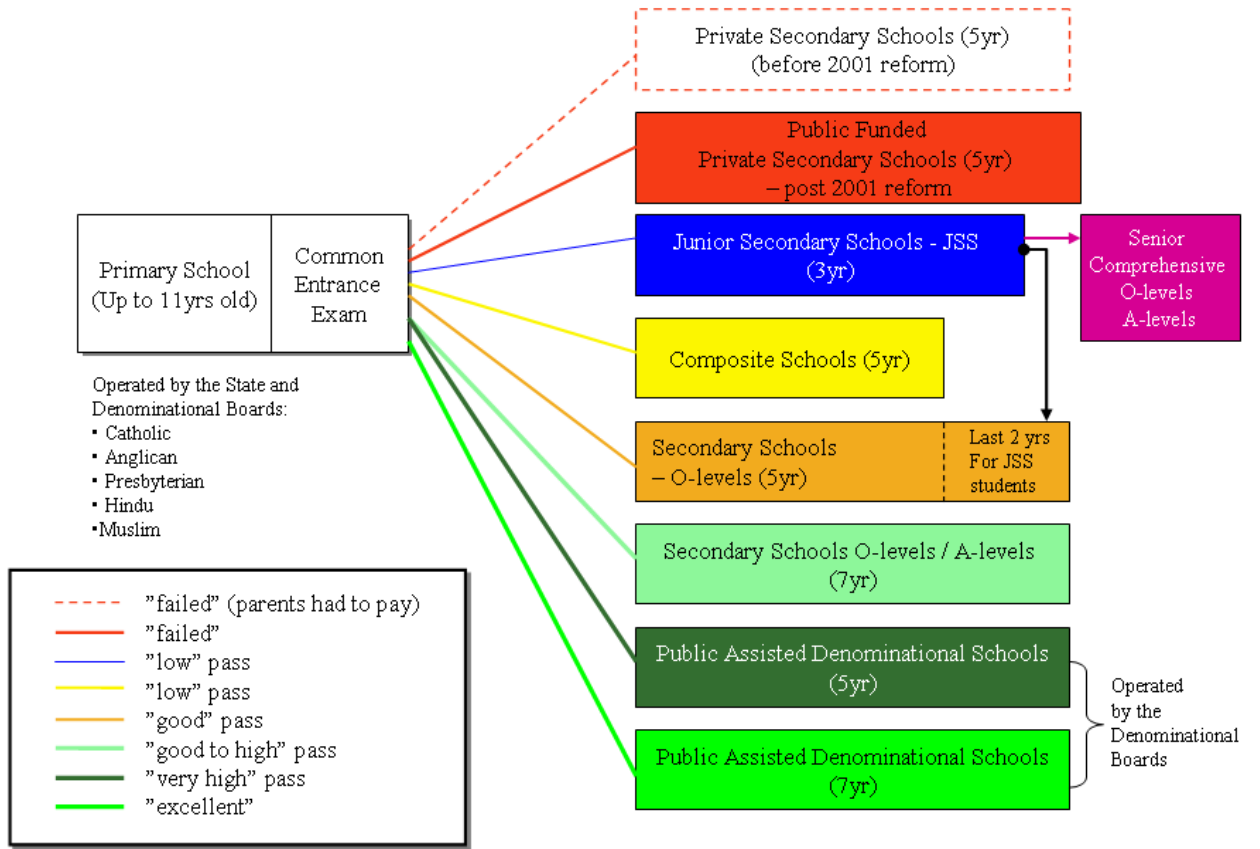
All existing 5 year secondary general schools were to be transformed so as to either become one or the other of the two tiers of the reformed structure. In other words, some were to be transformed to 3-year Junior Secondary schools and others into 2-year Senior Comprehensive schools depending on location and convenience. It was proposed that along with three others, QRC, the prized government 7-year elite grammar school be converted to another type of school called the Senior Secondary General which was to be completely academic with no technical and vocational courses and without junior classes. Entrance to these schools would also be determined by the CEE. Other elite denominational 7-year grammar schools were expected to voluntarily follow in this transformation:

The place or function of the Assisted Secondary and Intermediate Schools in the new structure will be the subject of further discussion with the denominational bodies (GOTT, 1967, p.33).

