Barefoot Language: Representation of the Alter/Native Aesthetic in Jamaican Popular Culture

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Abstract

The main concern of a new generation of Caribbean literary and cultural critics since the 1960s has been the historical distortions and omissions in critical approaches applied to 'Third World' literature. Such polemics seek to place less esteemed forms of cultural expressions in opposition to traditional literary texts. This dissertation traces the engagement with the oral tradition with the creative and transformative forces of Afro-Jamaican popular culture, focusing on acts of resistance in performance poetry. The result then is not a reduction of dominant literary discourses but a refinement specifically geared toward articulating the lived experiences in postcolonial Jamaica, wherein marginalised voices become increasingly audible in English literature.

As the poets use culturally grounded linguistic practices to create embodied experiences and effect a sort of cultural disruption, these texts reveal more than their narrative content alone. They collectively achieve a record of textualised oral narratives involving questions about re-writing, reinterpreting and reinscribing the margin in a counter-discourse. Since the critical debates of the 1960s and 1970s centred on the value of the Western canon and the eloquence of English for literary pursuits, there has been a shift in the study of literary representations of marginalised voices. To quote D. Soyini Madison, "By voice, I do not mean the representation of an utterance, but the representation of a historical self, a full presence, that is in and of a particular world" (2005: 191). The question at issue is what precisely constitutes literature?

The oral/scribal continuum of performance poetry often produces tensions in the academic environment; however, these dialectical tensions are formed within a space of control and resistance. West Indian writers and critics, led by Edward Brathwaite in an attempt to recover knowledge from their unrecorded history, argued for the importance of oral culture in the Caribbean literary aesthetic (1970, 1970/71, 1974, 1976). Such manoeuvres were very much inspired by the decolonisation movements of that era in Africa and elsewhere. Anglophone Caribbean intellects enter a discursive space to challenge traditional interpretations of English literature, resist colonialist narratives of history and diversify the range of genres to explore a wide variety of non-traditional material by unknown authors as objects of

inquiry. They argue that non-European cultures, particularly Afro-Caribbean cultural practices, are perceived as "alien intrusion that has been only a bane for the discipline" (Moore, 2011: 48). Although the revaluation of performance poetry has attracted growing interest, the notion of performance of Jamaican oral traditions still has not been given sufficient attention.

A literature survey reveals that only a handful of essays explicate how the alternative aesthetic framework, within which non-traditional story-telling modes are articulated, poses a challenge to that imposed by Western conventions. Notable examples include Mervyn Morris' "On Reading Louise Bennett, Seriously" (1963a) and Gordon Rohlehr's "Sparrow and the Language of the Calypso" (1970). Whether such studies advance Brathwaite's concept of 'nation language' and his engagements with the 'folk' to explore the possibility of a new Caribbean aesthetic and whether these ideas are relevant to their related concerns are debatable (1984). Similarly, very few anthologies provide a comparative analysis of Anglophone Caribbean performance poets (Brown et al., 1989; Burnett, 1986; Cooper, 1993; Habekost, 1993).

Even if 'Third World' literature has enjoyed a degree of popularity within postcolonial studies since the 1960s, the transgressive narratives in which English gives way to Caribbean dialects have so far failed to make significant inroads into any other sphere such as, for example, feminist criticism has done. Indeed, more recent studies of Louise Bennett's poetry, whether exclusively or partially, call attention to their destabilising potential in terms of traditional literary forms (Cooper, 1978, 1999; Dance, 2006; Doumerc, 2000; Ifeoma Kiddoe, 2017; Morris, 1963a; Narain, 2002; Vasquez, 2009). Still, relatively few pursue a postcolonial analysis of individual poems or provide the necessary context with which to understand their subversive unravelling of colonial assumptions that undermine non-Western cultural knowledge (Cooper, 1993; Neigh, 2009; Pearn, 1986; Ramazani, 2002; Rodis, 2009). As for existing scholarship on Roots Reggae, a postcolonial reading is either ignored or mentioned only in passing (Adjaye and Andrews, 1997; Anglès, 1994; Chude-Sokei, 1997; Dawes, 1999; Daynes and Martin, 2013; King and Bays, 2002; Macaulay, 1993; Prahlad, 2001).

In recounting their life narratives, the performance poets use the authentic language to communicate the truths of their worlds and distribute them through oral

performance. The meaningfulness of these oral histories thus speaks through their social context and by means of their textualised forms. Madison posits performance, in this case, storytelling, as essentially an empowering act that "centres on the principles of transformation and transgression, dialogue and interrogation" (2005: 278). In this way, they challenge hegemonic forces that tend towards exclusivity and reconsider the place of otherness in the coloniser's view of culture.

The choice of texts in this dissertation is sensitive to the social climate of the period in which they are produced and mirror the attitudes of the poets who produced them and their societies. They reveal forms of transgressive practice otherwise obscured by systemic constraints and imposed preferences. In them, identity in postcolonial contexts is constituted less by an orientation to the imperial centre than by reconstituting the mother tongue, reimaging the local space and place, and reinscribing the centrality of Afro-Jamaican folk culture. This dissertation argues that the poetry of postcolonial Jamaica is an emergent form of cultural resistance built on oral/aural narrative structures that make new points of contact with an already well-established performance culture.

Since language becomes an active component of these texts, it advances Brathwaite's attempt to reproduce the emphatic gestures and the dramatic sound of the voice in the print medium. It also shows how performance poetry is reshaping the dynamic between orality and textuality in Jamaican popular culture. In their performance, these poets actualised a process of cultural rebellion that defied marginalisation by "critically traversing the margin and the centre and of opening more and different paths for unlivening relations and spaces" (Madison, 2005: 172). Besides its importance as the first study to propose the postcolonial framework that encompasses all the main components of decolonisation and the main interpretive tool for detailed analysis of the chosen performance texts, this dissertation is unique in its criteria for selecting performance poets.

Performance poetry has been approached from different disciplines, including drama, folklore, poetry, cultural studies, and theatre, to name a few, suggesting that there is no one single overarching approach as some scholars would have us believe. In the humanities with which the postcolonial is broadly aligned, critical debates in Western historical scholarship have transformed the way we view the historical development of postcolonial society. This makes it possible to shift

from an analysis of dominant Western literary discourses to an analysis of symbolic devices in the present research. Therefore, the study will critically examine the works of Louise Bennett, Capleton, Buju Banton and Sizzla Kalonji for their anti-colonial arguments.

While I will not pursue a performance analysis, I want to focus on the relevance of the mother tongue in a selection of performance texts. This allows us to connect with the poets as they attempt to engage with tradition and negotiate otherness and displacement within the language available. I propose that language is the most dominant character in Jamaican popular culture and key to understanding the Afro-Jamaican cultural aesthetic. Thus, forms of artistic expression, including music and dramatic monologues that reflect African-influenced cultural traditions, have become relevant resources for inclusion and pertinent to the research question being addressed.

A postcolonial critical analysis of the performance texts enables us to identify how the poets try to articulate their feelings in socially meaningful ways. This will help to understand them as historical sources. In addition, this analysis captures the transgressive forces that destabilise the power of English and challenge the colonial binary, cultured/ uncultured, as the model for racial difference. For the texts used for this study, a systematic approach helps ensure consistency in their examination and hence the soundness of the conclusions drawn.

The poets are chosen for the most part, especially the poet-songwriters, for their unremitting anti-colonial stance. Louise Bennett's dramatic monologues are examined because her collection remains a fundamental resource for recognising the aesthetic value of Afro-Jamaican folk tradition, which literary scholarship itself has often neglected. With few exceptions, the most visible poets within the 1990s are generally from the Rastafarian community. Established firmly among the masses, the inclusion of Roots Reggae is an acknowledgement of the significance of Jamaican popular music and broadens the resources and scope of poetry itself, including a larger, more diverse audience.

This dissertation draws upon 27 performance texts to revisit transgressive practices in Jamaican popular culture as part of the de-colonial praxis. Louise Bennett's dramatic monologues are interwoven with that of the Roots Reggae songs, representing some of the 'noise' in Afro-Jamaican tradition. The collection is

treated as a historical source. When read together, the texts map out a series of events in Jamaican history more than three decades apart that are tied to a certain thematic narrative. These poems function as the performer's poetic manifesto and blend this slow unfolding of ideas that shape conceptions of the postcolonial world critically yet consciously with a first-person account of the poet's life.

The study is organised into six chapters, so non-experts can easily place these stories in the context of existing conversations surrounding the degradation and dehumanisation of non-European cultures. The textual analysis is presented in themes centred around postcolonial encounters, cultural dominance, fragmented identity, and language. Rather than following a Western literary tradition, it is possible to view the oral texts within their respective genres, considering specific linguistic features and the possible social interactions and negotiations using these features. Ultimately, one of the central arguments of this research is that a shift needs to occur from a normative conception of literature toward more embodied practices engaging a broad array of creative expressions from historically underrepresented groups.

This study offers a new framework for understanding Jamaican popular culture, long engaged with racialised constructions of colonial subjects and deconstructing the boundaries that give meaning to colonising discourses. This analysis reveals how the poet performers' engagement and re-engagement with oral history and cultural symbols also reveal the problem of language particular to the postcolonial narrative. Louise Bennett's dialect poetry has created a new terrain in the Jamaican popular culture, one with a strong oral tradition. However, though Jamaican Creole is the mother tongue and language of identity for the masses, it remains a contentious topic even for the production of this research. At the same time, the interplay of word, sound and imagery reinforcing Dread Talk evokes the intertwined character of Rastafari identity to generate new cultural forms. Rastafarians are no longer portrayed as a threat to Jamaican society; they are embraced as a legitimate part of Jamaican culture and assimilated into Jamaican identity. These shifts reflect a transformation of Jamaican popular culture, from mere literary representations of the mother tongue to the emergence of the notion of literature produced entirely in the mother tongue, mainly through orature. Finally, while the poet's counter-hegemonic arguments are necessarily a liberating act, Jamaica's

postcolonial problems do not simply belong to the past. Instead, they remain even more deeply embedded in the present by the incessant reproduction of old habits, which constitute new forms of entrapment.

The focus on dramatic monologues and songs enables us to examine them together as poetry and recapture the oral dialogic exchanges in a common language that ultimately destabilises and undermines hegemonic systems of signification. Studying language-use practices, particularly Jamaica Creole, as a bridge to mastering Standard English and policy implications for education in Jamaica would be of interest. Future research might benefit from extending this study using postcolonial analysis of the material that does not fit the traditional text, namely folk tales, mento music and pantomime for scholars engaged in folk aesthetics. Identifying quality repertoire is especially important for bringing to the fore the postcolonial space in which dominant configurations begin to disappear and from which subaltern articulations and challenges to Western forms of knowledge might emerge.

Zusammenfassung

Das Hauptanliegen einer neuen Generation von karibischen Literatur- und Kulturkritikern seit den 1960er Jahren sind die historischen Verzerrungen und Auslassungen in den kritischen Ansätzen, die auf die Literatur der "Dritten Welt" angewendet werden. Diese Polemik zielt darauf ab, weniger geschätzte kulturelle Ausdrucksformen den traditionellen literarischen Texten gegenüberzustellen. In der vorliegenden Dissertation wird die Auseinandersetzung von kreativen und transformativen Kräften der afro-jamaikanischen Populärkultur mit der mündlichen Tradition nachgezeichnet, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf den Widerstandshandlungen in der Performance-Poesie liegt. Das Ergebnis ist keine Reduktion der vorherrschenden literarischen Diskurse, sondern deren Verfeinerung, die speziell auf die Artikulation der gelebten Erfahrungen im postkolonialen Jamaika ausgerichtet ist, wodurch marginalisierte Stimmen in der englischen Literatur zunehmend hörbar werden.

Wenn die Dichter kulturspezifische sprachliche Praktiken verwenden, um eine Erfahrungswelt zu schaffen und zu verkörpern, dann offenbaren diese Texte mehr als nur ihren narrativen Inhalt und können ggf. einen Kulturbruch bewirken. In kollektiver Anstrengung gelingt ihnen eine Aufzeichnung und Verschriftlichung von mündlichen Erzählungen, die Fragen nach dem Umschreiben, der Neuinterpretation und der Wiedereinschreibung der Ränder in einen Gegendiskurs beinhalten. Seit den kritischen Debatten der 1960er und 1970er Jahre, die sich auf den Wert des westlichen Kanons und die Eloquenz des Englischen für literarische Zwecke konzentrierten, hat es eine Verschiebung hin zur Untersuchung literarischer Darstellungen von marginalisierten Stimmen gegeben. Um D. Soyini Madison zu zitieren: "Mit Stimme meine ich nicht die Repräsentation einer Äußerung, sondern die Repräsentation eines historischen Selbst, einer vollen Präsenz, die in und von einer bestimmten Welt ist" (2005: 191). Die Frage, um die es hier geht, lautet: Was genau macht Literatur aus?

Das mündliche/schriftliche Kontinuum der Performance-Poesie führt im akademischen Umfeld häufig zu Spannungen; diese dialektischen Spannungen bilden sich jedoch in einem Raum der Kontrolle und des Widerstands. Westindische Schriftsteller und Kritiker, angeführt von Edward Brathwaite, machten den Versuch, Wissen aus ihrer nicht aufgezeichneten Geschichte zu gewinnen, und argumentierten

für die Bedeutung der mündlichen Kultur in der karibischen Literaturästhetik (Brathwaite 1967, 1970, 1970/71, 1974, 1976). Solche Manöver waren sehr stark von den Entkolonialisierungsbewegungen jener Zeit in Afrika und anderswo inspiriert. Englischsprachige karibische Intellektuelle eröffneten einen diskursiven Freiraum, um traditionelle Verständnisse von englischer Literatur in Frage zu stellen, sich kolonialistischen Geschichtsdarstellungen zu widersetzen. Sie haben versucht, die Palette der Genres zu diversifizieren, um eine Vielzahl nicht-traditionellen Materials unbekannter Autoren als Untersuchungsobjekte zu erforschen. Sie argumentieren, dass außereuropäische Kulturen, insbesondere afro-karibische kulturelle Praktiken, als "alien intrusion that has been only a bane for the discipline" (Moore, 2011: 48) wahrgenommen werden. Obwohl die Aufwertung der Performance-Poesie auf wachsendes Interesse stößt, wurde dem Begriff der Performance jamaikanischer mündlicher Traditionen noch nicht genügend Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt.

Ein Überblick über die Forschungsliteratur zeigt, dass nur eine Handvoll Aufsätze darlegen, wie der andersgeartete ästhetische Rahmen, in dem nicht-traditionelle Erzählweisen artikuliert werden, eine Herausforderung für die westlichen Konventionen darstellt. Bemerkenswerte Beispiele sind Mervyn Morris' "On Reading Louise Bennett, Seriously" (1963) und Gordon Rohlehrs "Sparrow and the Language of the Calypso" (1970). Es ist fraglich, ob solche Studien Brathwaites Konzept der "Nationalsprache" und seine Auseinandersetzung mit dem "Folk" vorantreiben, um die Möglichkeit einer neuen karibischen Ästhetik zu erforschen, und ob diese Ideen für ihre verwandten Anliegen relevant sind (1984). In ähnlicher Weise bieten nur sehr wenige Sammelbände eine vergleichende Analyse anglophoner karibischer Performance-Dichter (Brown et al., 1989; Burnett, 1986; Cooper, 1993; Habekost, 1993).

Auch wenn sich die "Dritte-Welt-Literatur" in den postkolonialen Studien seit den 1960er Jahren einer gewissen Beliebtheit erfreut, haben die transgressiven Erzählungen, in denen das Englische den karibischen Dialekten Platz macht, bisher in keinem anderen Bereich einen ähnlich nennenswerten Einzug gehalten, wie es beispielsweise die feministische Kritik getan hat. In der Tat weisen neuere Studien zu Louise Bennetts Lyrik, ob ausschließlich oder teilweise ihr gewidmet, auf ihr destabilisierendes Potenzial in Bezug auf traditionelle literarische Formen hin

(Cooper, 1978, 1999; Dance, 2006; Doumerc, 2000; Ifeoma Kiddoe, 2017; Morris, 1963; Narain, 2002; Vasquez, 2009). Dennoch verfolgen nur relativ wenige eine postkoloniale Analyse einzelner Gedichte oder stellen den notwendigen Kontext bereit, um deren subversive Enträtselung kolonialer Annahmen zu verstehen, die das nicht-westliche kulturelle Wissen untergraben (Cooper, 1993; Neigh, 2009; Pearn, 1986; Ramazani, 2002; Rodis, 2009). In der vorliegenden Forschung über Roots Reggae wird eine postkoloniale Lesart entweder ignoriert oder allenfalls am Rande erwähnt (Adjaye und Andrews, 1997; Anglès, 1994; Chude-Sokei, 1997; Dawes, 1999; Daynes und Martin, 2013; King und Bays, 2002; Macaulay, 1993; Prahlad, 2001).

Indem sie ihre Lebensgeschichten erzählen, verwenden die Performance-Poeten die einheimische Sprache, um die Wahrheiten ihrer Welten mitzuteilen und sie durch mündliche Darbietung zu verbreiten. Die Bedeutung dieser mündlichen Erzählungen ergibt sich somit aus ihrem sozialen Kontext und aus ihren textuellen Formen. Madison sieht in der Performance, in diesem Fall im Geschichtenerzählen, im Wesentlichen einen ermächtigenden Akt, der "auf den Prinzipien der Trans formation und Transgression, des Dialogs und der Befragung beruht" (2005: 278). Auf diese Weise stellen sie hegemoniale Kräfte in Frage, die zur Ausschließlichkeit tendieren, und überdenken den Platz des Andersseins in der Sichtweise der Kolonisatoren auf die Kultur.

Die Auswahl der Texte in dieser Dissertation ist sensibel für das soziale Klima der Zeit, in der sie entstanden sind, und spiegelt die Haltungen der Dichter, die sie hervorgebracht haben, und ihrer Gesellschaften wider. Sie offenbaren Formen transgressiver Praxis, die sonst durch systemische Zwänge und auferlegte Präferenzen verdeckt werden. In ihnen konstituiert sich die Identität in postkolonialen Kontexten weniger durch die Orientierung am imperialen Zentrum als durch die Wiederherstellung der Muttersprache, die Neudefinition des lokalen Raums (space) und Ortes (place) und die erneute Betonung der zentralen Bedeutung der afrojamaikanischen Volkskultur. In der voliegenden Dissertation wird argumentiert, dass die Poesie des postkolonialen Jamaika eine neue Form des kulturellen Widerstands darstellt, die auf mündlichen/auralen Erzählstrukturen aufbaut, die neue Berührungspunkte mit einer bereits etablierten Performance-Kultur schaffen.

Da die Sprache zu einem aktiven Bestandteil dieser Texte wird, wird Brathwaites Versuch, die emphatischen Gesten und den dramatischen Klang der Stimme im Printmedium zu reproduzieren, weitergeführt. Sie zeigt auch, wie die Performance-Poesie die Dynamik zwischen Mündlichkeit und Textualität in der jamaikanischen Populärkultur umgestaltet. In ihrer Performance verwirklichten diese Dichter einen Prozess der kulturellen Rebellion, der sich der Marginalisierung widersetzte, indem sie "den Rand und das Zentrum kritisch durchquerten und mehr und andere Wege für unbelebte Beziehungen und Räume eröffneten" (Madison, 2005: 172). Neben ihrer Bedeutung als erste Studie, die einen postkolonialen Rahmen vorschlägt, der alle Hauptkomponenten der Dekolonisierung und das wichtigste Interpretationsinstrument für die detaillierte Analyse der ausgewählten Performance-Texte umfasst, ist diese Dissertation einzigartig in ihren Kriterien für die Auswahl der Performance-Dichter.

Performance Poetry wurde von verschiedenen Disziplinen aus angegangen, darunter Drama, Folklore, Poesie, Kulturwissenschaften und Theater, um nur einige zu nennen, was darauf hindeutet, dass es keinen einzigen übergreifenden Ansatz gibt, wie uns einige Wissenschaftler glauben machen wollen. In den Geisteswissenschaften, zu denen das Postkoloniale im Wesentlichen gehört, haben kritische Debatten in der westlichen Geschichtswissenschaft die Art und Weise verändert, wie wir die historische Entwicklung der postkolonialen Gesellschaft betrachten. Dies macht es möglich, in der vorliegenden Untersuchung von der Analyse dominanter westlicher literarischer Diskurse zu einer Analyse der symbolischen Mittel überzugehen. Die Studie wird daher die Werke von Louise Bennett, Capleton, Buju Banton und Sizzla Kalonji kritisch auf ihre antikolonialen Argumente hin untersuchen.

Auch wenn ich keine umfassende Analyse der Aufführung vornehmen werde, möchte ich mich doch auf die Bedeutung der Muttersprache in einer Auswahl von Aufführungstexten konzentrieren. Dies ermöglicht es uns, eine Verbindung zu den Dichtern herzustellen, wenn sie versuchen, sich mit der Tradition auseinanderzusetzen und Andersartigkeit und Verdrängung innerhalb der verfügbaren Sprache zu verhandeln. Ich behaupte, dass die Sprache das dominanteste Merkmal der jamaikanischen Populärkultur und der Schlüssel zum Verständnis der afro-jamaikanischen kulturellen Ästhetik ist. Daher sind künstlerische Ausdrucksformen, einschließlich Musik und dramatischer Monologe, die afrikanisch geprägte kulturelle Tradition

en widerspiegeln, relevante Ressourcen für die Einbeziehung und für die zu untersuchende Forschungsfrage.

Eine postkoloniale kritische Analyse der Aufführungstexte ermöglicht es uns zu erkennen, wie die Dichter versuchen, ihre Gefühle auf gesellschaftlich relevante Weise zu artikulieren. Dies wird zu einem vertieften Verständnis des gesprochenen Wortes beitragen, auf der Bühne wie im Buch, on stage und on the page. Darüber hinaus erfasst diese Analyse die transgressiven Kräfte, die die Macht des Englischen destabilisieren und die koloniale Binarität, kultiviert/unkultiviert, als Modell für rassische Unterschiede in Frage stellen. Die systematische Herangehensweise an das Korpus der Texte, die für diese Studie ausgewählt worden sind, trägt dazu bei, die Kohärenz ihrer Untersuchung und damit die Stichhaltigkeit der gezogenen Schlussfolgerungen zu gewährleisten.

Die Dichter wurden größtenteils aufgrund ihrer unnachgiebigen antikolonialen Haltung ausgewählt, insbesondere die Dichter-Liedermacher. Die dramatischen Monologe von Louise Bennett werden untersucht, weil ihre Sammlung eine grundlegende Quelle für die Anerkennung des ästhetischen Wertes der afro-jamaikanischen Volkstradition ist, die von der Literaturwissenschaft selbst oft vernachlässigt wurde. Von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen stammen die bekanntesten Dichter der 1990er Jahre im Allgemeinen aus der Rastafari-Gemeinschaft. Die Einbeziehung des Roots Reggae, der sich fest in der breiten Masse etabliert hat, ist eine Anerkennung der Bedeutung der jamaikanischen Populärmusik und erweitert die Ressourcen und die Reichweite der Poesie selbst, indem sie ein größeres, vielfältigeres Publikum einbezieht.

Diese Dissertation stützt sich auf 27 Performance-Texte, um die transgressiven Praktiken in der jamaikanischen Populärkultur als Teil der dekolonialen Praxis zu untersuchen. Die dramatischen Monologe von Louise Bennett werden mit den Roots-Reggae-Songs verwoben, die einen Teil des “Lärms” in der afro-jamaikanischen Tradition darstellen. Die Sammlung wird wie eine historische Quelle behandelt. Zusammen gelesen, zeichnen die Texte eine Reihe von Ereignissen in der jamai kanischen Geschichte nach, die mehr als drei Jahrzehnte auseinander liegen und mit einer bestimmten thematischen Erzählung verbunden sind. Diese Gedichte fungieren als poetisches Manifest des Künstlers und verbinden diese langsame Entfaltung von

Ideen, die Vorstellungen von der postkolonialen Welt kritisch, aber bewusst gestalten, mit einem Bericht aus dem Leben des Dichters in der ersten Person.

Die Studie ist in sechs Kapitel gegliedert, so dass auch Nicht-Fachleute diese Geschichten leicht in den Kontext bestehender Diskurse über die Abwertung und Entmenschlichung außereuropäischer Kulturen einordnen können. Die Textanalyse wird anhand von Themen präsentiert, die sich um postkoloniale Be gegnungen, kulturelle Dominanz, fragmentierte Identität und Sprache drehen. Anstatt einer westlichen literarischen Tradition zu folgen, ist es möglich, die mündlichen Texte innerhalb ihrer jeweiligen Gattungen zu betrachten und dabei spezifische sprachliche Merkmale und die möglichen sozialen Interaktionen und Verhan dlungen zu berücksichtigen, die diese Merkmale nutzen. Letztlich ist eines der zentralen Argumente dieser Untersuchung, dass eine Verschiebung von einer normativen Auffassung von Literatur hin zu mehr verkörperten Praktiken stattfinden muss, die ein breites Spektrum an kreativen Ausdrucksformen von historisch unterre präsentierten Gruppen einbeziehen.

Diese Studie bietet einen neuen Rahmen für das Verständnis der jamaikanischen Populärkultur, die sich seit langem mit rassifizierten Konstruktionen kolonialer Subjekte auseinandersetzt und die Grenzen aufhebt, die den koloni sierenden Diskursen Bedeutung verleihen. Die Analyse zeigt, wie die Ausein andersetzung der Dichterinterpreten mit der mündlichen Geschichte und den kulturellen Symbolen auch das Sprachproblem der postkolonialen Erzählung offenbart. Louise Bennetts Dialektdichtung hat ein neues Terrain in der jamai kanischen Populärkultur erschlossen, das wiederum auf eine starke mündliche Tradition verweist. Doch obwohl das jamaikanische Kreolisch die Muttersprache und die Identitätssprache der breiten Masse ist, bleibt es kontrovers, was sich auch in dieser Untersuchung widerspiegeln wird. Gleichzeitig beschwört das Zu sammenspiel von Wort, Ton und Bild, das den Dread Talk verstärkt, den damit ver schlungenen Charakter der Rastafari-Identität herauf, aus der neue kulturelle For men erwachsen sind. Rastafari werden nicht mehr als Bedrohung für die jamaikan ische Gesellschaft dargestellt, sondern als legitimer Teil der jamaikanischen Kultur akzeptiert und in die jamaikanische Identität eingegliedert. Diese Veränderungen spiegeln einen wesentlichen Wandel der jamaikanischen Populärkultur wider, der von der bloßen literarischen Darstellung der Muttersprache zur Entstehung einer Literatur

führt, die vollständig in der Muttersprache produziert wird, vor allem durch die Oratur. Schließlich sind die gegenhegemonialen Argumente der Dichter zwar notwendigerweise befreiende Akte, doch gehören die postkolonialen Probleme Jamaikas nicht einfach der Vergangenheit an. Vielmehr bleiben sie durch die unaufhörliche Reproduktion alter Gewohnheiten, die neue Formen der Ver strickung darstellen, noch tiefer in der Gegenwart verankert.

Die Konzentration auf dramatische Monologe und Songs ermöglicht es uns, sie gemeinsam als Poesie zu untersuchen und den mündlichen dialogischen Austausch in einer gemeinsamen Sprache zu erfassen, der letztlich hegemoniale Bedeutungssysteme destabilisiert und untergräbt. Die Untersuchung von Sprachgebrauchspraktiken, insbesondere des Jamaika-Kreolischen, als Brücke zur Beherrschung des Standardenglisch und der politischen Auswirkungen auf die Bildung in Jamaika wäre von Interesse. Zukünftige Forschungen könnten davon profitieren, diese Studie durch eine postkoloniale Analyse des Materials zu erweitern, das nicht einem engen Verständnis von literarischem Text entspricht, nämlich jamaikanische Volksmärchen, Mento-Musik und Pantomime für Wissenschaftler, die sich mit Volksästhetik beschäftigen. Die Identifizierung von quality repertoire ist besonders wichtig, um den postkolonialen Raum in den Vordergrund zu rücken, in dem die dominanten Konfigurationen zu verschwinden beginnen und aus dem subalterne Artikulationen und Herausforderungen für westliche Wissensformen hervorgehen könnten.

Introduction

The application of Western interpretive models to non-standard speech varieties in 'Third World' literature disregards alternative literary forms resulting unreasonably in gross distortions or sensationalism. In this regard, Jamaican oral tradition is often evaluated against prevailing 'isms' that appraise literary texts in their connection to moral virtue and intelligibility. Despite substantial literature in Jamaican Creole, this literary output, including novels, poetry, short stories and song lyrics, has not yet been thoroughly researched. Further, the preoccupation with language ideologies and what constitutes proper literary form exposes the idealisation of Standard English and the hostility to rhetorical protest. This current study explores the transformational dimensions of Jamaican popular culture to initiate a new discussion on the oral tradition and its treatment by the Western tradition.

Literary texts expose the reductionist nature of colonial discourse and how colonial subjects are constructed and perceived through Western languages. However, the mother tongue becomes a vital tool for displacing the language of the imperial centre, creating a space that openly critiques delimiting notions of an alternative aesthetic tradition. Specifically, this dissertation, "Barefoot Language: Representation of the Alter/Native Aesthetic in Jamaican Popular Culture," presents the work of four Jamaican performance poets as a collection of counter-discourses with particular emphasis on the discursive approaches to the English language. In the quest for self-determination, Louise Bennett, Capleton, Buju Banton and Sizzla Kolanji point to the aesthetic antecedents of their Afro-Jamaican culture, significantly transforming Jamaican popular culture. These poets set out to rewrite 'Jamaicaness' authentically, and therefore, this study is similarly focused on subversive resignification in Jamaica culture.

Emphasising how racialised conceptions objectify the 'native' voice, the present study enables us to explore how writers reinterpret European cultural expectations in their mother tongue. An essential tool for displacing the language of the imperial centre, the study examines the function of vernacular language in a selection of Jamaican performance texts, creating a space that openly critiques delimiting notions of an alternative aesthetic tradition. Finally, we consider how

the transgressive re-inscription of metaphors of blackness, Africa, and self become a means by which the poets project their complex Afro-Jamaican identity and present perspectives on their societies. The accompanying comments examine the discursive approach to poetry in performance from a postcolonial perspective to evaluate their relevance for critical theory today.

Theories, Issues and Application

Postcolonialism has been criticised for being vague and thus amenable to different interpretations. Critical perspectives on postcolonialism tend to concentrate on its heterogeneous nature. Stephen Slemon "de-scribes a remarkably heterogeneous set of subject positions, professional fields, and critical enterprises" (cf. Lawson and Tiffin, 1994: 16). He argues against the view that postcolonialism is homogeneous, opining that it is "a field of study that embraces radically different forms and functions of colonialist oppression and radically different notions of anti-colonialist agency" (cf. Lawson and Tiffin, 1994: 16). Because the term is applied to the study of various academic fields and demarcates diverse disciplinary boundaries, postcolonialism suggests a problematic conception. Moore-Gilbert (1997: 186) refers to the current predicament:

> The impasse which now besets the field derives from the failure of its practitioners to be sufficiently interdisciplinary, to move out from a focus on essentially literary concerns to engage with disciplines like economics and sociology, in particular, which are addressing the material operations and cultural consequences of globalization, in a quite different manner to what is habitual in the arena of postcolonial studies.

Historians, for example, deal with the period following decolonisation compared with literary scholars who may apply the term in the context of the culture and history of a place once colonised. Hence, postcolonialism is seen quite differently by different scholars.

Slemon notes that postcolonialism plays a dual role as an emerging field of study and an alternative approach to critical inquiry spanning several disciplines. Elaborating further on this point, Slemon emphasises that postcolonialism is employed as:

> A way of ordering a critique of totalising forms of Western historicism; as a portmanteau term for a retooled notion of 'class,' as a subset of both post-modernism and post-structuralism…as the name for a condition of nativist longing in post-independence national groupings; as a cultural marker of non-residency for a 'Third World' intellectual cadre; as the inevitable underside of a fractured and ambivalent discourse of colonialist power; as an oppositional form of 'reading practice' (cf. Lawson and Tiffin, 1994: 16).

Postcolonialism is also used to study the reverberations of colonialism, rendering the complicity and continuity that pervade two different historic periods. The notion of postcolonial and attempts at discerning an overarching theoretical framework is described as the dispute "between those who would see the postcolonial as designating an amorphous set of discursive practices, akin to post-modernism, and those who would see it as designating a more specific, and 'historically' located set of cultural strategies" (Ashcroft et al., 1995: xv). Besides, there are those for whom the postcolonial designates post-independence while for others it comprises "the totality of practices, in all their rich diversity, which characterise the societies of the postcolonial world from the moment of colonisation to the present day, since colonialism does not cease with the mere fact of political independence and continues in a neo-colonial mode to be active in many societies" (Ashcroft et al., 1995: xv).

Postcolonial theory establishes intellectual spaces for vernacular literature. It contributes to a new dialectical model that problematises the privileged position of English literary criticism and the ideological framework that constitutes it. Nevertheless, it would be remiss to ignore that the term postcolonial is fraught with contradictions. Critical theory may have broadened the contextual field of inquiry in postcolonial scholarship in recent decades, but postcolonial signals a complex temporality like other 'post'-marked terms. Though scholarly essays and academic discussions have proliferated since introducing the concept in the early 1960s, the debate over the lack of a unified definition remains unresolved. Varying theoretical perspectives appear to otherwise exacerbate certain fundamental inconsistencies within postcolonial theory, as noted by Spivak (1999).

The postcolonial has described a state of being "uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images" (During, 1989: 33); a statement deemed

delusive by Hutcheon (1989); and a convoluted concept yet to address "contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination" (Dirlik, 1994: 331). Despite the lack of consensus and controversies, postcolonial criticism stimulates "radical rethinking and re-formulation of forms of knowledge and social identities authored and authorised by colonialism and Western domination" (Prakash, 1992: 8). As to the problem of temporality, Abdul JanMohamed suggests the postcolonial designates a contested space that has transitioned from the "dominant phase" yet is still experiencing the "hegemonic phase" of colonialism (1985: 61).

The need to disrupt hierarchical relationships inscribed in colonial binaries precipitates the problematic postcolonial struggle. An enduring concern for critics has been legitimacy, but to use Shohat's argument, "the postcolonial must be interrogated and contextualised historically, geopolitically and culturally" (1992: 111). In this way, we need to reconceptualise the 'civilising mission' of colonialism in its specific historical, political and cultural contexts to sketch out the possibility of a coherent postcolonial understanding of the subject position of colonised. I go further and propose a postcolonial re-reading of the dialectics of vernacular poetics and the colloquial language employed as a literary medium to decolonise English literary criticism. The purpose is to consider how postcolonial theory that contests colonial inscriptions of otherness offers the possibility of framing literary dialect as counter-poetics. The performance texts presented in the current study mediate this interplay between English literary tradition and non-Englishness of the margin 'writing back' to the centre.

Critical theory has been maligned for being elitist and exclusive. The esoteric language of critical theory is somewhat contradictory. The double standards within this elitism inform prevailing contemporary theory that is being critiqued by postcolonial scholars, who constantly push back against such intellectual orthodoxies. Still, postcolonial theory should not be dismissed because critics point out its weaknesses due to the inevitable limitations of interpretation drawn from the discipline's methodological, historical, and geographical specificity. A fundamental reconceptualisation of the postcolonial is nevertheless essential to tackle the ostensible theoretical challenges within the field and would seem necessary to avoid becoming a mere intellectual fad.

Anglophone Caribbean literature has come a long way since the primary debates of the 1960s and 1970s dubbed 'the decade of the critic' related to traditional divisions between textuality and orality. Edward Brathwaite makes a bold attempt to establish a basis for analysing Caribbean performance culture through critical inquiries into folk aesthetics. This new scholarship tended more towards the inclusion of otherwise non-traditional cultural production that academic demarcations of literary legitimacy have in the past excluded. Such critical manoeuvres have been followed up by Mervyn Morris and Gordon Rohlehr, whose seminal works on performance poetry are often cited as foundational texts of a Caribbean literary criticism (1963b; 1970). Mervyn Morris took up the sustained and critical support of Louise Bennett's work as the standard of Afro-Caribbean literary aesthetic. His arguments are revisited decades later (Cooper, 1978, 1999; Dance, 2006; Doumerc, 2000; Ifeoma Kiddoe, 2017; Narain, 2002; Vasquez, 2009).

These interventions have influenced and continue to influence the scope and selection of works informing anthologies published years later. Burnett (1986) traces the development of Caribbean literary history to the expressive resources found in the Afro-Caribbean storytelling tradition. Selected to portray the representative voices that speak on behalf of the folk, this collection is not limited to literary texts but captures the vitality of the oral lore from the 1700s to the 1980s. Indeed, such influences are evident in the list of entries for other publications. Three years later, another collection seeks to advance 'oral and related poetry' including Reggae and Calypso, previously ignored or still significantly underrepresented modes of cultural production (Brown et al., 1989).