This however was not done by the boards. No secondary board school was converted to any of the new types of school; Junior Secondary or Senior Comprehensive. In fact no pressure was exerted on the boards by the state. The reverse was true, hence the Concordat. As Fanon (1963) argues, the relationship between the nationalist party and the bourgeoisie is a major stumbling block to the development of the nationhood. Nationalism, the urge of the people to liberate themselves, once used by the nationalist party to establish itself in power, does not move towards national consciousness in which the people became aware of themselves in the context of the nation. In this case, the denominational boards represented the bourgeoisie, fledgling as it was at the time. It was their children who attended these exclusive schools. Here it is argued that the SEA acts as the facilitator of the bourgeoisie, an obstacle to the development of national consciousness. This is not only reflected in the relationship discussed by Fanon, but also in the function of the exam as a tracking and gate-keeping mechanism in the education system, in its maintenance of the colonial hierarchical form of education and its stultification of the creative energy of the people. In fact it could be said that Trinidadians are creative in spite of the SEA.

At the end of five years of secondary school, students were expected to take the external GCE O'Level exam which would mark the end of high school. Those with suitably high grades could stay for two more years and then take the A'Level exam which would give them the qualifications for admission to university.

The Structure of the Education System in Trinidad & Tobago



The diagram above shows the structure of the education system in its pre and post 2001 reform forms. The CEE/SEA is clearly at the core of the system. It plays a significant role in streaming students thus affecting life chances. There is meaning attached to every type of school, the most prestigious being the Public Assisted Denominational Schools – 7yrs and the least being the Public Funded Private Secondary Schools which take in the students with the lowest scores. The Junior Secondary, Composites and Senior Comprehensive offer a combination of vocational, technical and academic courses. The intention is to give students some preparation for the world of work while at the same time catering to those whose academic skills may develop (Alleyne, 1996). The problem is that much more value is put on the schools with predominantly an academic focus. They are considered “prestigious schools” and are called such, as a large percentage of their student populations do very well in the O’Level and A’Level exams. Much of the competition in the CEE

is based on the desire on the part of parents for their children to go to these schools for which the pass mark is in the high 90s.

Limited in number, the secondary schools were all elitist, concentrated in urban areas and largely inaccessible to the lower classes. The Draft Education Plan indicated the state's intention to deal directly with equality in the education system. Its articulated aim was:

The correction of "serious imbalances by providing (secondary level) places that would relate on the one hand to the population of the catchment area and on the other as a matter of equalising opportunity (MOE, 1967, p. 33).

The structure of the education system as outlined in the Draft Plan remains the system today. There are several notable points reflected in this structure. First it is a highly stratified system as access to each school type, whether Junior Secondary, Composite, Senior Comprehensive (all called New Sector schools), Senior Secondary of the 5 – year or 7 – year duration, is determined by grade. Grades required to get into the Junior Secondary were the lowest and the 7 – year schools require the highest. This is in theory. In practice as Jules (1994) has shown, other factors such as race, religion, geographical location, gender and the Concordat all play a part in placement. She also points out that the New Sector schools are perceived as low prestige schools by the populace. For example, her study showed that:

For each year there was a significant difference in the mean Common Entrance score of students in the various school types, giving credence to the belief that the school types are different and that a hierarchy exists among school types with respect to the score level needed for a student to be placed in particular school types... (Jules, 1994, p. 11).

Stratification facilitated by the various school types, which are accessed by the SEA, is key in the maintaining the colonial form in education. This means that the divisions in the society are reproduced, but it is not to argue that no social mobility occurred in the post-colonial period. In fact as Campbell warns, that "the continued dominance of a white minority did not preclude perceptible social change and scholars should be wary of writing as though nothing worthwhile happened between 1838 and 1937 [that there was] a century of stagnation" (Campbell 1997, p 13 – 17). Indeed Campbell (1967, 1997) demonstrates the growing demand of the people for education over the course of the entire period under study in his two books; 1838 – 1986. The establishment of private secondary schools which were filled up with children from the poor and working class is testament to the determination of the people to acquire secondary education in the belief that they

would benefit. Social mobility did occur and it was to a large degree due to the slow increase in access to secondary schools (Brereton, 1979, Campbell, 1996, 1997). Here it is instructive to discuss Ashcroft's analysis of resistance and transformation; the active part people take in challenging the various forms of oppression. Where opportunity for change is perceived, advantage is taken as much as possible. The response to the call by Williams and the nationalists to education was not due to the power of rhetoric alone. For decades before, people were seeking ways to enter the education discourse.