More recently, several Jamaican scholars have responded to Brathwaite's call to explode the prevailing centuries-old conventions of English literature. This looking to and analysis of "popular music, movies, dress codes, style…the whole range of the quotidian" as the primary sites of discussion heralded another critical moment in Caribbean literature (Bucknor and Donnell, 2011: 143). These critical shifts became apparent in the early 1990s and can be traced to scholars engaged in cultural studies. In an introductory study of Jamaican popular culture, Carolyn Cooper provides a more sophisticated analysis of performance poetry. Echoing

arguments pursued by Brathwaite decades earlier, Cooper's analysis of 'noise' marks a further shift away from "the smug equivalence of class /language /intelligence" that undergirds the study of literature (1993: 9). Recognising Jamaican culture's "subversive ignorance," she studies transgressive performance texts—dramatic monologues, dub poetry along with Reggae lyrics and its derivation dancehall—establishing significant poetic shifts in Jamaica's literary history (Cooper, 1993: 9).

Her study is regarded as an exemplar research text that employs the concept of an Afro-Jamaican aesthetic to leverage a positionality from which to regard the dialectic terrains of oral/literate and the transgressive voice in postcolonial Jamaican literature. Yet, it also presents difficulties and leaves scholars like Denise Narain unimpressed by the misogynist tone that underwrites many dancehall songs. Narain takes issue with Cooper's lauding dancehall and not seriously addressing its culture of violence and misogynist tradition, ingrained practices that problematise the postcolonial dilemma. Notwithstanding these limitations, one can agree with Narain that it is challenging to situate Jamaican popular culture within appropriate theoretical contexts in current scholarship.

The ground-breaking study by Cooper inaugurates a new era for research. It arouses the enthusiasm of a new generation of scholars keen to reconnect to the aesthetic interventions decades earlier with the vibrant contemporary Jamaican music. Christian Habekost (1993), in his pioneering study on dub poetry, maps out a textual terrain that helps expand appreciation of dub poetry as an art form. As he points out, dub poetry calls for rhythmic sensitivity: "Ideally the musical sounds play a subordinate yet distinctive role, supporting and propelling the rhythm, emphasising the poetic statements, interacting with the voice, and actuating the dub impact of "word, sound and power" (Habekost, 1993: 102). Despite noticeable 'talk over' style and similar messages, popular music "use prefabricated "riddim tracks," whereas the rhythms which accompany Dub poetry are designed especially for this purpose (Habekost, 1993: 102).

Kwame Dawes (1999) first sought to identify a 'Reggae aesthetic' to establish its function as a recurrent narrative element in Caribbean literature. This innovative approach seeks to explore the emancipatory potential of Reggae music in the late 1960s and early 1970s, one reminiscent of Brathwaite's engagements with

African American Jazz. Admittedly, he does caution that some of the material bears no resemblance to Reggae songs, though "at their core and in their attitudes, they represent a dialogue with Reggae" (Dawes, 1999: 22). Later he applied literary analysis to the interpretation of Bob Marley's lyrics, a voice of resistance and transformation (Dawes, 2002).

Even the much-maligned dancehall music has aroused the interest of many researchers in recent years, signalling that the field still has much to offer to academic debates. Donna Hope (2006) explores dancehall culture as socio-political practice seeking to demystify negotiations of power, violence and sexuality through meaning. The work of Sonjah Stanley-Niaah maps transnational performance geography in her engagement with contemporary dancehall culture (2010). Forged through a performative re-enacting of tradition, she argues dancehall similarly relies on "physical, mental, emotional and spiritual activity" to enact "a human existence specifically in the 'black Atlantic' space of violation, ruptured roots and self-reconstruction" (Niaah, 2010: 194).

Though there has been growing interest in modes of cultural production that challenge disciplinary orthodoxies, there have been no substantial anthologies of performance poetry since the early 1990s. The placing of Louise Bennett alongside the contemporary Roots Reggae musicians who are here given special attention for the first time has not been attempted by previous studies. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to apply postcolonial theory as the main interpretive tool for the poetic lyrics of Roots Reggae songwriters Capleton, Buju Banton and Sizzla Kalonji. Earlier studies of Louise Bennett have limited postcolonial relevance (Bailey, 2009; Neigh, 2009; Pearn, 1986; Ramazani, 2002; Rodis, 2009; Simmons-McDonald, 2003). This dissertation also seeks to give due weight to Bennett's poetry within the frame of postcolonial theory, thereby filling another research gap. I have not found any other studies on this subject to the extent found in this dissertation. It is not a complete study of her work but rather a representation of postcolonial topics and an analysis of their symbolic content.

This dissertation builds on Carolyn Cooper's work, which promotes new knowledge accumulation on the dialectical process underpinning popular Jamaican culture and reacts to contemporary literary polemics. In developing an approach, I

attempt to build on existing research on Jamaican performance texts in two ways. First, it examines the selected works as a kind of "verbal marronage," a term that evokes exclusion and denigration—marronage refers to the practice of runaway slaves forming independent communities elsewhere (Cooper, 1993: 136). Although deemed less privileged in literary domains, these texts become a site for displacing English and replacing it with the Jamaican vernacular speech, a language fully adapted to Jamaica.

Second, I carry out a postcolonial reading of the collection, providing a link between history and language. Therefore, studying the choice and use of vernacular language for literary purposes is imperative for sociolinguistic interpretation. It helps contextualise the texts and give due consideration to the historical, social and literary contexts in which they are written. The chief factors influencing the writers' choice of literary language thus become grounds for further research and not the obstacles that would immediately appear. It seems that here is a context in which the present study can contribute to strengthening the idea that Jamaican popular culture is worthy of serious scholarly attention and might be of some value to future researchers.

This present study is distinctive, particularly in its determination to historicise and contextualise the poetry of Louise Bennett in its unique time and place. The analysis of Bennett's poetry differs from others in that it presents a postcolonial re-reading of black subjectivity, establishing connections to undervalued Roots Reggae poet-songwriters. Focusing on the social history of Rastafari, this research provides a new and exciting way to look at Roots Reggae and Rastafari outside of the mainstream of sociological discourse and re-evaluate Rastafari discourse in a postcolonial setting. The current research is most appropriately categorised as decolonising studies insofar as the focus of the study's content is on how performance texts presented as dramatic monologues and songs reflect forms of cultural transgression in practice.

Leading Questions

The current study employs postcolonial theory to assess the degree to which Jamaican Creole and its variation Dread Talk articulated as counter-narratives subvert hegemony identified at play in sustaining cultural domination. By examining

selected works of Louise Bennett, Capleton, Buju Banton and Sizzla Kalonji, I explore how these writers exploit stereotypes conceptualised and negotiated by cultural differences and assert their Afro-Jamaican identities. To guide the study, I ask these three main questions: How does cultural hegemony impact conventional attitudes and perceptions toward Jamaican Creole? How do these performance poets use language in their works to articulate the postcolonial experience in Jamaica? How does the representation of the vernacular speech and folk forms contribute to understanding the role of the oral tradition in the development of authentic Jamaican culture and its relationship to the culture of writing in Jamaica?

In keeping with Tiffin's recommendation for deconstructing master narratives, this dissertation contributes to such inquiry by drawing on postcolonial conceptual frameworks to understand each of the writers in the present study and how they address these questions. As already implied, rather than thinking of these writers as musicians and folklorists or performing artists, I have treated each with the poet chiefly in mind as an inclusive and practical way of approaching analysis. Hence this dissertation's focus is specifically on performance texts.

Definition of Terms

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., argues convincingly: "We, the critics of black literary tradition, owe it to those traditions to bring to bear upon their readings any 'tool' which helps us to elucidate, which enables us to see more clearly, the complexities of figuration peculiar to our literary traditions" (1984: 4). By this, he means sensitivity to self-imposed and institutionalised silences, linguistic domination, and biases must be given due consideration. The term postcolonial is being used in the same way by Peter Hulme in this study: "the process of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome" (cf. Barker et al., 1994: 120). To this end, postcolonial is adopted as memoir writing "grounded in those societies whose subjectivity has been constituted in part by the subordinating power of European colonialism" and opposed to "colonialism, colonialist ideologies, and their contemporary forms and subjectificatory legacies" (cf. Barker et al., 1994: 5). Representing an anti-colonial stance or rejecting the colonial subject position reference to the postcolonial in the current dissertation enables examining transgressive/subversive performance practices. Moreover, the avoidance of a clear chronological framework defined in

terms of cultural factors makes applying postcolonial to elements of the Afro-Jamaican aesthetic during British colonial control less problematic.

Language provides a framework for engaging critically with the refractory imprint of British colonisation. The term 'barefoot language' that appears in the title of this study is deliberately chosen to characterise the inscription of transgression into the domain of 'proper' literature as writers vehemently spurn the coercive force of the literary canon. It would have been helpful to adopt the term 'nation language' by distinguished Caribbean scholar Edward Brathwaite. This course is precluded by John Hearne's 'barefoot language' designation, a term that exhibits interesting peculiarities and more appropriately connects Jamaican Creole with the innovative lexis, Dread Talk. Barefoot language seems more agreeable with this dissertation's context, which is still more obviously the case in the subsequent chapters, which introduce linguistic derogation invariably.

John Hearne's depreciation of Patois as 'barefoot language' effectively distinguishes the people who speak Jamaican Creole from those who speak Standard English. I have here adopted the term 'barefoot,' which primarily refers to being uncivil or underprivileged and thus intended to constitute a general understanding of the special categories into which speakers of Jamaican Creole and variations like 'Dread Talk' are traditionally classified. Such terms are strongly associated with illiteracy and lack the social prestige afforded to speakers of Standard English. It demonstrates precisely how an explicitly derogatory term can be reclaimed and resignified in a non-offensive way, giving it authority rather than inferiority.

Within the field of linguistics, the terms 'dialect' and 'Creole' have very distinct meanings. However, for this study, both terms are used interchangeably to refer to Jamaican Creole or Patois, to imply everyday speech and the first language acquired by children in Jamaica. You will find the same interchangeable use of the words 'West Indian/West Indies,' both obsolete terms now replaced by 'the Caribbean.' As a precautionary note, the use of period diction in its historical context serves to convey the true sense of the original. This may eventually result in quoting (N-) words which nowadays are considered 'politically incorrect' and a racial slur but may stem from earlier Black anti-colonial writers who used them with no offence intended.

Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to transcend oral/scribal boundaries and examine performance poetry as text. I argue that the vernacular aesthetics of Roots Reggae and Bennett's dialect verse challenge the ideological underpinnings of cultural dominance. Despite using different articulation techniques, these texts convey poetics of resistance through a similar interpolated narrative when placed together. They provide complimentary evidence of the differing life of postcolonial Afro-Jamaicans. These texts eke out a transformative liminal space or "the in-between space that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" to circumvent canonical aesthetics norms (Bhabha, 1994: 38). My approach is intended to encourage new critical thinking and suggest new possibilities for evaluating Jamaican popular culture.

I consider the representative Roots Reggae musicians as poets presenting their protest songs as transgressive texts overlaid with immanent rhythms. Similarly, Louise Bennett's subversive dialect poems deconstruct the discursive construction of the colonised. Therefore, it would seem demonstrated by the scribal/oral dimensions that these performance texts address broader questions relating to literary expression and poetic quality. The aesthetic value of language in these texts provides new ways of understanding how performance poetry can be configured as poetic compositions and lend appreciation to Jamaica's oral culture. These texts of an oral/scribal nature that employ distinctly Afro-Jamaican aesthetics are represented in postcolonial contexts raising central questions concerning the marginalised voice and the referential boundaries of literary convention.

This researcher employs postcolonial perspectives on language to explore selected works of these creative intellects as counter-hegemonic discourse, showing how writers exploit stereotypes conceptualised and negotiated by cultural differences. Further, I demonstrate how Rastafarians use Dread Talk to mediate their quarrelsome relationship to history and re-image blackness more positively. Additionally, I attempt to broaden our understanding of the literary language of Louise Bennett by providing a detailed reading of each poem. My observation also demonstrates the responsiveness of these writers to the social and the political spheres and the pervasive presence of the local dialect in Jamaican culture. To that end, the nexus of this study involves close reading of these performance texts, focusing on

recognising recurrent themes and discursive practices that help to guide this study's argument.

The analysis of Roots Reggae song lyrics in this thesis accounts for the writers' feelings of alienation, resentment and frustration. Analysing each particular verse, in turn, builds an understanding between the artist and the listener through various contextual themes. This further impels us to accommodate the writers' use of language and fully appreciate their works within a postcolonial frame considering social, historical, and cultural factors. Louise Bennett's poems constitute cultural contestation and demonstrate Jamaican Creole's creative, transformative and destabilising potential. She uses the Jamaican dialect to criticise language ideologies and the continued legacies of colonial rule. In her dramatic monologues Bennett evokes an aesthetic experience through oral recitation using word, sound and rhythm.

Methodology

Linguistic hegemony and misguided cultural assumptions engender conflict-ridden binaries mediated through English. These issues have dominated postcolonial theory since its inception. This study incorporates an interdisciplinary methodology consistent with the postcolonial framework and critically analyses poetic language in selected performance texts as a subversive force. Compiled from Jamaica Labrish and Selected Poems, a collection of nine poems of Louise Bennett, some of which appeared in Jamaica as early as the 1940s, are selected (1966f, 1982d). They have been divided into two broad categories: those dealing with independence and those defending 'nation' language.

Preeminent dialect poet Louise Bennett's influence on a new generation of poet-songwriters that follow is matched only by Bob Marley's lasting legacy. Bennett's repertoire devoted to elevating folk forms and the voice of ordinary Jamaicans on an artistic level remains unparalleled among Jamaican poets of the period and even today. Writing during Jamaica's post-war era, she chronicles its economic, cultural, and political stages of development. These include the push for workers' rights precipitating the 1930s labour riots, the nationalist impetus for Jamaican independence in the early 1960s and the notoriety of the fledging black consciousness-raising Rastafari movement during the 1970s. Bennett examines the significant

patterns of social change in each transition period in conjunction with the central state and non-state actors, their historical significance and how they relate to change efforts in Jamaican society. Implicit throughout the commentary is the underlying assumption of a seamless connection between the different texts through history and aesthetics, theoretically offering new opportunities for their inclusion in this study.

Although there is a considerable body of popular Jamaican songs, the choice of songs for this study is limited to a new generation of poet-songwriters imbued with radical anti-colonial thought. Specifically, the research will focus on three poet-songwriters in Jamaica who give deeper meaning to black consciousness and for whom language becomes a means of insurrection like Louise Bennett. The thematic collection brings together eighteen songs from 1994 to 2004, the cultural content and innovative lexicon of which are complementary to the broader research context. The analysis is organised around five central postcolonial themes—displacement, reimaging God, repatriation, inequality, and postcolonial continuities deemed beneficial to rethinking the colonial encounter in postcolonial Jamaica.

While there were many famous musicians during this period, Capleton, Buju Banton and Sizzla were chosen for study because individually, each has created a specific tone, yet together harmonised the revolutionary rhetoric of Rastafari. The research gives preference to Roots Reggae; hence Dub Poetry and Dub Poets are excluded because they have been covered in sufficient detail in earlier studies elsewhere (Bolle-Debessay, 2020; Habekost, 1993). Since Jamaican popular music spreads over two sub-genres, Roots Reggae and Dancehall, there is always the possibility that certain hardcore Dancehall acts would undoubtedly prove equally popular. To avoid conflict when ascribing importance to the resurgence of Roots Reggae in the mid-1990s, besides popularity and success, essential factors for selection are poetic quality and Rastafarian themes reminiscent of the golden era of Reggae in the 1970s.

The mid-1990s Rasta Renaissance signals a musical change triggering renewed interest in Roots Reggae while attracting a younger audience. Songwriters become increasingly self-aware, taking early inspiration from Reggae pioneers like Bob Marley. Their revolutionary enthusiasm reawakens Rastafari's consciousness, directly contrasting with Dancehall's sexually explicit and violent gun lyrics. Besides

music, the financial crash of the 1990s remains a pertinent reminder of the adverse consequences of Jamaica's financial liberalisation, which began in 1989 under the Michael Manley administration and presided over an unprecedented four successive general election victories. This eighteen-year reign ended in 2007, but it nonetheless points up issues with the nature of political rhetoric conveying the sameness and predictable pattern of empty assurances. It also highlights the complacency of the electorate, seemingly resigned to predestined failure, accepting a state of poverty and the drudgery of postcolonial life.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations appearing in this dissertation are my own, based on the original and are added only to facilitate understanding. This study presents a theme-based context analysis drawn from texts suitable for the research topic. The discussions which follow this constituent material address issues that will naturally fall under the postcolonial purview. These performance texts share historical and aesthetic similarities that accentuate a specific Jamaican cultural element that differentiates them from each other and Western narrative tradition. Besides representing unique aspects of Jamaican culture, the poetic voices, I believe, are particularly worthy of critical attention. It must be acknowledged that this study has several limitations that present opportunities for future research. Further details will be made available in the conclusion.

Organisation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Each examines the impact of British colonialism on identity formation and represents an extension of the previous discussion by focusing on foundational concepts, discursive modes of expression, and the significance of oral culture. The close reading of counter-narratives that repudiate colonial rationality will help develop an understanding of the common themes presented throughout the research. Chapter one is devoted to a discussion of the psychological impact of colonisation and the degree to which the nature of the colonial education system influences negatively oriented prejudices toward non-European cultures. The chapter contextualises colonial history as a constitutive site of struggle, in which postcolonial writers struggle to define their identity and reclaim their repressed histories. Critical perspectives on colonialism are integral to this discussion (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1963, 1967; Ngugi, 1986). The arguments presented

herein are borne out by the history of British colonial rule in Jamaica. They will serve as the backdrop against which the rest of the dissertation is developed.

After staging the struggle over identity within broader questions of language and culture in postcolonial contexts, chapter two explores Western canonical practices and to what extent English imperialism devalues Jamaican Creole, specifically in formal settings and for literary purposes. This chapter also introduces an important component of this research. It explores the upsurge of intellectual activity among leading West Indian personalities in the 1960s and 1970s. They raise this intriguing question: What happens when writers break with established authority instead of accepting English as a literary medium and become skilful in storytelling in their mother tongue?

The focus on Caribbean intellectuals provides a complete reimagining of the English literary canon to examine its engagement with oral cultures. The seminal critiques in the 1960s encourage close readings of performative and folk expressions as an alternative approach to traditional literary analysis (Baugh, 1977; Brathwaite, 1969b, 1976; Morris, 2014; Ramchand, 1968; Rohlehr, 1970, 1972). It extends the argument of postcolonial critics elsewhere, whose intellectual discourse proposed for language and/ or cultural differences as being culturally important (Fanon, 1963, 1967; Ngugi, 1986; Said, 1978, 1993). An overview of aesthetics in performance in this chapter makes a case for each subsequent chapter in which two crucial cultural elements of Jamaica are explored: the subversive Jamaican Creole and Dread Talk, as oppositional strategies.

Chapter three introduces the subversive approach in Louise Bennett's dialect verse as a creative method. Like Claude McKay, regarded as a pioneer of Jamaican dialect poetry, Bennett also employs the same strategy to undermine the imposed language and culture. However, her attempts to use folk expression and revive Jamaican folk culture proved challenging because British cultural values remained pervasive. This is because folktales, folk songs, and folk speech remained outside the sphere of what was considered a serious art form.