Campbell (1997) argues that the organization of the curriculum so as to maintain the 5 – year and 7 – year schools as predominately academic institutions with the New Sector schools having the technical/vocational curricular aspects, contributed greatly to this perception. As he put it, “technical/vocational education was an innovation which had to fight against the entrenched values and methods of traditional education” (Campbell, 1997, p. 209). Parents tended to be suspicious about non-academic education. As in the colonial period when agricultural education was resisted and despised, now the people seemed to be of the opinion that technical/vocational training would similarly relegate them to menial tasks. Access to education meant access to the esteemed halls of academic institutions such as the elite grammar type schools. These attitudes emerged out of colonial oppression and constituted a form of resistance as argued earlier. Yet they persist in the post-colonial context because the type of school that most of the working class and poor are tracked into tend to be the 3 – year Junior Secondary schools. Colonial stratification therefore remains.

The insistence of the state to maintain a stratified system with different school types compromised the goal of instituting fairness in the system. As Campbell (1997, p. 207) points out, a disproportionately large number of children from lower class origins were distributed in the Junior Secondary schools and a disproportionately large number of children from the higher socioeconomic groups could be found in the grammar schools [i.e. the 5 – year and 7 – year schools].” Jules' (1994) findings demonstrate this. For example:

While up to 50% of students of New Sector schools came from homes where the top occupation is associated with low or no income levels, the same was true for less than 25% of the population of the traditional schools, [and] the higher the Form level, the larger the proportion of students who come from higher or middle income homes, suggesting that students from low income homes leave school earlier than others. (Jules, 1994, p. 5)

The system is also stratified by race and ethnicity. According to Jules (1994), children of African descent were the highest numbers in Junior Secondary (20.2%) and Indian children (20.1%) were in the highest numbers in the Senior Secondary schools. On the other hand, “Fifty eight percent (58.4%) of all Chinese students, 50.6% of the Whites and 46.0% of the Syrian-Lebanese were in the 7 – year schools. In Trinidad, these latter three groups occupy the higher echelons of the class divisions in the society.

It was noted earlier that commercial private schools to certain extent, filled the gap between the demand of the poor and working class for education and what was available to them. According to Campbell, this commercial sector was seriously undermined by the PNM’s programme to develop and expand secondary school access as the state would not fund any commercial school. These schools then became a source of education for those children who failed the CEE up to 2001. Though they were subjected to some regulations they generally fell outside the gambit of state regulation and control, thus in many cases they became sub-standard, lacking basic infrastructure, equipment and trained teachers. Jules’ study revealed that students of African descent (5.5%) followed by those of Indian descent (3.8%) attended these schools. This means that the majority of students who failed the CEE were of African descent.

The Ministry of Education (2004) has produced one report on the performance in the SEA from 2001-2004 in which the findings of Jules and others which have shown inconsistencies and bias have been confirmed. For example, it found that in the period, female students did better than male students and that rural children scored lower than urban children. Further, between 13 and 16% of students scored less than 30% in the exam. The figure would look much worse if the cut off point was 40%. This demonstrates the role of the SEA in stratification of education and society. It is a mechanism of tracking children into the different domain of literacies according to Hickling-Hudson (2004). But in the case of the SEA, those who ‘failed’³ are essentially tracked out of the system. The private schools pick up the slack. With most poorly equipped and staffed, it would be fair to assume that with chalk and board teaching, children who failed the exam are being once drilled once again into the academic domain. Though no information on their performance in the O’Level exam at the end of secondary school was available for this research, it is likely to be generally poor.

³ As noted earlier, since 2001, everyone writes the SEA but no one fails as a place is found for everyone. The term ‘fail’ is no longer used.

This report concludes with an indictment of the SEA as revealed by the following points:

Student selection and placement in denominational secondary schools under the Concordat continue to disrupt placement patterns by merit

The SEA placement process continues to legitimize inequities in the school system by sorting students into perceived high scoring, average scoring and low scoring groups and placing them into secondary schools likewise perceived

The placement system is maintaining the notion of different types and quality of schools as well as different quality of education in the school system

There is a significant number of students whose composite scores at the SEA are 30% and lower. This highlights the need to address teaching and learning at the primary level (MOE 2004, p. 53)

The only aspect of this report which appears in subsequent MOE documents is the fact that 13 – 16% of students scored 30% or less. None of the issues raised are addressed and indeed neither is the SEA other than in passing. The MOE has raised issues concerning the relationship between the school and the social environment, putting measures in place for example to build a peaceful environment. Yet, the role of the SEA in maintaining barriers and reproducing social inequities is ignored.

The CEE was conceived as a means to improve access for all as well as to ensure equality in the placement of students in secondary schools. It was to be a mechanism for levelling off the playing field and was in fact widely heralded as such. But while it is identified as a means to access secondary school, it was emphasized that it was a short term measure. In the preface of the document where broad decisions were outlined, it states the “the selection of pupils at age 11-plus should be eliminated as rapidly as the resources of the country would allow of the expansion of opportunities for admission to Junior Secondary Schools” (GOTT, 1967, p. 3).

As has been demonstrated here, not only is the CEE still operational in the form of the SEA, it was itself, a form of the college exhibition, the exam, which in the colonial days was the gatekeeper par excellence of secondary education. The SEA is an intrinsic part of a post-colonial education system, which though it marks a crucial point in the system, is not interrogated by the Ministry and is rather considered as a norm in the society. The documents which define post-colonial education

in Trinidad and Tobago, are themselves post-colonial documents. The following section examines the Draft Education Plan, the foundational educational planning document, as a post-colonial document.

The Stratified System, Transformation and National Consciousness

Hickling-Hudson (2004) connects the dots between the stratified colonial mould of education in terms of curriculum, age-grading and placement and transformation by arguing that it is precisely the function of stratification within the education system which creates social inequities. People are initiated into particular literacies which is a de facto initiation into particular social strata. Education reform is central to creating a just society and in the Caribbean context, it will entail removing selective exams which determine which school type children are placed. Hickling-Hudson argues that:

Schools would have to shed their 19th century characteristics of stratification, didacticism, authoritarianism, competitiveness and selfish individualism, and become open, accessible, socially responsible and facilitative, instead of closed, custodial and often humiliating institutions (Hickling-Hudson, 2004, p. 298).

This type of education should be displaced by the kind which enables students to better understand the world they occupy and how to change it. For example, Hickling-Hudson (2004) asserts that the hallmark of such an education would be that:

Teachers prepare people to appraise their systems of governance, understand the implications of international and global change, address patterns of injustice, hold politicians accountable and experiment with problem-solving, both nationally and in alliance with global civic movements.

This type of education is inhibited by selection exams such as the SEA, their functions and implications. This is also the type of education which according to Fanon (1963, p. 159), relays the message to the people that “everything depends on them”. It is the type of education which is empowering and through which the people recognize their responsibilities in taking the nation forward. This is the type of education which could awaken the national consciousness – the crystallization of the innermost hopes of the people - which could not develop in the period of decolonization, denied as it was by nationalism; the cornerstone of this period. The eradication of the SEA is key to this type of liberatory education.

4.3.6 The Draft Plan as a Post-colonial document

Produced as it was in the years immediately after independence, this document represents the post-colonial experience in the sense that it maintains the colonial structures of education. The aim of the plan was to present the structure, functions and management of an efficient education system. Although the term 'revolution' in education was used, all the trappings of the colonial system remained. It kept the essential stratification of the levels which are marked by exams. Also, according to Hickling-Hudson (1998), the stratified Eurocentric curriculum though challenged, was merely tinkered with. The basic curricular principles were kept. The very exam orientation of the British system is left in tact and the Common Entrance though referred to in one paragraph as being implemented only on a short term basis, 'until resources of the country would allow', it is the very basis of the whole plan. All expansion of access depends on it. It represents as Hickling-Hudson (1998) argues a source of tension as it attempts assert the identity and aspirations of the nation but at the same time keeping within the colonial framework.

The College Exhibition, which was in fact a barrier to secondary school, represented the racial and class stratification in the society, was transformed to the CEE. The CEE became the new gate-keeper to an expanded system. But the important point is that the gate-keeping function was preserved. The system in fact was not fundamentally reconceptualised to match the promise of secondary education for all. In the document, the CEE represents a contradiction in the ideology of education for all and though it is at the centre of the system, it is only directly mentioned once as a factor which must be eliminated.