By the 1960s, the revolutionary optimism in which nationalist sentiments espoused the hope of an anti-colonial uprising helped inaugurate an era of Afro-Caribbean identity. It helped transform the purported limitations of dialect and folk

elements into local cultural assets. The title of chapter four, "The Subversive Mockery of English in Miss Lou's Dramatic Monologues," is self-explanatory. It closely examines Louise Bennett's rebellion against the imposed language through the use of Jamaican Creole in a selection of dramatic monologues. Bennett's criticism of colonial 'Englishness' and her desire to decolonise Jamaican culture is evident in her poem presented as social commentary. They reflect themes like independence, language, national identity and the issues affecting the daily life of ordinary Jamaicans.

I felt it necessary to present Louise Bennett in two chapters (three and four) because her story began before independence and long before the other artists were born. Her experience as a colonial subject during the cultural revolution of the 1950s and 1960s was a critical juncture demonstrating how the changing policy toward Jamaican popular culture influenced the others in the 1990s. There is a historical link between Louise Bennett's attempts to revitalise the oral lore in her dialect poetry and that of Rastafarians who emerged during the cultural revolution. As the story of the Rastafarian movement is also an important part of my study, I use it to build a foundation for readers to understand how Rastafarianism also affected the cultural changes in Jamaica. Hence, chapter five is intended as both a review of the Rastafarian movement and a reference for understanding some of the thematic issues covered in chapter six later.

Chapter five moves away from poetry analysis to song lyrics. This chapter links the well-founded apprehension around independence from British colonial rule with the ostensibly unchanging nature of the Rastafarian movement intrinsically linked to Roots Reggae music. We examine the history of the movement and the social dimensions of Dread talk, the Rastafarian counter-hegemonic response to advance anti-oppression views and construct a functional and symbolic domain. Thus, Dread Talk could be understood as a complex construct that provides a sense of belonging and cultural identity for the Rasta community, within but distinct from the existing Jamaican Creole.

Chapter six proceeds with an analysis of protest lyrics in selected Roots Reggae songs. The analysis is presented in only one chapter. This is not a lack of balance but simply because the artists are much younger, and their stories are, of

course, shorter than Louise Bennett's. Here we are introduced to arguably three of the most prolific leaders at the forefront of the 'Rasta renaissance' during the early 1990s who dramatically transformed the Jamaican music scene. Capleton, Sizzla Kalonji and Buju Banton mark their musical distinctions through their diverse lyrical styles and biographies, yet they share a deep devotion to the guiding principles of Rastafari. Naturally, my analysis focuses on how the song lyrics use the frame of Rastafarianism to espouse the African worldview and scrutinise internalised effects of colonisation on Afro-Jamaicans. Further, the analysis will allow for a more straightforward presentation of how the re-thinking of African identity helps validate the rebellious Dread Talk and Roots Reggae as legitimate cultural treasures.

The conclusion draws together the study's implications for understanding orality in Jamaican popular culture and for interpreting performance texts outside the rigid literary categories. Each chapter is reflected upon in relation to the leading questions presented in the introduction summarising the main themes that recur throughout the dissertation. Finally, we reflect on the opportunities and challenges of a postcolonial reading of performance texts as a theoretical model while also recommending areas for consideration by those interested in developing the field.

In this dissertation, the chosen performance poets have shown themselves to be culturally relevant to the re-telling of history and effectively raising the silenced voices of the 'Third World.' They employ oral aesthetics to account for their artistic creativity and redefine their self-concept. In pursuit of an authentic voice, they discover that language and culture are mutually indispensable and rooted in colonialism's ideological foundations as manifested in Western knowledge production. Accordingly, the first chapter interrogates the artificial construction of the colonised in pursuance of the postcolonial writers' quest for authenticity and self-determination. The chapter explores the historical trauma of colonialism and the resulting displacement, dispossession and fragmentation.

Chapter 1: Subaltern Voices: Disentangling the Psychology of Otherness

> Forced from home and all its pleasures,
> Afric's coast I left forlorn,
> To increase a stranger's treasures
> O'er the raging billows borne.
> Men from England bought and sold me,
> Paid my price in paltry gold;
> But, though slave they have enrolled me,
> Minds are never to be sold.
> Cowper (1791: l. 1-8)

The history of slavery in the British Caribbean reveals that the coloniser and the colonised maintained separate cultural forms. The dominant culture idealises European aesthetics and ascribes negative and demonising designations to African cultures, discourses that constitute the discursive construction of the colonial subject. Therefore, the postcolonial critic emerges forcefully to deconstruct the iconography of the colonised and foment a changing relationship between the colonised and their identity. Suspicious of Western discourses, these critics interrogate master narratives that have been used to justify colonial domination. These criticisms provide a wide-ranging account of colonialism and its impact that remains pervasive in the postcolonial era.

Postcolonial theory aims to reconceptualise the colonial space from the perspective of the colonised and highlight the enduring labels assigned to them. This chapter attempts to discuss anti-colonial thought and the emergence of postcolonial criticism linked by a shared concern for addressing the historical specificity of binary constructs and the psychology of colonisation. Further, this chapter examines how cultural hegemony figures in the perception and representation of the colonised through key texts that deconstruct the monolithic tower of the English language.

Eric Williams (1964) probes the history of colonial exploitation of the West Indies and analyses it on account of the Atlantic slave trade. After Christopher Columbus arrived in Jamaica in 1494, the entire indigenous Taíno or Arawak Indian

population was devastated, leaving behind faint traces of a once vibrant culture. By the 17th and 18th centuries, when the British occupied the West Indies, the 'Gold Coast' of West Africa would become the epicentre of the slave trade as unsuspecting black Africans were shackled and dehumanised, then transported across the Atlantic. Enslaved Africans, stripped of all personal possessions and separated from their homelands, were summarily auctioned off in Spanish Town, then the capital of Jamaica.

Selwyn Cudjoe describes the atrocities of colonialism and the tragic nature of Caribbean history since the 1500s, one marked by "violence perpetrated against Caribbean peoples and their political resistance" (1980: 19). Pervasive colonial stereotypes reinforce negative labels that contribute to the demonisation and reductive image of the colonised. Pronouncements of European superiority incentivise European settlers seeking to assert their power and authority over their subordinates. This history has become a primary focus of postcolonial scholarship in relation to deconstructing master narratives.

Postcolonial criticism seeks to establish ways to engage the broad theoretical issues under discussion and the history of Western attitudes towards non-Europeans. Acknowledging the implications of colonial domination, Edward Said concedes there are challenges to anti-colonial thought. Relating the emerging debates around postcolonial criticism, he remarks:

> We must take stock of the nostalgia for empire, as well as the anger and resentment it provokes in those who were ruled, and we must try to look carefully and integrally at the culture that nurtured the sentiment, rationale, and above all the imagination of empire (Said, 1993: 12).

Said draws attention to the contradictions of colonial discourse, its prevailing disposition and operating mechanisms. Postcolonial critics attempt a radical reappraisal of the received colonial narrative, including pre-colonial origins, as mentioned in the introduction. However, he criticises the tendency to focus narrowly on certain histories and cultures when discussing postcolonial identity. Addressing fundamental pitfalls of postcolonial inquiry, Said cautions that sometimes scholars in an attempt to define the postcolonial end up reproducing the same conflicts they argue against. Accordingly, he warns:

> To ignore or otherwise discount the overlapping experience of Westerners and Orientals, the interdependence of cultural terrains in which coloniser and colonised coexisted and battled each other through projections as well as rival geographies, narratives, and histories, is to miss what is essential about the world in the past century (Said, 1993: xx).

The above statement is an excellent example of Said's constructivist outlook: he conceives of a battle of words, images and concepts rather than an actual physical fight about changes to a reality in which he does not believe. Said (1993: 230) notes that "there is the possibility of a more generous and pluralistic vision of the world, in which imperialism courses on, as it were, belatedly in different forms." He disqualifies the one-dimensional African-centred praxis of postcolonial identity, promoting instead 'hybridity' and treating it as a collective identity. Said's sentiments are shared by Bill Ashcroft who also resists the notion of 'cultural purity:'

> Postcolonial culture is inevitably a hybridised phenomenon involving a dialectical relationship between the 'grafted' European cultural systems and an indigenous ontology, with its impulse to create or recreate an independent local identity. Such construction or reconstruction only occurs as a dynamic interaction between European hegemonic systems and 'peripheral' subversions of them. It is not possible to return to or to rediscover an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity, nor is it possible to create national or regional formations entirely independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise (1989: 195f).

Ashcroft's remarks are agreeable to that of Said, who envisions "a library or archive of information commonly and in some of its aspects, unanimously held…a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective" (1993: xxv). This foundational concept is a building block for Homi Bhabha's later expansion of hybridity theory.

Bhabha takes a different approach to Said. He reasons that hybridity is used to explain cultural fusion or the intermingling of different cultures. We could refer to Paul Gilroy's statement about "the inescapable hybridity and intermixture of ideas" in his concept of 'The Black Atlantic' (1993: xi). Nevertheless, while Gilroy views hybridity as interwoven histories and entangled narratives, Bhabha sees it as a symptom of resistance that undermines colonial discourses in the context of the postcolonial novel. We are thus reminded of the notion of 'double consciousness,'

a state of being experienced by the other as described by W.E.B Dubois (1903: 8): "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity." This state of what Bhabha calls 'in-betweenness' represents the uncertainty of postcolonial identity and forms the basis on which he proposes a 'Third Space.' It follows, thus, that "all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1994: 37). More generally, this space "disputes the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (Bhabha, 1994: 211). Against the backdrop of the Duboisian context, the 'third space' is one of continuation that connects the colonial other and the postcolonial self.

Édouard Glissant connects postcolonial identity to an "enmeshed root system" (1997: 11). The 'rhizome' is adopted to represent diversity and summed up as the "quantifiable totality of all the possible differences" (1997: 30). A 'root system' that evolves continually, Glissant suggests, "identity is no longer any in the root, but also in the relation" (1997: 18). Ashcroft would go on to expand Glissant's 'rhizome' concept as an interconnected labyrinth with no "master-plan" and "no central motif but which propagates itself in a fragmented, discontinuous, multidirectional way" (2001: 50).

Other postcolonial scholars focus on the psychology of colonisation and the extent to which Eurocentric fixations lead to self-contempt. In his pioneering contributions to psychiatry, Frantz Fanon focuses on the psychological impact of the binaries established by hegemony on the racial identity of the colonised (1963, 1967). This discussion unveils how the physical representation of the black body affects how the black subject sees himself/herself; is he/she willing to accept it? Or will he/she reject it? It is even more vital to determine how the coloniser envisages the degraded image of the colonised. We must therefore consider internalised oppression as it relates to how the colonised relates to his/her own feelings, how he/she relates to others, and how he/she relates to his/her physical environment. The constant struggle between the colonial and postcolonial identity causes internal conflicts that overlap with the concept of self and self-worth.

Over a century before Fanon's widely accepted thesis on the psychological impact of colonial subjectivity Thomas Cooper filed this report from Jamaica remarking that the black slave was:

> An injured individual; he is robbed of his liberty and with that of everything that can render a rational existence desirable. He is denied all the advantages of education, condemned to the vilest ignorance, lest by becoming informed, he should discover and see to remove the cause of all his unmerited misfortunes (1824).

We get a clearer understanding of how the local colonial authorities were promoting the notion of evolution around the same time that Claude McKay was writing 'Cudjoe Fresh from de Lecture:'

> Talk bouten Africa, we would be deh till now,
> Maybe same half-naked - all day dribe buccra cow,
> An' tearin' t'rough de bush wid all de monkey dem
> Wile an' uncibilise', an' neber comin' tame
> (1912: 4)

Cudjoe, like other blacks, is expected to show a measure of gratitude to British colonialists for being rescued from living wild and uncivil in Africa. The word "buccra" adds a certain harshness and insult to McKay's subversive tactics. Buccra, a word of no known etymology, is used to describe a white plantation owner in Jamaica. It is a term that will reappear later in this thesis as 'bakra.' In the poem, McKay exposes the coercive labour practices and denounces the ever-present colonial master in the lines "all day dribe buccra cow." McKay's critique confronts the brutality and racism inherent in colonisation that, in effect, "allows buccra the exclusive prerogatives of a comfortable existence" (Ramesh and Rani, 2006: 51). To the coloniser, the colonised are savage, barbaric, and, to use Fanon's chosen title, 'wretched.' The colonised are thus forced into subservient positions and reduced to the imagery of a 'barefoot drudge.'

Fanon (1963: 120) has this to say about the self-concept of the postcolonial black subject: "The black man among his own in the twentieth century does not know at what moment his inferiority comes into being through the other." He further maintains that colonisation is made possible through "denegrification," a process of brainwashing "the miserable Negro to whiten himself and thus to throw off

the burden of that corporeal malediction" (Fanon, 1963: 111). Ultimately, these emotional manipulation tactics lead to self-denial and a loss of self-worth. Fanon bemoans the colonised subject's mental disposition, which reinforces their degradation: "colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it" (1963: 120). Gradually, the colonised subconsciously imitates patterns of behaviour that conform to the coloniser's expectations.

Colonial domination is reinforced through the binaries that separate coloniser/colonised, European/African, white/black, and civilised/uncivilised. Memmi (1991: 67) bemoans the coloniser's reductionist view of the colonised that further "condemns him to contempt and poverty, to eternal dependence." The coloniser regards the colonised as merely an 'object'; therefore, colonisation is achieved through "*thingification,*" as so well stated by Aimé Césaire (1972: 42). Memmi draws on Fanon's insights into the internalised oppression of the colonised: "once enslaved, the colonised rapidly forget the concept of liberty, as well as their own days of freedom" (1991: 92). This situation sums up the complicated situation that confronts these Francophone intellectuals who occupy the third space in-between Bhabha mentioned above. In this mediated space, they give an account of their colonial experiences and share critical perspectives on the subject of colonisation.

Postcolonial studies, like other disciplines, have benefitted in some way from the nationalist movement. The social ills afflicting virtually all postcolonial states present a compelling account of the postcolonial dilemma. Nationalism is born out of the desire for independence and espouses the doctrine of homogenisation, mutual respect and freedom. Benedict Anderson examines the foundations of the 'nation' against the backdrop of "an imagined political community" conceived by like-minded individuals drawn by mutual interests (1983: 5). Though people tend to align with nationalist movements to help clarify their national identity and values, such movements are governed by their statutes and strict ideology. As Glissant reminds us, "most of the nations which themselves are released of colonisation have tended to form around the idea of power, totalitarian impulse of the single root, and not in one founding report to another" (1997: 26).

Although Anderson states that the nation is a construct of our imagination, we cannot deny that nationalist movements and nationalist sentiments are politically and emotionally charged. Revolutionary optimism aside, nationalism is often a violent phenomenon. One of the best examples is the Algerian War of Independence 1954-1962, when nationalist sentiments found a target in their French colonial rulers. Anderson further proposes "nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts" (1983: 4). Hence, we should consider carefully "in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy" (Anderson, 1983: 4). Indeed, the historical disruptions brought on by colonisation and the resultant independence struggles warrant some reflection.

While helpful in realising political independence, nationalism often fails to bring about real change. Said articulates the problems of independence effectively: "instead of liberation after decolonisation, one simply gets the old colonial structures replicated in new national terms" (1988: 9). The same old colonialist ideologies the nationalist movement sets out to rewrite are instead replicated. Concepts, terminologies, and binary constructs found in colonial discourses remain firmly in place. Economic stagnation, greed, corruption, and nepotism are rife in the newly postcolonial nation. We can conclude that "premature independence can be dangerous, retrogressive and destructive" (State, 1953: 656).

As reasoned by Fanon, who had first-hand experience of the Algerian war of independence, independence is violent and fraught with challenges. He understands the violent nature of decolonisation and how it continues to operate even after independence. Fanon points blame at the national bourgeoisie for the wanton corruption and exploitation that has become the norm. Similarly, Césaire attacks the colonial enterprise that regards overseas colonies as an experiment and the colonised as a commodity. Outraged by the devastation caused by the European 'civilising mission,' few would disagree with Césaire's words (1972: 1):

> A civilisation that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilisation.
>
> A civilisation that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilisation.
>
> A civilisation that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilisation.

Neo-colonial practices preserve old habits and traditions that lead to "social degeneration, economic stagnation and educational backwardness" (Shakir and Sarma, 1989: 183). Consequently, the same anti-colonial sentiments that inspired the nationalist struggle for independence also inspired the lower classes against bourgeois polity.

Like other former British colonies, Jamaica, of relevance to the focus of this thesis, finds itself an ill-equipped and ill-prepared newly independent state in 1962. The country's increased responsibilities are not commensurate with its limited resources. In reality, colonialism was replaced with a neo-colonial edifice that largely benefitted local elites while the masses suffered from economic deprivation and political malaise. These challenges represent a betrayal of the nationalist rhetoric and imperil the process of nation-building and economic development after independence.

Anderson believes that postcolonial means loosening the grips and disavowing the constraining influence of the imperial centre. He argues that "nations dream of being free[…]the gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state" (Anderson, 1983: 7). Almost by default, literary production is at the forefront of this resistance movement, and "the nation would continue to serve as the natural if unspoken flame of the novel" (Anderson, 1998: 334). National literature is inextricably tied to nation-building and would play a central role in the anti-colonial struggle. Anderson further states that "the novel would always be capable of representing, at different levels, the reality and the truth of the nation" (1998: 334). Fidel Castro asserts that these resistance novels set out to counter master narratives and retell the colonial experience from the subject position:

> Novels which attempt to reflect the reality of the world of imperialism's rapacious deeds; the poems aspiring to protest against its enslavement, its interference in life, in thought, in the very bodies of nations and peoples; and the militant arts which in their expression try to capture the forms and content of imperialism's aggression (2007: 259).

Said explains that literature and colonial discourse are interdependent: "imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible...to read one without in some way dealing with the other" (1993: 84). In the Western tradition,

the colonised are often cast as inferior and judged as frivolous characters. Many of these novels are written from the viewpoint of writers sympathetic to the 'civilising mission.' Hence, it is common to find white and European characters in English novels are either captives or liberators, but never aggressors or oppressors. Indeed, the portrayal of liberator or saviour is used to justify the violence and cruel treatment of non-Europeans.

The 1960s represented an important period for anti-colonial writing and marked a turning point against what was seen as the pervasive influence of colonisation. Anti-colonial thought emerged during the liberation struggles era to challenge master narratives. Fanon characterises the dissenting voices fomenting this movement as "a literature of combat, because it moulds the national consciousness, giving it form and contours and flinging open before it new and boundless horizons" (1963: 155). The emergence of nationalism and anti-colonial sentiments present an opportunity for radical change. Although these two concepts are mutually related, there are limitations, and they represent two different phenomena. For example, certain cultural groups with different histories, the Chinese, Syrians and Indians in Jamaica, do not share the same experiences or perspectives as Jamaicans of African descent. They, however, may express apathy to many of the assertions about experiences of oppression and anti-colonial resistance.