As Hall (1996, p.254) points out, in the post-colonial context "relations which characterized the colonial are no longer in the same place and relative position." That is to say that the period after independence, that is the temporal 'after' of colonial rule, a neutral, conflict-free time zone is not created, rather new and contextualized configurations of power-knowledge emerge and begin to manifest their effects in various ways. The power-knowledge of the national intelligentsia now begins to articulate itself in the laying out of action plans, policies, declarations and legislations in the language of nationalism. The framework for development is drawn as in this draft education plan represents the same structure and barriers of the colonial society. In other words, it represents the interests of the new ruling class.

The boldest assertion of the independence and identity of the nation is in the introduction. Loose references to the 'local scene' are made throughout. The idea of a balanced education comes from a UNESCO-ECLA conference and there is no reference to any such coming together of Caribbean or Trinidadian minds to develop a truly indigenous structure and curricular. No account of how the local scene is to become an intrinsic part of education is given. In fact, it could be argued the idea of the local scene is rather cosmetic and the plan is more concerned with the structure and rationalization of education. Fanon's concern with the effects of the nationalist leadership is relevant here. He makes a clear distinction between nationalism and national culture. The nationalist leaders tend to promote forms of ethnic traditional cultural expressions as culture. It is a backward looking process while true national culture is "the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself in existence" (Fanon, 1963, p. 188). In the draft plan reference was made to the decision by the government to reorganize the Division of Culture to "include its upgrading and expansion and cultural arts centres should be established" (GOTT 1976, p. 3). Besides this however, no other information is provided as to how culture would be used in pedagogy or how it is to be expressed within schools. In any case, the curriculum outlined for primary schools contain only a reference to the "importance of the cultural arts." Moreover, the curriculum to be covered for the CEE was not outlined, but it is not the case that it contained any elements of culture. In fact only mathematics and English were tested and moreover as Campbell points out it quickly became the norm that preparation for the test, like the Cambridge Exhibition exam before it, dominated teaching practices.

Yet the draft plan is a part of a process of anti-colonial assertion. Historically, though it is framed in the past, it speaks to the future. It is an example of decolonization as a process rather than an epochal shift. It embodies the reconstitution and re-imagining of self of the oppressed who understood the potential of education as a liberating force. That increased access to secondary school was a central issue in the plan is testimony to the demand by the mass of the population who were essentially barred from education beyond primary school, for secondary education. According to Campbell (1997, p. 98), in "Trinidad and Tobago, as well as in some other Third World countries, the expansion of education in the 1950s and early 1960s was less the result of educational planning than spontaneous political and social demand." Further, this demand was so intense that several private secondary schools were set up in the decades before independence such that their student intake represented 41% of the secondary school population in the island. These schools were no match for the elite schools which sent up candidate for Oxford and Cambridge entrance

exams, but they were facilitating the high school leaving exams from which an increasing amount of working class youths earned certificates. The PNM took this on because it was the number one political issue at the time. This added to the fact that Eric Williams was himself passionate about the role of education in development in the region made it the most charged elections issue in 1956.

The Draft Education Plan therefore is an expression of the aspirations of the people, of their demand to be brought into the fore of development, their attempts to escape the margins of society. The plan drew out the expansion plans of the government and already, there were 15 new government secondary schools. According to Ashcroft (2001, a post-colonial reading of this document calls not for a re-insertion of the marginalized into representation, but rather a it requires a re-vision of the “temporality of event” (Ashcroft, 2001, p.99). The document does not mark the end of an era, but rather it reflects their attempts to take control of the process of representation. In this sense it represents a political process, in which the marginalized find a voice. In a sense this demand for education is an appropriation of it from the elite and the draft plan represents this.

The CEE was at the heart of the matter. It was the mechanism through which those previously marginalized from secondary education, could access it. As Campbell argues, access to secondary school in itself, however flawed was the placement system, was what mattered most and “as long as distribution to secondary schools was made through a competitive exam and not through ascriptive factors of race and colour, it looked like a fair system” (Campbell, 1997, p. 207). The absence therefore of a discussion of how the CEE worked was not relevant at the time to the extent that it was understood to be a mechanism which increased fairness in the system.