The decolonisation process has been the subject of many studies. They reveal structures, ideologies and values that characterise the permanence of colonialism. The question then becomes, amidst apparent discord and the ambiguities of independence, who will write the "literature of combat"? (Fanon, 1963: 240). Is any knowledge that excludes the authentic voice of the 'native' justified based on the false premise that they are servile and treated as racially inferior? What happens when the subversive mother tongue attempts to deconstruct colonialist presuppositions?

Through language, the poet performers under study discover that the coloniser/colonised relationship is one of power and domination. The search for an independent voice cast them within a struggle to renegotiate a "third space" proposed by Bhabha as a discursive site where the imposed language is displaced from the symbolic centre (1994: 37). By detaching themselves from spheres of

influence, this site of negotiation enacts a postcolonial decentring of the subject position and validates the margin as an original locus of creativity. Consequently, the Jamaican folk vernacular is employed as a subversive tool as these writers attempt to validate their identity and uncover marginalised voices that have been historically stifled.

The Long Road to Self-Determination

Eurocentric categorisations of colonised subjects complicate attempts to reverse a slave-driven mentality. Nevertheless, Helen Tiffin discusses how the struggle to renegotiate a new identity produces counter-discursive practices:

> Postcolonial literatures/cultures are thus constituted in counter-discursive rather than homologous practices, and they offer 'fields' (Lee 1977: 32-3) of counter-discursive strategies to the dominant discourse. The operation of postcolonial counter-discourse (Terdiman, 1985) 1 is dynamic, not static: it does not seek to subvert the dominant with a view to taking its place, but, in Wilson Harris's formulation, to evolve textual strategies which continually 'consume' their 'own biases' (Harris 1985: 127) at the same time as they expose and erode those of the dominant discourse (cf. Ashcroft et al., 1995: 96).

Tiffin explains that these strategies undermine binary opposites and confront master narratives that dehumanise colonial subjects. These sentiments are much like Bhabha's, who writes that the colonial project is still interrogated mainly in its historical context. He argues that the continuing impact of colonisation shapes postcolonial writing, and to "write the story of the nation demands that we articulate that archaic ambivalence that informs modernity" (Bhabha, 1990: 294).

Postcolonial critique interrogates Western attitudes and the labels of cultural inferiority ascribed to non-Westerners that are often conceived in ignorance. Racial undertones are foundational to colonial discourse: the African continent is dark, the colonised is barbaric, the black skin is grotesque, and freedom is death. The coloniser presides over naming, assigning status, and granting independence to the colonised. Historically, the coloniser occupies the dominant position within political, social, and economic spheres compared with the colonial subject, who rarely enjoys

any symbolic or privileged position. Fanon (1967) contends that colonial subjects are accorded an inferior status that fixes them in a very lowly position.

Conditioned by the dark continent trope, in which Africa/African represents primitive and savage, the struggle to reverse centuries of dehumanisation becomes overwhelming. Inevitably, dismantling and deconstructing Eurocentric agendas is bound to bring about feelings of self-doubt, uncertainty and guilt. In the following passage, Fanon sums up the profound sense of a loss of self and identity from the perspective of the colonised:

> I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects. Sealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others. Their attention was a liberation, running over my body suddenly abraded into nonbeing, endowing me once more with an agility that I had thought lost, and by taking me out of the world, restoring me to it. But just as I reached the other side, I stumbled, and the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there […] I was indignant; I demanded an explanation. Nothing happened. I burst apart. Now the fragments have been put together again by another self (1967: 82).

Read in its entirety, Fanon portrays the colonised as an 'object' wrestling with its own self-image that discovers this image has become fragmented invariably. In the post-colony, the stranglehold of the absent 'mother culture' proves detrimental to the self-concept and self-perception of the colonised. Moreover, this relationship reinforced by systemic manipulation further construes the image of colonial subjects as subservient and never feeling empowered to think or act independently.

The racial rhetoric of the coloniser determines the "black complexion was the certain indication of a servile condition" (Cooper, 1824). The coloniser rarely affords the colonised space to relate to his/her own self-image appreciably. The black-conscious Léon-Gontran Damas, a founding member of the Negritude movement, confronts a repressive colonial system poignantly in "Limbé" (1972). Resisting grand narratives, he proudly embraces his African roots and seeks to restore the repressed history of his forefathers. Damas' depiction of the black doll functions as visual stimuli for the resignification of blackness. He demands forcefully:

Give me back my black dolls
so that I may play with them
the naïve games of my instinct
in the darkness of its laws
once I have recovered
my courage
and my audacity
and become myself once more ("Limbé" l. 1-8)

The above poem exemplifies what another pioneer of the movement Léopold Senghor counts as "rooting oneself into oneself and self-confirmation: confirmation of one's being" (1974: 27). In general, Damas' aggressive push to reclaim his blackness is congruent with the 'black-oriented' negritude project as a concept and a movement. It is also reminiscent of the black-conscious reverberations of Marcus Garvey: "the black skin is not a badge of shame, but rather a glorious symbol of national greatness" (2004: 103).

Decolonising the institutions of knowledge production brings within the ambit of postcolonial theory questions about the discursive domains of language and other forms of cultural expression. The use of non-standard speech, oral histories, folklore, performance and other discursive strategies helped writers shatter the silence imposed on them by European colonialists. However, many of these writers struggle to assert their authentic language in the literary space and cannot set themselves apart from the conventional writer.

The Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe, disputes the idea that English is superior to African languages. In his assessment, Achebe observes that linguistic and literary conventions unduly constrain African writers into suppressing their mother tongues. He is concerned that Western knowledge production presents a challenge to the preservation of African traditions. He determines to rescue his Nigerian culture from Western indoctrination. Achebe realises that the African writer has a principal duty:

> To help my society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement...I would be quite satisfied if my novels... did no more than teach my readers that their past - with all its imperfections - was not one

> long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them (1975: 44f).

Achebe is left frustrated after reading novels about Africa bearing little or no resemblance to his reality. He contends that the African story must be written in the African language because "the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else no matter how gifted or well-intentioned" (Achebe, 1988: 25). There is a noticeable lack of representation of African languages in Western literature, particularly the voices of colonised Africans, that he finds disconcerting.

Colonialism systematically erodes the cultural, linguistic, religious, and racial identities of the colonised. George Lamming (1960: 34f) shares that some individuals are devoted to "the values in that language of his coloniser which have given him a special relation to the word, colonialism." He notes, "colonialism is the very base and structure of the West Indian cultural awareness," hence I argue that the Caribbean writer uses language as a resistance strategy against the imperial metropole (Lamming, 1960: 45). As Lamming confirms, the postcolonial writer attempts to "change the very structure, the very basis of his values" through a transgressive writing technique (1960: 45). Rex Nettleford describes the Caribbean region as the archetype of the postcolonial dilemma. He laments that "Jamaicans and their Caribbean counterparts are still perceived by themselves and others as extensions of Europe, historically speaking" (Nettleford, 1978: 59). Therefore, we can conclude that the Caribbean writer's actions are "responses or reactions to the initiatives of Europe" (Nettleford, 1978: 59).

The overall objective to deconstruct master narratives that enable the 'othering' of non-Europeans is in keeping with the efforts to decolonise the colonial mindset. In the next section, we consider the implications of linguistic imperialism and how derogatory references to the mother tongue of non-Europeans constitute the resultant transgressive national literature. This discussion delves into the challenges of language decolonisation.

Policy and Practice of the 'English' Empire

The linguistic emphasis of postcolonial scholarship exposes the racist discourses assigning prestige to the dominant language and repressing local cultures. Ashcroft

(1995: 283) sees language as a colonising tool: "the colonial process begins in language." Crucial to this important conjecture is the notion of language as a tool for "spiritual subjugation," an argument proffered by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986: 9). (Hereafter cited as Ngugi). His seminal work on decolonisation proceeds as an extension of the early meditations of Fanon on colonialism and racism. These works unveil the effects of colonial language policies and the psychological effects of colonisation, particularly on the black psyche. Although Ngugi deals with the subject of language in African literature, given the influence of linguistic imperialism and devaluation of non-Western languages, his argument is equally applicable to the language debates that dominate other post-colonies.

Linguistic hegemony discriminates against non-English speakers as uncivilised and ascribes an inferior status to minority languages. Jacques Lacan theorises that "the function of language is not to inform but to evoke" (1977: 86). One can imagine the difficulty in moving beyond the limits of the standard language to a medium that is deemed sub-standard. We consider the struggle over the imposed language as an exercise of power, as Ngugi draws our attention to language as a 'civilising' tool and an instrument of ideological dissemination. Language policies in the British colonies are central themes in language debates, especially among independent states. English is esteemed as "free of the limitations that the ambitious attribute to the native languages," with better prospects and more appealing than non-standard varieties (Ashcroft et al., 1995: 273).

British colonial regime transforms English into the language of dominance. Within this framework, the dominant "language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other-selves, from our world to other worlds" (Ngugi, 1986: 12). With this in mind, we will trace the ongoing struggle to decolonise dominant English ideologies and examine the prejudices against non-European languages and cultures. My analysis highlights the influence of linguistic imperialism and the resultant dualities that inform Western notions of literary quality and acceptable speech.

Colonial administrators imposed restrictive language policies on the colonies, appointing English as "the language of public discourse and conversation, of obedience, command, and conception" (Brathwaite, 1984: 7). To combat language and

cultural domination, the colonised attempted to "map out strategies and tactics of resistance" (Ngugi, 1986: 51). Abrogation and appropriation are foundational concepts of postcolonial theory used to demarginalise African and Caribbean Creole traditions. They are mentioned frequently in discussions about language in postcolonial literature. As described by Ashcroft (1995: 4):

> Abrogation rejects of a normative concept of 'correct' or 'standard' English and of the corresponding concepts of inferior 'dialects' or 'marginal variants.' The term appropriation describes the processes of English adaptation and is an important component of the postcolonial assumption that all language use is a 'variant' of one kind or another and consequently 'marginal' to some illusory standard. Thus, abrogation is an important political stance, whether conscious or not, from which the actual appropriation of language can take place.

Using the above explanation, we could argue that textual strategies interrogate the values ascribed to English that diminish the traditions of non-English speaking cultures. Some critics caution that abrogation is inherently flawed and exposes the ambivalence of postcolonial writing.

Though calling attention to the colonisation of the Indian sub-continent, British-Indian novelist Salman Rushdie intends to appropriate the English language, disrupt its natural patterns and 'Indianise' it. Rather than advocating outright rejection, Rushdie appropriates English as a language of choice to make his thoughts and feelings known from an Indian perspective. Rushdie reasons that English is a clever tool for unravelling English hegemonic discourse and liberating the subaltern voice. He observes that many texts coming out of former British colonies demonstrate the writer's apparent ambivalence toward English:

> Many have referred to the argument about the appropriateness of this language… And I hope all of us share the opinion that we can't simply use the language the way the British did; that it needs remaking for our own purposes. Those of us who do use English do so in spite of our ambiguity towards it…perhaps because we can find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies. To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free (Rushdie, 1991: 17).

Braj Kachru (1990: 12), like Rushdie, states that Standard English, inherently socio cultural, also renders the "sociopolitical dimension very different from those available through native linguistic tools and traditions." Hence, these new Englishes advance the authenticity of 'native' languages and are used as a tool for subverting normative English language practices. Kachru asserts that the accepted notion that the dominant language promotes the "attitudinally and materially desirable domains of power and knowledge" applies equally, for instance, to folk languages (2015: 147).

The dialect of the common folk challenges the claimed superiority of English by introducing an alternative aesthetic to engage postcolonial theory. Glissant (1989: 110), a proponent of Creole identity, emphasises that language is a powerful identity signifier and "guarantor of the Other...inseparable from the rebalancing of relations between communities." He is mindful that "the extinction of any language is impoverishment for all" and defends the oral lore as a powerful knowledge transmitter in 'native' cultures (Glissant, 1989: 110). His critical examination of language ideologies that frame negative representations of non-Standard varieties reveals the continuance of such attitudes postcolonial.

Colonial Schooling: The Centre of Repression

Postcolonial theory has contributed to language studies by focusing on contested and controversial issues relating to the hegemony of English. These central debates help us understand the dominant language ideologies that inform postcolonial literature. However, some critics argue that postcolonial writers risk reinforcing arbitrary assumptions about minority languages. For example, when writers in a position of privilege attempt to speak on behalf of the black community they often reflect personal biases and overt criticism. Frederic Cassidy explains that English, the language of colonial discourse, was used to transform "a barbarous dissonance of the African dialects" (1961: 20). British colonial policies introduced a curriculum to Jamaican schools based on the British syllabus, content and standards. Thus, the anti-English colonial stance emanating from discussions of linguistic imperialism in the current study rejects the dogma of cultural superiority attributed to the English.

Language policies in British colonies employed English as the primary instrument for anglicising the school system. Hence, the curriculum was adapted to the perceived needs of the colony and discouraged school children from speaking their mother tongue or practising traditional cultural expressions. British colonial education policy cunningly introduced English as the accepted language, begetting the suppression of non-Western languages and psychological ruin. Accordingly, the marginalisation of the mother tongue and shift to English medium instruction caused irreparable harm to the school children in the colonies. Gradually they start rejecting their mother tongues, moving towards mastery of English and those values that signify improved social status.

British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, a staunch defender of the English literary canon, considers the literature of non-English speaking countries "less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England" (1975). The classification of non-European national literatures as worthless follows the colonial assumption that the colonised are inferior. Macaulay defends English medium instruction for reasons of intellectual and social necessity:

> We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongue. We must teach them some foreign language…Whoever knows that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created… we shall see the strongest reason to think that, of all foreign tongues, the English tongue is that which would be the most useful to our native subjects (1975).

Macaulay believed British colonial policy should be designed to produce students who were "English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (1975). An overt attempt at eroding traditional folk culture, the mother tongue is undermined by ambitious British education initiatives that assign primacy and supremacy to English values.

The introduction of the British curriculum in overseas colonies is crucial to the 'civilising mission.' Education policy pursues a dual objective to simultaneously perpetuate English as the preeminent language and repress the mother tongue of purported uncivil, illiterate, and backward colonial subjects. This strategy raises

questions about culturally relevant teaching and understanding that indigenous languages and cultures have a role in education. Ngugi (1986), highlights the contradictions in colonial education and how it serves the British empire's interest. He stresses the lasting impact of colonial schooling, which threatens colonised people's cultural heritage. Ngugi takes exception to the language ideologies that:

> Annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves" (1986: 3).

Ngugi sees colonial education as a model that equates non-Englishness with savagery in order to uphold the hegemony of English. He recognises that English education sensitises students to cultural differences and imbues them with a bias that the mother tongue corresponds to illiteracy and ignorance. From the African perspective, Ngugi views English as an instrument for ideological dissemination and the broader purpose of exploitation. Education thus becomes a more subtle form of colonisation in which the influence of Great Britain operates at both a strategic and tactical level in terms of repressing cultural traditions. In protest, Ngugi begins writing in Gikuyu, his authentic language, to reconnect with his African traditions and validate the authenticity of his Kenyan culture. This revolutionary practice does not necessarily imply a normalising thrust. However, it is comparable to Chinua Achebe's anti-colonial stance, which postulates African literature as a site of struggle in postcolonial Africa.

The English language education model in British colonies functions as a tool for displacing ordinary speech patterns and reproducing the culture and ideologies of the imperial centre. Ngugi's examination of language policies in British colonies contributes to understanding educational institutions in Kenya. English is promoted as integral to the country's development and social integration. He thus highlights the interdependence of language and culture and how the deprivation of one naturally leads to deprivation of the other:

> A specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality, but in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific

> history…Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world…Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specifies relationship to the world (Ngugi, 1986: 15f).

As a postcolonial writer, Ngugi heeds Fanon's call to "strip himself naked" to reorient the unsettling encounter of the 'white gaze' (1963: 211).

Edward Brathwaite (1978), criticises the linguistic dogma that asserts English in the intellectual and creative space. He observes that the British education policies tend to venerate European advancements and achievements. Moreover, he laments that the veneration of the imposed language combined with the English literary tradition complicates efforts to preserve the oral cultures of Caribbean communities. Highlighting the oppressive aspect of the colonial education system, Brathwaite remarks:

> People were forced to learn things which had no relevance to themselves. Paradoxically, in the Caribbean (as in many other 'cultural disaster' areas), the people educated in this system came to know more, even today, about English kings and queens than they do about our own national heroes, our own slave rebels, the people who helped to build and to destroy our society. We are more excited by their literary models, by the concept of, say, Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood than we are by Nanny of the Maroons, a name some of us didn't even know until a few years ago (1984: 8f).

Perhaps we should consider the apparent cultural dislocation experienced during colonisation and African subjects' suppressed histories and identities. As Brathwaite notes:

> The whole educational environment was pushing me into being an Afro-Saxon. Africa did not mean anything to anybody in Barbados; we never mentioned the word in our ten years of schooling. So there was no question, at that stage, of trying to find out "who am I?" (cf. Perrier, 1973: 22f).

The thrust of British literature in schooling ensures the diffusion and veneration of written works by literary luminaries such as Chaucer, Dickens and Shakespeare. George Lamming reflects on this system of indoctrinated colonial values. Describing the novel's cultural context, Lamming explains that even though "the colonial

experience of my generation was almost wholly without violence. It was a terror of the mind; a daily exercise in self-mutilation. Black versus black in a battle for self-improvement…This was the breeding ground for every uncertainty of self" (2002).

Olive Senior in "Colonial Girls School" writes that a highly structured school system exists in Jamaica to reinforce desirable behaviour and eliminate perceived uncouth appearance and manner. She uses the words 'borrowed,' 'muffled,' and 'dekinked,' to describe the repressive tactics employed by the colonial education model. The student is thus submerged in a de-cultured system:

> Borrowed images
> willed our skins pale
> muffled our laughter
> lowered our voices
> let out our hems
> dekinked our hair
> denied our sex in gym tunics and bloomers
> harnessed our voices to madrigals
> and genteel airs
> yoked our minds to declensions in Latin
> and the language of Shakespeare
> Told us nothing about ourselves
> There was nothing about us at all
> Senior (1985: 26)

St. Lucian-born Derek Walcott registers similar problems as a young writer trying to find his authorial voice during the 1940s. Like Senior, he shares the same level of consciousness and points decisively at cultural repression, which remains a strong undercurrent in the British education system. Walcott recalls his formative years:

> I sighed up a continent of envy when I studied English literature, yet, when I tried to talk as I wrote, my voice sounded affected or too raw. The tongue became burdened, like an ass trying to shift its load. I was taught to trim my tongue as a particular tool which could as easily have been ordered from England as an awl or a chisel (1970: 31).

The so-called substandard Caribbean Creole languages and oral culture remain peripheral and deemed not sufficiently authentic. Thus, these Caribbean writers' search for a sense of identity begins in earnest when the onslaught against the mother tongue long sustained by the colonial education system is examined, criticised and reconsidered. Experiencing profound ambiguity, the postcolonial Caribbean writer forges a sense of national identity shaped by their unique languages and the colonial experience. Notably, Jamaican poet Louise Bennett refuses to anglicise her dialect verse throughout her long career. Employing language to present new voices, perspectives and themes in a new literary aesthetic, she showcases hidden elements of her Jamaican culture.

Part of the oppressive state apparatus, the imposition of English marks a deliberate attempt to erode everyday speech patterns used by locals in the colonies. The concept of 'writing back' gives rise to Edward Brathwaite's search for an "alternative to the European cultural tradition" (1967: 115). His proposed concept of a 'nation language' constituted through the interactions between different languages and cultures during slavery in the British Caribbean will suffice with only a brief mention here. The next chapter provides a more appropriate context within which to examine this new concept taking into account critical debates around a distinctively new Caribbean aesthetic and form.

Despite the broad masses of Caribbean peoples speaking their authentic languages, English-language poetry and novels circulate widely. Some Caribbean writers even help sustain racialised narratives that undergird the superiority of the distant mother culture and dismiss the predominantly oral nature of Caribbean cultures (Naipaul, 1962; Roach, 1970; Walcott, 1998). Their conformity to English writing and literary norms reflects underlying cultural biases. A subject occupying the other/otherness position, the West Indian writer struggles to establish his identity and might otherwise construct an ideal persona leading to compromise and accommodation to the coloniser's values.

Carolyn Cooper reasons that Caribbean writers often experience agonising self-doubt in light of the postcolonial:

> The setting sun of empire does not automatically allow the Caribbean intellectual to find his tongue. The poet as colonial subject often becomes the victim of self-doubt.

> Can he speak for himself? Is he ready to play the lead role in the drama of his own life? Or must he continue to inhabit the asinine fictions of congenital inferiority? (2017).

A critique of Africa's assumed 'primitivism', the land of the 'noble savage' disputes the idea that anything associated with the continent is thus devoid of history and civilisation. Writers confronting this racialised discourse seek to establish themselves as radical intellects and endeavour to move away from financial and economic issues toward a new cultural order. This is especially true of a broad selection of West Indian poets, writers, and theorists, clearly leading up to Louise Bennett.

The Linguistic and Cultural Milieu of the Slaves of Jamaica

It has been noted that even with the increased arrival of enslaved West Africans towards the end of the slave trade, the dialects of the Ewe and Akan-speaking slaves who arrived long before had become more firmly established in Jamaican Patois. Altogether, these dialects have become the cornerstone of Patois' expansion. A result of this expansion has primarily been the progressive strengthening of pidgin. It gradually evolved from a mere plantation speech pattern to the wider rural communities: "As the creole population grew to outnumber the African population on the island, Jamaican patois became the *lingua franca* of the enslaved population" (Vasconcellos, 2015: 69).

Pidgin speech, recognised as a speech pattern with limited appeal, captures the essence of the different African dialects and simplifies communication between slaves. Sidney Mintz hypothesises: "One may suppose that, initially, pidginization of the master's language would be part of the process of mutual adjustment necessary to carry on plantation operations. In some cases...pidgin languages must have evolved into creole languages" (1968: 8). Despite deliberate cultural suppression, pidgin is the nucleus of Caribbean Creole, allowing for cross-fertilisation and the diffusion of cultural knowledge and ideas.

Similarly, the ethnic composition of the Jamaican slave community has been influential in the development of Patois. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics are also significant contributors. During this period, Jamaican Pidgin splits into two quite distinct sociolects – the speech patterns of urban and rural residents – and

forms a continuum rather than two clearly defined dialects. This phenomenon represents two similar but different speech communities whose language choices are shaped within slightly different linguistic environments, with Jamaican English being the preferred variety.

While the Creole/Standard continuum exists, the utterance closely resembles the distinct speech rhythm and tone of African languages. The sociolinguistic situation described above exposes the insular nature of colonial assumptions and the imperial mandate of the English language, literature and culture relative to African cultures. It also highlights the innovation of displaced African slaves in the Caribbean and their contribution to Jamaican folklore.

It is argued that the evolution of Pidgin and its metamorphosis into Jamaican Patois starts at an early age:

> Mulatto and urban enslaved children learned a dialect with more English intonations, syntax, and vocabulary because of their close contact with the white community, and rural enslaved children living on estates with one or two white men learned a patois that was less influenced by English and more an amalgam of African sounds and words (Vasconcellos, 2015: 69).

Enslaved children easily identify the more accessible and functional language, thereby "adopting the African words for ease of communication" (Vasconcellos, 2015: 69). We will return to the discussion of the social perception of the Jamaican language later.

The mid-twentieth century stimulated much interest in the origins and the influences on Jamaican Creole, resulting in the wave of pioneering research by linguists such as (Bailey, 1953, 1966; Cassidy, 1961; Cassidy and Le Page, 1967; Le Page, 1960). This scholarly endeavour has placed Jamaican Creole at the forefront of early studies in Caribbean English Creoles. Collectively these scholars set out to document the contributions of African-derived linguistic heritage to Jamaican culture, preserving it from extinction.

In his description of Jamaican Creole, Frederick Cassidy suggests it is "an English learned incompletely in slave days, with a strong infusion of African influences, and continued traditionally in much the same form down to the present" (1961: 2). The various stages in the evolution of Caribbean creole languages have

been a matter of considerable debate amongst linguists in the Caribbean and beyond. He writes that it should come as no surprise that:

> People of many kinds in the new colony have pooled their home differences, seasoned them with the tropical spices of Arawak and Carib Indians, Africans, Spaniards, Frenchmen and assorted others until a strong and tasty pepper pot of language is concocted (Cassidy, 1961: 2).

It was quite normal for White British settlers to acquire Jamaican Creole during the colonial era owing to its widespread use as the first language or mother tongue. Cassidy further explains this pattern of behaviour:

> During this period the Creole English became the accepted lingua franca of the island among the slaves, between Creole whites and slaves, in the growing community of free people of colour, and in a less extreme form among many of the Creole whites themselves. The use of metropolitan dialects of English was confined to expatriates, among whom the bookkeepers and artisans would soon get into the habit of using Creole (1967: xiii).

When Jamaican Creole words were used indiscriminately by anyone from the white settler society, whether casually or in serious discussion, they were seldom reprimanded.

The transformation of indigenous languages under British colonial rule considerably influences the current language situation in Jamaica. Earlier, Brathwaite reasons that when various unrelated languages converge in a restrained geographical location, they expand the dominant language over time. Considering the relationship between Standard English and Jamaican Creole, we can apply this concept to the penetration of new words into the vocabulary of the dominant language. As the official language of Jamaica, Standard English thus acquires new words and certain unique phonetic features of West African languages.

Cassidy (1961) highlights the pervasive influence of African languages on Jamaican Creole. He demonstrates how pitch variation affects or interferes with the pronunciation of words in Standard English. This creates noticeable word modifications as individual syllables are accentuated in Jamaican Creole. For example, by simply adding a vowel, we can form the 'Africanised' version of English words: *owna* for own; *taak* for talk, and *diistant* for decent. Still, the grammatical system of Jamaican Creole appears to have benefited most from this arrangement.

As to its relationship within Niger-Congo languages, Patois has as absolute plural demonstrative 'dem,' as in 'de man dem' for 'the men' or 'de people dem' for 'the people.' In like manner, the construct 'fi' is used to form an infinitive: Mi glad fi see yuh. But 'fi' is also unique to Jamaican Creole as a possessive noun: fi mi/ mine; fi him/his; fi we/ ours. The only first-person singular pronoun 'me' which Cassidy suspects is "surely a factor in the preference for me over I in Jamaican folk speech" (1961: 54). Repetitive verbs are sometimes employed to emphasise utterances: "Is gone I gone" (Cassidy, 1961: 64). Besides, even long and more complex sentences are shortened, such as "De man owe me money gone a Cuba/ The man who owes me money has gone to Cuba" (Cassidy, 1961: 57).

Jamaican Creole contains many examples of African dialects that have been absorbed or supplanted by dialectal forms of English because of governmental language or educational policies. This new language change sometimes retains words and expressions that have become obsolete or dying out. Bickerton (1988: 268) speculates that "new languages are produced *ab ovo* within the space of, at most, one or two generations."

Linguists recognise the relationship between language and context. In the study of the New Englishes, they employ a context-oriented approach to analyze language as a marker of social identity and the cultural forces that influence its use. Christian Mair (2003: xiii) studies linguistic repertoires in different social contexts. He suggests that linguists must first examine the historical practices that predicate the use of specific language varieties and the speaker's attitude towards it:

> So we might well ask whether, in the study of new varieties of English, it isn't time linguists recognised the fact that long before 'Jamaican creole,' 'West African English' or 'Indian English' end up as decontextualised constructs in linguistic descriptions, they exist as communicative practices available to real people who pursue their mundane aims in specific communities and in very specific historical and social contexts. What is needed is, thus, no more and no less than a discourse-based and dynamic model of varieties of English, which puts the context, the speaker and his/her intentions, and history back into the picture.

The colonial education model persists in Jamaica precisely because the language imposed upon locals reflects negative attitudes toward Jamaican Creole and

adversely affects the choice of a national language. Few writers and literary critics recognise the Afro-Jamaican aesthetic properties but are reluctant to promote Jamaican Creole or even contribute to its expansion across different genres. The following section examines the consequences of linguistic imperialism relative to the challenges of de-colonising Jamaica's education policies and negotiating the continuities between centre/margin. Therefore, it becomes necessary to examine the received narratives that discriminate against Jamaican Creole and reinforce the dialectics of 'proper' English.

The Impact of English on the Development of Jamaican Creole

Jamaica's storied colonial history retains an English-only language policy. English has the status as the island's official language and is positioned as the main criteria for asserting national identity. On the other hand, Jamaican Creole is associated with 'bad' English deemed incomprehensible and unintelligible. Even more disturbing, some Jamaicans stir up further discrimination against their mother tongue. This means that language discrimination greatly affects every facet of Jamaican life menacingly. One strategy postcolonial writers adopt to assert their identity is to present Jamaican Creole as an extension of the local folk culture, emphasising speech style and the African personality.

In recent years, attention given to issues regarding the recognition of Jamaican Creole in the political debate over language standardisation has grown. However, its literary relevance remains controversial. Writing and speaking Standard English equates to intelligence and sophistication compared with Jamaican Creole, the language of choice for most Jamaicans. Even worse, there is no consensus about which values and cultural traits comprise the Jamaican identity. The intermingling of English and African cultures produces hybrid forms of identity, meaning Jamaican society is not homogenous.

Proponents of Jamaican Creole propose that it is the national language and should be given equal status with English. Within the education sector, opponents raise questions about standardisation issues and the authenticity and integrity of Jamaican Creole as the language of instruction. Critic Morris Cargill wonders why anyone would try to reproduce the barbarisms and archaisms of the Jamaican dialect. Probably

worried that Patois as a literary language is becoming popular, Cargill believes a Patois-medium instruction will force a dramatic decline of English in the public domain. He makes his position clear in his customarily curt, dismissive tone:

> I, on the other hand, take the view that if it is what is called 'our cultural heritage,' it is a lousy heritage redolent of slavery and that if we keep on saying it is a great thing, it merely encourages its continued use until it will finally swamp what remains of Standard English in Jamaica (Cargill, 1989).

One could describe Cargill's labelling of Jamaican heritage as 'lousy' and his assimilationist orientation with English culture as a 'bakra' mentality. The expression 'bakra' is the Jamaican appellation used in the pejorative sense and applied to white enslavers or colonial rulers. (See page 40 for commentary on Claude McKay's "Cudjoe Fresh from de Lecture" for marginal note on 'buccra'). Cargill believes that the impulse toward standardisation of orthography in Jamaican Patois denigrates Standard English and stymies upward mobility and progression.

Language choice is a particularly problematic issue, and privileging Jamaican Creole in the public space challenges the tradition of British colonial policy that permits the entrenchment of indigenous languages. It is not only the imperial centre but also the cynics on the periphery who reject the Jamaican dialect as a genuine language. Critics find the use of the Jamaican dialect in literature meaningless, showing conformity to the English language rules for artistic creativity instead. This debate adds increased pressure on 'Third World' writers and a constant problem they have dealt with by portraying antagonising characters.

The overt devaluing and undermining of Jamaican Creole problematise the struggle to overcome the colonial mentality. Jamaican Creole has been doubly labelled a 'slave language' by some observers and tantamount to 'mental disfigurement.' At the forefront of current discussions are advocates for bilingual education aiming to transform the unwritten language of slaves into the 'nation language.' The debate on language choice in Jamaican education centres around the functional dimensions of Jamaica Creole.

Two recent studies reported that students prefer speaking Patois over Standard English. An annual report produced by the Caribbean Examinations Council blaming the 'interference' of Patois, music slang, and social media acronyms is

misleading (2012). Furthermore, the report suggests, "For students who almost abhor reading, some methods must be found to encourage correct use of the language" (2012: 5). It also claimed a downward trend in male student performance is attributed to two main factors. First, "the tendency of Jamaican boys to view reading and language proficiency as a mark of effeminacy" and second, "the use of Patois as refuge against standard Jamaican English" (Wilson-Harris, 2015). Others have argued that English is 'sissified' and looked upon as effeminate, so it becomes unappealing for the male student. The researchers fail to mention that Jamaican Creole is the first language spoken by the vast majority of Jamaicans, and according to linguists, only a negligible one per cent of the population speak English as their first language.

Hubert Devonish has steadfastly supported the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. In solving the language problem, he submits: "I believe we should have two official languages - English and Jamaican. And that we should acknowledge that Jamaican is the language of the majority and start teaching English as a foreign language in schools" (cf. Turriff, 2002). Devonish argues that it is time to end language discrimination against Jamaican Creole. He has made several recommendations for developing a bilingual education programme, particularly at the early primary level. The policy reiterated by the Jamaican Bilingual Primary Education Project (BEP), spearheaded by Devonish, aims to "formalise, standardise and popular ise" Patois and bring a rich bilingual experience to the Jamaican classroom (Turriff, 2002).

Several reader comments in the local daily newspaper are discriminatory and refer negatively to the Jamaican language. Writes one commentator, "We only heard Patois when we listened to radio productions of Ranny Williams and Louise Bennett" (2016). This shows the relatively lowly position accorded Jamaican Creole. Others blame Louise Bennett for promoting primitiveness among the poorer classes during the independence era. They believe her creative use of Patois helped set the stage for what they describe as a legacy of literary backwardness and ignorance. Therefore, Patois is thought to hinder upward mobility and is a root cause of social problems.

Statements about the superiority of English are oversimplified and lead to negative inferences about Jamaican Creole. Accordingly:

> Language is such an integral part of our culture, and thus crucial to the concept of ourselves as human beings, teachers and parents who openly criticise or condemn children for their use of 'patois' are likely to find that these children clam up, because being told that their language is inferior they are at the same time told that they themselves are inferior (Jennings-Wray, 1984).

Carolyn Cooper is one of the few public figures supporting Devonish's proposed bilingual curriculum and the standardisation of Jamaican Creole. She stresses that "until we admit that a child's home language plays a fundamental role in shaping intellectual development," they will continue to perform below academic standards (Cooper, 2008). For centuries, the school curriculum in Jamaica has remained tied to the British curriculum. There has not been much activity in the way of curriculumreform that reflects the current local concern for the socio-cultural needs of the school population. Consequently, the proposed bilingual education in primary schools and the questions relating to Jamaican Creole as a language of instruction in a postcolonial context are necessary.

Journalist Barbara Gloudon, the first columnist in Jamaica to write newspaper articles in Patois, dismisses Devonish's bilingual education proposal as a useless activity. As expected, Morris Cargill is also critical of the proposed bilingual education policy, remarking that it would encourage "linguistic indiscipline" (1999). His conjecture that the way one speaks results in indiscipline and disorderly conduct is questionable:

> Although a few jackasses, some of whom are at the university, keep claiming that Patois is some kind of language, it is nothing more than an undisciplined and unstructured kind of chattering. An undisciplined and disorderly way of speaking makes for an undisciplined and disorderly mind. Of course the converse is also true. A disorderly and undisciplined mind also brings about a disorderly and undisciplined way of talking (Cargill, 1999).

Strengthening Macaulay's ignorant assertion that the English language is a repository of Western culture, Cargill reaffirms his commitment to linguistic purism by denouncing Patois as "slave talk" (1999).

Nearly a decade earlier, John Hearne delivered perhaps the most severe and derogatory evaluation of Jamaican Creole as 'barefoot language' to convey a sense of servitude and deprivation (Hearne, 1990). Cooper (2008) detects the troubling undertones in Hearne's statement: "Since languages don't wear shoes, it's clear that Hearne was talking about barefoot people who in the old colonial days would have been described as *ole nayga.*" She adds, "For Hearne, shoes signify civilisation, or what Rogge would define as culture" (Cooper, 2008). The degradation of folk vernacular amounts to the prevailing tendency to unfairly treat the everyday speech of ordinary Jamaicans as a sign of illiteracy and poverty.

To a large extent, critics echo the concerns of many Jamaicans, even those who are lower-class and believe that advancing Jamaican Creole to the Standard is insulting and degrading. Language advocates are ridiculed for supporting the sort of 'linguistic indiscipline' that keeps poor black folks 'in their place' and at the 'back of the line.' Such reactions reinforce harmful stereotypes that liken Patois to backwardness. Linguistic hegemony imprints the non-Western language with inferiority and a threat to the social order of the colonies. Hence, the imposed language casts an indelible imprint on Patois as 'bad English' and "collapse of grammar" (Burgess, 2003). This normative assertion is emblematic of colonial narratives about folk language as a degenerated variant of English.

English is widely accepted as the idealised standard and a symbol of social prestige and intelligence. The question remains whether one wants to speak like an educated person or a country bumpkin? Understanding the socio-cultural dynamics: "In Jamaica, language is one of the primary domains in which all-out class warfare is constantly waged. You are as you speak: high class or low; uptown or down; bright or dunce; cultured or not" (Cooper, 2009). The continuity of colonial education policies still informs the double-consciousness of many Jamaicans indifferent to their African heritage and attuned to the mannerism and values of the imperial metropolis. Cooper reckons that "many of the people do not appear to know what is the essence of Jamaican identity. And if they do, they do not like what they see. So they attempt to construct an alternative image that suits their own needs" (2009). Language attitudes in Jamaica are divided along class lines: uptown from

downtown, ghetto from *stush* (Jamaican term for someone who acts snobbish or conceited).