5 Conclusion

This study has attempted to put the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) in Trinidad in its social and historical perspective in order to examine the role of the exam in education and in society as a whole. The research question was asked: What are the historical factors which led to the adoption and retention of the CEE/SEA? The analysis of the historical forces behind the Common Entrance Exam in 1960 at the eve of independence were analysed and showed that the island as a colony was from the start, infused into the global economy through the plantation system of production based on slave labour. Globalization useful to an extent in analyzing the interconnectedness of the global economy, is regarded here, as inadequate in the study of the Caribbean as from an historical perspective, it can be shown that the region was always global an intrinsic part of the global economy. Educational development too, closely linked to happenings in the world. But it was also shaped by local conditions such as the dominance of the denominational boards in the provision of education, the demand of the oppressed for education, the link between nationalism and education and the influence of international agencies on educational development

In the context of post-colonial theory, the historical development of the island was examined in which the colonized was established as the Other. It was demonstrated that the provision of education in the colonial period mirrored as well as reproduced the racial, and class divisions in the society. But in the post-colonial period, the construct of the Other remained, being reproduced in different ways.

What is the function of the SEA? This research question insisted on an enquiry into the role the exam plays in the education system and indeed the society as a whole, in maintaining the concept of the Other in the colonial and post-colonial periods. The exam acts as a gatekeeper to the different types of secondary schools which correspond to the schools' quality real or perceived. Each school type is part of a highly stratified system with the 7 – schools at the top and the 3 – year ones at the bottom. Placement patterns were shown to reproduce the social order as they are reflected in the schools with poor, African, Indian, urban, rural, male, female, religious affiliation, etc. being factors which determine placement.

The perusal and analysis of Ministry of Education documents shed light on the research question: To what extent does the CEE/SEA facilitate or inhibit the articulated education goals of the state? The CEE/SEA was shown for the most part, to be a detractor to the state's own goals for education.

In its CEE form in particular, the exam inhibited the goal of secondary education for all as it consistently denied thousands of children places. Thus claims such as the right of every child to education, is compromised as are those which elaborate on the importance of recognizing individual differences in learning. Broadening and modernizing the curricular are truncated in their application by the CEE/SEA, which focuses on only on math and English, the preparation for which conducted in a stifling and oppressive atmosphere. Intervention programmes are also cut short to facilitate the exam. In terms of promoting multi-racial, multi-religious harmony and removing the barriers to elite secondary schools erected by the Churches, the CEE/SEA acts to maintain the status quo, as did its predecessor. From its inception the CEE/SEA was supposed to have been a short term measure, yet it persists to this day.

The final research question enquires as to the extent to which the CEE/SEA represents continuity with the colonial past or a break from it. This was found to be the case and the thread which runs throughout the entire study. Post-colonial theory insists that the end of formal colonialism did not mark an epochal change but rather it is characterized by the continuities and discontinuities of colonial forms and structure. The CEE/SEA exemplifies this. It has acted and continues to act as a mechanism which on the one hand was instituted to instil fairness in a system based on privilege but at the same time it symbolizes and reproduces the stratified nature of colonial education both in terms of the age staging, its structure and its selection and gate-keeping functions. The SEA is the descendent of the CEE which a modified version of the college exhibition, established in the 19th century.

The SEA/CEE symbolizes and contains the tensions of the colonial and post-colonial periods. It is an attempt to shape education in a postcolonial nation, at the same time retaining the colonial structure and form. It represents the emancipatory thrust of Trinidadians in the colonial period as well as their desire for development after independence and at the same time it contains the power of colonial forms and representations. But Post-colonial theory posits that change rather comes as a process in the actions of people to resist oppression and transform their world. It refuses a static reading of oppression and embraces the myriad of ways in which oppressed people take action. In other words, the final chapter on the CEE/SEA is not yet written.

Hopefully, this study has served to broaden the perspective on the education system in Trinidad in general and the CEE/SEA in particular to the effect that it demonstrates that a better, fairer system, the one that we wish to have, is possible, not least because what we have now is historically

determined. In other words, what obtains now, is not written in stone, it is only inscribed by history, i.e. by human action and by human action, it can be changed for the better.

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