Strengthening Ngugi's well-argued thesis that rejects English, the colonial language of domination, it is easy to understand why language advocates recommend Jamaican Creole as a medium of instruction. Moreover, consider Ngugi's argument for using the mother tongue for literary expression and undoing cultural binaries. Through the colonial education system, "language was the means of spiritual subjugation" and inadequate to express that inherent construct of African-ness that African literature should represent (Ngugi, 1986: 9). It is then easy to see why Jamaican literature should be written in Jamaican Creole.

The current chapter focused on the veneration of European cultural values, negative labels that became internalised in the colonial psyche and their impact on the postcolonial identity. We also discussed how independence failed to meet expectations despite nationalist rhetoric and failed to actualise a sovereign state free of outside interferences and coercion. In addition, the colonial education taught the colonised "to see the world and where he stands in it as seen and defined by or reflected in the culture of imposition" (Ngugi, 1986: 7). Postcolonial scholars negotiate the prescriptive dimensions of the imposed language and find that its dominance in the creative space is replete with unwarranted cultural assumptions and biases. At its most fundamental level, the English language bespeaks a specifically Eurocentric and alienating position.

Chapter two focuses on the treatment of the Jamaican dialect in early twentieth-century Jamaican literature and the impression made by those who exploited its potential. Continuing this pioneering effort further, by the 1960s, we see a more assertive Caribbean voice breaking with literary caricatures of Creole speakers, thus upsetting the oral/scribal dichotomy. To this end, we explore the visceral experience of the 'voiceless' that evokes an emphatic counter-discursive response to presuppositions about dialect interference and non-standard forms for cultural expression in Caribbean literature.

Chapter 2: Language Attitudes of Early 20th Century Jamaican Writers

Conventional writing techniques reinforce the superiority of English over non-standard varieties. Concerning the function of language, particularly in the development of Jamaican literature, members of the literary community reject Patois and conform to the written standard. Jamaica's predominantly white and mixed-race literary elite react less enthusiastically to Patois for literary expression and the narrative perspectives of those who use it. Local purists bemoan how African words and expressions gradually seep into English vocabulary, resulting in language degradation.

Discrimination against non-standard languages helps drive the unending debates surrounding the pervasiveness of English in former British colonies. Relating the experiences of the colonial subject and the attempted recovery of the subaltern voice indeed raises the question, "Can the subaltern speak? (Spivak, 1988). English-speaking Caribbean writers attempt to answer this question leading to a confrontation with English idealism. The rejection of the authority of English is the central theme around which the discussions in this chapter take place and expands to include discussions of a Caribbean aesthetic as the chapter unfolds.

The colonised are conditioned to mimic the cultural habits of the coloniser and espouse veneration for the institutions of colonialism. English contributes to the domination and reimaging of the colonies in the interest of the privileged centre. It gives writers who are committed to upholding the established ways of settler society a sense of superiority to position themselves securely in a higher social class. Jamaica's literary elite has long accepted English as the primary language of Jamaican literature. This is most evident in poetry collections published in the 1930s by the Jamaican Poetry League that excluded dialect poems by Louise Bennett. We could interpret this exclusion as a classic example of the association between 'dialect interference' and periphery/centre relations. The disempowerment of Jamaican Creole, therefore, contributes to its marginalisation, so often seen in the publishing world.

The members of Jamaica's literary circles associate writing with a refined and virtuous poetic art form. Hence, they will have a more favourable view of a black writer who idealises the 'white saviour narrative' and writes in Standard English. For this reason, many black middle-class writers tend to abandon Jamaican Creole for English to make social distinctions between themselves and their own community. Consequently, the point of view of the Jamaican folk is often presented as ignorant. Many writers reject Jamaican Creole in speech and writing, perhaps out of fear of rejection. This is not unusual because English was imposed upon them in such a way that they began to see their natural language as an aberration. Occasionally when the stories deal with the actual lived experiences of locals, the choice of language or purported lack thereof has done a great deal to characterise the dialect of the Jamaican folk as unsophisticated and socially inferior.

Jamaicans have habitually accused their fellow citizens of 'talking white', which often leads to strained social relationships. This is an attempt to sound more 'cultured,' 'intelligent,' and most of all 'civilised.' It typifies the tenuous situation of most early twentieth-century Afro-Jamaican writers, who tend to deny their origins and immerse themselves fully in the British culture. The greater an individual desires social prestige and acceptance, the more willing they are to conform to expectations and assimilate with English. Nonetheless, acting and talking white is more psychological than physical and impacts how people think and behave.

The colonial apparatus situates English as the dominant language; therefore, individuals or fictional characters made to speak Patois to lend authenticity and enrich the aesthetic experience are generally dismissed as irrational and possess unrefined black qualities. However, it should be noted that mastery of Standard English does not solve the problems of the colonial subject. This is because the hegemonic concept of black/blackness is informed by the notion of racial and intellectual inferiority. The 'civilising mission' helped perpetuate the notion of genteel mannerism and eloquence of British culture. By contrast, hypercritical connotations were applied to the cultures of colonised subjects. With very few exceptions, members of the ruling class generally disapprove of any cultural input from the black masses. Occasionally, words, utterances and rituals peculiar to African cultures appear in storylines to undermine their normative significance. They are merely

portrayed as objects of cultural curiosity rather than appreciated as an invaluable cultural resource.

Texts often reaffirm the 'civilising mission' and cultural ethos of Great Britain. Vernacular language is used to ridicule certain customary practices of symbolic importance to the enslaved community. Many Jamaican writers reinforce the colonialist narrative and exploit characters peculiarly developed to distort reality and belittle their own community. Such practices impress upon the reader's mind a negative view of most Jamaicans using everyday expressions distinct in many ways from English. They reinforce the idea that English is inherently superior to non-English languages. The characterisation of dialect-speaking personas in early Jamaican literature represents the majority black population as linguistically inferior and somewhat inconsequential. Where writers refer to folk tales or religious observances in Jamaican folk culture, they merely provoke a sense of disaffection.

The degrading stereotypes of Jamaican folk culture feature prominently in works produced by H.G. de Lisser. The treatment of Afro-Jamaican heritage is one of condescension. Happy-go-lucky, uneducated naïve peasants who speak with an exaggerated tone of voice reinforce caricatures of Afro-Jamaicans. De Lisser's general outlook on Jamaican Creole greatly influences his depiction of dialect-speaking characters. His reworking of the Baptist War (1831-1832) and the Morant Bay Rebellion (1865) invites a new perspective on two of Jamaica's most significant slave rebellions. These adaptations reveal de Lisser's preoccupations with the epistemological premise of colonial discourse and the spirit-filled world of slaves on Jamaican plantations.

The dialect-speaking characters in De Lisser's novels are conspicuous members of their community who express the values of traditional African societies strongly. Still, his stereotyping of Jamaican folk culture proves disingenuous. His choice of language creates a noticeable separation between himself and mother tongue speakers. The distortions of the Jamaican way of life in the early writings of de Lisser represent the normative standard against which works by the later generation of writers are judged. De Lisser (1925: 10) explicitly favours English as the standard literary language and claims Jamaican Creole is 'broad, flat' and 'unpleasant to the ear.' He does note, however, that the impact of international travel and

the number of Jamaicans increasingly educated overseas has gradually transformed the local accent and speech patterns:

> Education in England or Canada, however, or frequent visits abroad, and association with those from other countries, have done much to modify this accent; what is unpleasant in it has been eliminated; it is, on the whole, free from strained affections. It is natural (De Lisser, 1925: 10).

J. E. Clare McFarlane, another Jamaican poet, strongly disapproves of the Jamaican dialect as an effective writing tool. McFarlane contends that the English language is undoubtedly the primary medium of expression. In his view, dialect writing could inadvertently promote the local history and cultural traditions. He delivers his thoughts on Jamaican Creole:

> I have often wondered whether these iconoclasts…have not thought what a serious obstacle is language, with its roots embedded in a dim but unchangeable past. The language of a people has been shaped to express the experience of a people…On the other hand, they are only with great difficulty forced into expressing the circumscribed values of an alien race-group. Any attempt, therefore, to use this vehicle of thought for the expression of exclusive race ideas foreign to it is doomed to disappointment (McFarlane, 1945: 200).

McFarlane judges Patois using the same overt racialised language as British colonisers. His comments on "an alien race-group" show his underlying attitude to Afro-Jamaican heritage. As might be expected, such attitudes present a significant challenge to dialect writers expressing their views in the decades that follow. The local literary elite continued to enforce adherence to the standards of the English canon and restrict the use of the mother tongue in national literature. Thus, the transgression in Jamaican literature moves beyond rigid boundaries to reproduce the nuances of oral histories and represent the Jamaican folk and their way of life.

A Commitment to Language of the Common Folk

Contrary to standard practices among early twentieth-century Jamaican writers, Walter Jekyll does not dwell on the perceived degeneracy of the Jamaican dialect. In fact, Jekyll, an English clergy turned planter, thought Jamaican dialect verse was 'beautiful.' This left Claude McKay quite perplexed because "the Jamaican dialect

was considered a vulgar tongue" (1979: 67). Jekyll was one of the early folklore collectors in Jamaica.

Jekyll shunned British society living a quiet and unencumbered life in Jamaica, collecting folk tales and folk songs "from the mouths of men and boys in my employ" (1907: liii). To collect these oral histories, he proceeds to "sit them down to their recital and make them dictate slowly; so the stories are in their *ipsissima verba"* (Jekyll, 1907: liii). As he writes in the preface to *Jamaica Song and Story*:

> The book as a whole is a tribute to my love for Jamaica and its dusky inhabitants, with their winning ways and their many good qualities, among which is to be reckoned with that supreme virtue, Cheerfulness (Jekyll, 1907).

The 1966 edition of Jekyll's book would prove invaluable to Louise Bennett in her early career, as she confirms in its introduction:

> When I was collecting Jamaican folklore for use on the stage and trying desperately to remember some of the stories I knew as a child, a friend gave me a copy of Walter Jekyll's book of Jamaican stories and songs. I was overjoyed to find accurate retellings of many of the stories which I had forgotten…Now there they all were in black and white (cf. Jekyll, 1907: x).

An influential member of Jamaican society, Jekyll is best remembered as the man who encouraged a young Claude McKay to write poems in the common folk dialect. He advised: "The Jamaican dialect has never been put into literary form, except in my Annancy stories. Now is your chance as a native boy to put the Jamaican dialect into literary language" (cf. McKay, 1979: 76f). Jekyll found Jamaican English writing too imitative due to the writer's dependence on British literary models.

Claude McKay's poems read as complete opposites to those published by the Poetry League of Jamaica, whose membership included a combination of upper-class, black, white and mixed-race Jamaicans. Largely inspired by the local peasantry McKay despite his intellectual curiosity and wide reading, published *Songs of Jamaica* (McKay and Jekyll, 1912) and *Constab Ballads* (McKay, 1912), two volumes of extensive dialect verse. Carolyn Cooper remarks: "No black West Indian educated in the British imperial tradition had ever before attempted to use a local island dialect as his primary poetic medium" (1993: 35). The poems celebrate what colonialists consider the backwardness and ignorance of traditional farming practices

of local peasants. The poem "King Banana" conveys his sense of pride in the black complexion, while "Sukee River" and "My Pretty Dan" express his devotion and enduring love for his homeland (McKay, 1912; 1912):

> Jamaica is de nigger's place,
> No mind whe' some declare;
> Aldough dem call we "no land race,"
> I know we home is here.
>
> You give me life an' nourishment,
> No udder land I know;
> My lub I neber can repent,
> For all to you I owe.
> ('My Native Land, My Home', 2. 5-12)

Reminiscing on his childhood in Jamaica, McKay recalls that disparagement of Jamaican Creole had little effect on the cultural identity of the black masses despite fierce criticism. He remembers his father continued to speak Patois and his love for his Afro-Jamaican heritage. His father's resentment of British settlers on the island was extreme. McKay (1979: 61) reflects on his father's commitment to celebrating his West African ancestry:

> My father was descended from West Africans. I think he was of the Ashanti nation. Sometimes when he became angry with us boys for any foolish practice he would say to us: "Your grandfather (meaning his father) was a slave and knew how cruel the white man could be. You boys don't know anything about life." My father was a wonderful teller of African stories and besides he would tell us about African customs.

Unwilling to surrender to cultural alienation McKay's father fought back against colonial domination by preserving the Jamaican folk expression, practices and way of life. McKay would later establish himself as a pioneering figure in the Harlem Renaissance and set himself apart as a prolific dialect writer. Although McKay used Jamaican Creole in an articulated manner to assess the legacy of the British empire, it somewhat resembles a stylised version and reflects the mannerism of English authors.

Thomas MacDermot, another Jamaican novelist, is widely known for his advocacy of social change and for challenging common misconceptions of Afro-Jamaicans. He reasons that disrupting class hierarchies would help undermine upper-class privilege and become "co-workers together with our black countrymen" (MacDermot, 1899: 503f). A recurring theme in his writings, MacDermot considers Jamaicans of different racial and social backgrounds on equal terms. He also rejects racialised colonial interpellations that associate blackness with inherent mental subservience.

MacDermot expresses similar arguments as Roger Mais, who also criticises the biased presuppositions about Jamaican Creole. For example, Mais strongly objects to critics who refer negatively to the local vernacular. Furthermore, he laments the self-ignorance of local poets who insist on prescribed English writing:

> Every Jamaican or most Jamaicans are Englishmen with subtle differences of race, etc., any theory about English speech producing English poetry must be right. Greater depths of self-ignorance and wilful at that, cannot exist. If poetry is an art, and outside of Jamaica it plainly is, then it must express whatever is unique and personal in the experience of a given people at a given time. Twentieth century attempts in Jamaica to revive the romantic age of English poetry of the early nineties, is the chosen forceful attempt of our local effusionists, exclude a few, a very few, of our younger writers (1940: 13).

Mais complains that Jamaican poetry of that era reflected a nostalgic longing for "the romantic age of English poetry" (1940: 13). What Mais wants to see is poetry written in a way to reflect the 'unique' and 'personal' experience of ordinary Jamaicans. For the dialect poet, less English-orientated, the mother tongue functions as the primary vehicle in the struggle to valourise the oral tradition. Mais aims to overthrow the dominant language and strengthen the position of marginalised languages.

Educator and poet Phillip Sherlock also used Jamaican Creole, though sparingly, in his collection of folk tales. It must be said that the collection was intended for international publishing, where the use of dialect was traditionally frowned upon. English was more acceptable for this endeavour as it could raise the profile and bestows upon the author their rightful place in literary circles. Sherlock, no doubt, is aware of this fact. Even so, he is recognised as one of the first authors to publish

a collection of Jamaican folk tales and legends, albeit less vigorous and forceful than Louise Bennett's. His compilation of oral histories reflects extensive knowledge of West African customs and practices.

While it is quite common to assess Jamaican Creole and its cultural value unfavourably, most notably among early twentieth-century writers, it is not surprising. Much has changed in recent years as the use of Patois in literary texts has slowly become more popular. Gradually, attitudes began to shift. Even the conservative upper classes have embraced every speech form, especially since the emergence of Louise Bennett. Nowadays, it is no longer implied that the author belongs to a different social background because of their choice of language. Stereotyped happy-go-lucky bumpkins or illiterate country folks are presented more positively in different contexts that focus less on a purely literary frame. The use of everyday speech can be seen in various cultural forms and signals the transformations in the creative space.

We have already discussed that folk expressions and way of life were often excluded from early twentieth-century Jamaican literature. Dialect poets and writers engaged with folk traditions are rarely recognised by the relatively few influential figures who, in their own opinion, constitute the patrons of the arts. This is undoubtedly an important observation as we explore the marginalisation and alienation of the performance poets in this study because of their use of non-standard speech. Failure to recognise such colonialist attitudes will diminish the significance of the critical debates concerning Caribbean aesthetics in the next section. The proposed aesthetic alternative situates folk forms as the centre of performative texts, extending their scope beyond the strict rules of the Western canon.

Edward Brathwaite and the Search for a Caribbean Aesthetic

Across the Caribbean, English-based Creole languages covey the indigenous knowledge, beliefs and values of African cultures. In the language situation, "it has both gained legitimacy as one self-identification symbol for a new 'Creole' community and becomes the 'target' of acquisition for new speakers entering the community, either via birth or via the continuing slave trade" (DeGraff, 1999: 5).

Despite that, the Anglophone Caribbean still struggles to resolve its Afro-Caribbean identity and preserve the most vital representations of African culture, namely its storytelling tradition, folk religion, folk music and dance. As we shall see in the ensuing discussion, in the wake of the struggle for independence, Caribbean writers have begun to scrutinise their muted voices and how their identities have been constructed in colonial discourse. Moreover, they exploit the intangible oral histories of their African heritage, helping to radically transform the production of popular forms of cultural expression.

Dispelling misconceptions about African cultural forms, postcolonial writers invoke Durkheim's 'collective consciousness:' "The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average members of the same society" (1933: 79). This theory was popularised by Durkheim's pupil Maurice Halbwachs who put forward the concept of 'collective memory' (1939). In this instance, the mother tongue is used to construct meaning and a sense of identity though it is also used to recode received knowledge and 'write back' from the margin to the centre. The vernacular expression relates the writer's reaction to history and interrogates English culture through local characters and how they react to the irony and ambivalence of postcolonial identity. Although themselves impacted by linguistic imperialism that designates English literary authority, the postcolonial Caribbean writer attempts to use transgressive practices to counter-balance Western knowledge production.

Ngugi analyses how literary traditions are shaped and modulated by the practices of specific cultures:

> A specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality, but in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history. Written literature and orature are the main means by which a particular language transmits the images of the world contained in the culture it carries (1986: 5f).

The dismantling of the coloniser's creative space reconfigures the discursive parameters of Standard English and attains a new level of complexity. Operating outside these constricting parameters entails complex renegotiations in terms of the oral tradition as an authentic literary expression in a culturally specific place. Rather than simply "re-placing colonial English in a discourse fully adapted to the colonised

place," Caribbean cultural expression offers a revised historical account of colonialism and negates European arrogance (Ashcroft et al., 1989: 38).

Returning to an earlier point about the purely African approach to postcolonial identity, efforts to promote a continuum, bridging the gap between the African oral tradition and the English language could undoubtedly aggravate such problems. English and Creole often intertwine in a sort of transgressive Caribbean literature, as writers confront colonial history. Invoking the creative imagination, writers articulate themes of resistance, displacement and assimilation. However, some texts reflecting the colonialist viewpoint of their authors reinforce English purist sentiments favouring English over the language of the 'Third World.'

Common themes have emerged in the many attempts to distinguish the aesthetics of Afro-Caribbean literature which has been defined in negative terms: 'newness' and 'otherness.' Caribbean Creole languages constitute a counter-discourse since the 1960s and have long been the focus of critical debate. Caribbean voices represent intimate knowledge of a place and introduce the development of literary activity marking specific periods in Caribbean history. One of the first book-length studies of West Indian literature contests the notion of a singular Caribbean voice or identity:

> The West Indies have no definitive and exclusive culture. Its peoples have come to the West Indies as travellers, forced or of their own will from Africa, Asia and Europe. Any claim that there is one West Indian voice at least as yet, does not bear examination. Secondly, for better or for worse, although the great majority of West Indians have an African background, the peculiar circumstance of Caribbean history, its slavery and its emancipation, its educational and governmental systems, have all been within the European system (James, 1968: 89-90).

For many critics at the time, it seemed that "West Indian literature was being rapidly annexed to English literature and would soon be totally assimilated into the Western literary tradition" (Allis, 1982: 1).

James' *The Islands in Between* would become an invaluable material resource for critics in the early stages of the 'West Indian literary project,' pointing out the weaknesses of this narrow and superficial classification of Caribbean fiction and its general neglect of regional influences (1968). It provokes crucial questions

on the idiosyncrasies and histories of the Caribbean region and simultaneously the Caribbean writer's "use and transformation of their own local raw material" (Brathwaite, 1969a: 116). The unquestioning adoption of Western discourses to discuss the work of Caribbean writers in terms of language seems contradictory. Likewise, the application of critical theory devoted almost exclusively to Western and European scholars could be seen as reinscribing the values of the dominant culture.

Haunted by a history of slavery and the lingering vestiges of colonisation, writers like George Lamming, Wilson Harris, Edward Brathwaite and Derek Walcott emerged as dominant and contentious voices actively involved in 'the West Indian quarrel with history' in the early 1960s. I refer to Edward Baugh's exposé on the conceptions of history in the West Indies that generate challenges for West Indian writing in its various forms (1977). In fact, Naipaul's notorious dictum, "History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies," provided a strong impetus for counter-narratives to such disheartening statements (1962: 29).

The 1960s and 1970s became known as "the decade of the critic," more or less favourable to the development of intellectual activity in the Caribbean (Allis, 1982). This is because many intellectuals and critics found themselves embroiled in the 'Walcott /Brathwaite debate,' a crucial historical debate that helps form the background and basis upon which this dissertation is developed. The main discussion is whether or not a West Indian aesthetic exists and the function of the West Indian writer in West Indian society.

The debate is taken up most often by West Indian scholars whose polemic views may be criticised in the course of a commitment to a more 'cultured' West Indian literature. It can be assumed that such contemplative preoccupation with Western literary tradition is undoubtedly encouraged by colonial legacy. The dualisms that underpin colonialism also have repercussions for the postcolonial world. The imposed alterities encourage Caribbean critics, particularly those at the then University College of the West Indies, to consider themselves progressive thinkers whose scholarship on Caribbean literature was pursued within the narrow confines of the Western tradition.

Lamming (1960) disqualifies writing as a viable career choice in the West Indies, a position shared by Walcott (1970), who points out that a reading public is practically non-existent. At the time, Walcott argues, rather insultingly, the common folk have little understanding of such high-art forms, with a complex interplay of words and strict rules of composition. Still, Brathwaite sees the Caribbean writer as primarily part of the development of a nation's culture and describes a reciprocal relationship that involves how the writer "uses his tradition" and "is 'used' by it" (1993: 37). He defends the inherent aesthetic qualities of Caribbean orality, which was previously unexplored on its own parameters.

Brathwaite outraged conservative critics by featuring Rastafarian dub-poets Ras Dizzy and Bongo Jerry alongside acclaimed poet Derek Walcott in a controversial issue of *Savacou* (1970/71). Stressing "craft" and the "civilising" influence of the literary culture of Europe, critical reaction is initiated by Eric Roach, who laments "the breakdown of literary qualities in the islands" (1970). Roach's dismissive tone impels Gordon Rohlehr to defend folk speech in Caribbean poetry, noting that analysing the general constituents of oral poetry is necessary to appropriately contextualise each in a way that might give meaning to its content. By now, Caribbean English is an acceptable literary medium for Caribbean writers, but there remains a more significant question regarding poems that use the demotic tongue exclusively. This continues to be a major part of the discussion about language.

Performance art forms have commanded the attention of critics and scholars who express their concurrence in the view of the symbiotic oral and scribal features. The subversive effect of oral performance and orality often diminishes the significance of the text in print. Following in the footsteps of Brathwaite as it relates to the alter/native Caribbean aesthetic, the distinctive contributions of a new breed of cultural critics form an important precursor for the exploration of the Afro-Jamaican cultural matrix. Accordingly, many of Brathwaite's contemporaries undertake to show the West Indian writer "exploring the communal nature of their environment, attempting in doing so, to liberate the consciousness of the submerged folk" (Anonymous, 1969: 267).

Emanating from the 'Walcott/Brathwaite debate,' with critical views relating to the provenance of Caribbean poetry, the continuum model has been firmly

established by Rohlehr as the essential continuity of Afro-Caribbean culture. His central argument foregrounds the interrelationship between "a living oral tradition and a growing scribal one in the West Indies. It relates to the continuum between the various West Indian Creoles and Standard West Indian English (Rohlehr, 1992: 68). This idea is also presented in his essay (Rohlehr, 1985) and reiterated in (Brown et al., 1989: 1-24). The latter describes itself as "an anthology of oral and related poetry from the Caribbean" (Brown et al., 1989). Rohlehr argues that most West Indians seem to enter that continuum at various points" (1992: 68).

Rohlehr's (1970: 99) presentation on The Mighty Sparrow glorifies the prowess of the Calypsonian raising interesting points about the complex rhythmic patterns of Calypso music and their influence on West Indian performance poetry. A leading researcher on the evolution of traditional Trinidad Calypso, he sees it as an art form corresponding to the African griot storytelling tradition. He notes that Calypso follows "an older West African tradition of social commentary, in which praise, blame or derision were conveyed in song" (Rohlehr, 1990: 1). The history of this African-derived folk form, Rohlehr asserts, is one of "urbanization, immigration and black reconstruction in post-emancipation Trinidad" (1990: 1).

Responding to the arguments advanced by the "pastoralists of the African revival," Walcott's critique of the recovery of African roots also emphasises his resentment towards the rising black consciousness sweeping the Caribbean (1970: 9). At the time, critical texts by pioneering postcolonial intellectuals historicise the colonised position as the most critical constituent in transforming critical perspectives pertinent to postcolonial theory (Césaire, 1972; Fanon, 1963, 1967; Said, 1978). Emphasising "an electric fusion of the old and the new," Walcott finds support amongst critics like Mervyn Morris and poet Dennis Scott. They advocate creolisation pulling toward the hybrid interplay of European and Caribbean cultures. This model calls for the indigenisation of European culture in the Caribbean and the notion of a Caribbean Creole aesthetic that is neither European nor African.

Edward Brathwaite successfully follows up his argument for a 'roots-directed re-vision' of West Indian literature with his highly influential essay *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry* first delivered at Carifesta 1976 and again in 1979 as a lecture at Harvard

University (1984). Primarily concerned with Afro-Caribbean oral lore, Brathwaite's premise of a distinctive 'nation language' reinforces Fanon's contention that reconstructing national culture is inextricably linked to the struggle for nationhood. This has helped refocus research interests on the oraliterary tradition as an object of Caribbean aesthetics.

Due primarily to the influence of the imposed language, Caribbean English Creoles contain easily recognisable English loan words. Brathwaite, in his exploration of cultural creativity in Caribbean slave societies, reveals that the mother tongue functions as a subversive tool to disrupt unequal power hierarchies, ultimately indigenising the imposed language:

> It was in language that the slave was perhaps most successfully imprisoned by his master; and it was in his (mis-) use of it that he perhaps most effectively rebelled. Within the folk tradition, language was a creative act in itself, the word was held to contain a secret power (1970: 17).

Similarly, he examines the origins of Caribbean Creole languages and the contributions of oral aesthetics to the development of Caribbean literature. Brathwaite then presents the juxtaposition between "the imposed language on much of the archipelago" and the mother tongue of its inhabitants (1984: 5f). Brathwaite describes Creole English as:

> A mixture of English and an adaptation that English took in the new environment of the Caribbean when it became mixed with the other imported languages. We (have also what is called nation language, which is the kind of English spoken by the people who were brought to the Caribbean, not the official English now, but the language of slaves and labourers, the servants who were brought in by the conquistadors (1984: 5f).

Brathwaite traces the development of Caribbean Creole languages and how colonial contact has transformed the languages of enslaved Africans. 'Nation language,' he argues, fundamentally contradicts the 'monolingual fallacy' that holds English as the only accepted language. For him, Caribbean Creole represents various cultural elements from different ethnic groups at various historical stages, including Amerindian, East Indian, Chinese, and African. According to O'Regan the '*lingua franca*' in multi-cultural Caribbean communities can be understood within the Marxist

conceptual framework of 'false consciousness' as 'Lingua franca fetishism' (2014). The term fetishism is taken here in its most general sense, referring to the attribution of values to English. Indeed, the fetishism of English spread among writers and patrons of the arts in the Caribbean when they would have vilified regional dialects in any other context. Displacing English as the language of Caribbean culture here in many ways is the central focus of Brathwaite's argument.

West African languages and English are constrained by different institutional and symbolic parameters within a space in which they struggle for coexistence. This basic tenet is most central to Brathwaite's notion of 'nation' language. Brathwaite suggests that the covert imposition of English stifled the mother tongues of newly arrived enslaved Africans, thereby forcing their "submergence" (1984: 7). He believes this process serves an "interculturative" purpose that continuously transforms everything suppressed and hidden into new forms (Brathwaite, 1984: 7).

Commenting on the cross-cultural interchange of African and English languages in the British West Indies, Brathwaite explains how transformation begins with lexical borrowing and language fusion:

> People continued to speak English as it was spoken in colonial times it was nonetheless, still being influenced by the underground language, the submerged language that the slaves had brought. And that underground language was constantly transforming itself into new forms. It was moving from a purely African form to a form which was African but which was adapted to the new environment and adapted to the cultural imperative of the European languages. So there was a very complex process taking place, which is now beginning to surface in our literature (1984: 7f).

To survive the coloniser's hegemonic discourse about English and 'Englishness', African languages are forced to "submerge themselves" to avoid linguistic erosion by the dominant culture (Brathwaite, 1984: 309f). Though multicultural by nature, Brathwaite believes the varieties of English spoken in the Caribbean are strongly influenced by "the African model, the African aspect of our New World/Caribbean heritage," and transformed by the profusion of new cultural forms (1984: 6f). This new language and cultural forms embody enslaved Africans' resiliency and adaptive capability, helping redefine Caribbean cultural identity.

One of the Caribbean's premier cultural critics and a leading authority in the performing arts Rex Nettleford alludes to an 'African Presence' as the antecedent to Caribbean cultural identity. He asserts that despite pervasive attempts to undermine the influence exerted by traditional African societies, many culturally unique practices remain unaffected. Nettleford (1970: 202) concludes:

> One unifying force in the Caribbean heritage is undoubtedly the 'African Presence.' We may as well admit to ourselves the great moral strength that would accrue to Caribbean civilisation were we to eschew once and for all the lingering plantation and colonial assumptions about the natural inferiority of those of its inhabitants who carry the 'stain' of Africa in their blood.

English spoken in the British Isles is distinctively different in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation from varieties spoken throughout the English-speaking Caribbean. Having said that, the undermining of traditional African social structures and the dislocation of African cultures cause Caribbean Creole to lack certain features that are intrinsically unique to African languages.

The rejection of Western thought, we could argue, has emboldened "the wretched of the earth" to "emerge as creative, constructive contributors to human history" (Nettleford, 1995: 10). The momentum behind nation language as a poetic medium is buoyed by a new generation of culturally conscious West Indian critics seeking an alternative paradigm to discuss the oral dimensions of Caribbean poetry. (Baugh, 1968, 1971; Morris, 1963b; Ramchand, 1965, 1968, 1970; Rohlehr, 1971, 1992) are foremost publications of Anglophone Caribbean literary criticism.

The West Indian voice is described as a manifestation of "imposed 'establishment' tongues and the mainly submerged patterns of 'the folk'" forming the matrix of West Indian culture (Brathwaite, 1969b: 2). Kenneth Ramchand's vision of West Indian creative writing overwhelmingly emphasises the crucial role of the folk and folk speech. A prominent academic critic of Indo-Caribbean descent, Ramchand shares the colonial heritage of his fellow Afro-Caribbean writers and critics and supports this position to radically change the critical approach to Caribbean literature. He observes that the myriad dialects spoken by Caribbean peoples share certain common features:

> improvisation in syntax and lexis; direct and pithy expression; a strong tendency towards the use of image especially of the personification type; and various kinds of repetition of syntactic structure and lexis combining with the spoken voice to produce highly rhythmic effects (Ramchand, 1968: 36).

The portrayal of West Indian society through the ordinary folk typifies the West Indian novel. Against the backdrop of broader social and historical domains, Ramchand explains:

> West Indian novelists applied themselves with unusual urgency and unanimity to an analysis and interpretation of their society's ills, including the social and economic deprivation of the majority; the pervasive consciousness of race and colour…the lack of history to be proud of, and the absence of traditional or settled values (1970: 5).

As it relates to West Indian literature, Brathwaite laments that many critics lag behind what local writers are actually writing, usually resisting or having trouble engaging with the West Indian reality. Consequently, this failure undermines how writers' lived experiences, topographic features, a sense of place, belonging and connectedness are configured differently in West Indian writing.

Moving beyond a narrow focus on major novelists, Brathwaite's survey of music's prodigious influence over Caribbean poetry takes us back to one of his earlier essays *Jazz and the West Indian Novel* (1967). Brathwaite, himself a West Indian poet, examines the interrelation between African American Jazz and other regional poetry. His resolve to eke out a connection is determined by the archetype 'New World Negro' in the context of 'Black Consciousness:'

> We will, in other words, be looking for some mode of New World Negro cultural expression, based on an African inheritance, no matter how unconsciously but also (and this goes without saying), built (increasingly firmly?) on a superstructure of Euro-American language, attitudes and techniques (Brathwaite, 1986: 61)

His main concern is how poets employ sounds principally relating to the notion of a 'jazz aesthetic' and how it bears on the underlying prosody. Examining poetry in this manner, he infers the critical importance of orality over the written text, rhythmic patterns, the dramatic speaking voice, and improvisational practices surrounding performance poetry in the West Indies.

Brathwaite then raises this hypothetical question for justification giving an opening to answers which likewise deserve further examination:

> I am asking here whether we can, and if it is worthwhile attempting to, sketch out some kind of aesthetic whereby we may be helped to see West Indian literature in its (it seems to me) proper context of an expression both European and African at the same time (1986: 63).

He attempts to delineate an "alternative to the English Romantic/Victorian cultural tradition," turning to folk tradition as the basis of an alternative (1986: 72f). Here, Brathwaite signals to the notion of a 'Black Atlantic' which Paul Gilroy would expound some years later in his eponymous and congenial 1993 study.

Referencing the resonant character of cultural 'noise' that denotes the marginalities associated with Afro-Caribbean culture, Brathwaite writes:

> The poetry, the culture itself exists not in a dictionary but in the tradition of the spoken word. It is based as much on sound as it is on song. That is to say the noise that is makes is part of the meaning, and if you ignore the noise (or what you would think is a noise, I shall say) then you lose part of the meaning (1984: 17).

Such experimentation introduces performative elements of Reggae, Calypso, and the Kumina ritual in ways that would later prove influential on Dub poetry, a form of performance poetry that evolved out of Reggae. Oku Onuora, Mutabaruka, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Mikey Smith, Binta Breeze and Benjamin Zephaniah are prominent among this new breed of oral poets.

Rex Nettleford reflects on the resounding voice of Caribbean writers confronting the colonial experience and inscribing a sense of radical resistance to the hegemony of English. Caribbean Creole, he imagines, essentially reproduces the diverse modes of cultural transmission of African societies. Nettleford highlights a new generation of Caribbean writers whose stories reflecting on colonial subjectivity have profoundly influenced the Caribbean literary landscape. Unlike twentieth-century Jamaican writers, he reflects on Louise Bennett's manipulation of "simple quatrains in the powerful language of the ordinary folk" (Nettleford, 1978: 13f). Confronted by the West Indian colonial situation, he comments how Edward Brathwaite forges "aesthetic sense out of the contradictory omens of the chaotic but exciting existence which has been the bane of Caribbean life" (Nettleford, 1978: 13f). Elsewhere, Samuel Selvon and Derek Walcott open new avenues to promote

"the language of their people to give a classic scribal expression in a world that remains the offspring of colonisation" (Nettleford, 1978: 13f).

Historical Development of Oral Poetics in Jamaica

The diffusion of Caribbean Creole languages and its impact on literary production in the region provide a sound basis for arguments that it should not be treated as sub-standard English or a limitation to those who use it. The ongoing debates about the status and creative force of Creole languages of the Caribbean, especially Jamaican Patois, compared with the more established Standard English, are well known. As mentioned previously, critics Edward Brathwaite and Gordon Rohlehr defend the oral aesthetics in Caribbean Creole languages. It has been sufficiently argued that performance poetry as a continuity of African oral culture expresses the nuances and idiosyncrasies of the different Caribbean communities. Hence, it seems necessary to describe here the history, form and content of performance poetry, which has given occasion to this dissertation.

Reacting to colonial narratives that emphasise 'discoveries' in the language of the coloniser, Caribbean literary discourse attempts to reconstitute the local space and cultural traditions. Performance poets apply creative strategies involving a broad spectrum of cultural knowledge and hold their place against the revered classics of the imperial centre. In the struggle against the colonial dialectic of culture, the poet becomes the leading voice confronting colonial figurations of self/other and thereby reflecting their own reality. Viewed primarily in terms of the fundamental importance of the oral lore in transmitting culture, such poetic reconfigurations of colonisation inscribe in the emergent national literature a storehouse of Caribbean folklore.

The nascent stages of Jamaican national consciousness are reflected in the early dialect poetry of Louise Bennett. Her appearance on the local literary scene in the 1930s heralds a new poetic age. Meanwhile, Slim Beckford and Sam Blackwood, more popularly known as 'Slim and Slam,' whose style of street-corner minstrelsy exploits topical issues of the day, exerts a profound influence on the Jamaican mento music scene. When discussing agitation against colonial rule, we cannot ignore the labour riots and general discontent among Jamaicans. All provided

fodder for poets and brought a renewed militancy to black activists like Marcus Garvey.

In terms of linguistic style, Louise Bennett builds on the work of Claude McKay, who presents, for the first time, a collection of poems in Patois written by an Afro-Jamaican writer (1912). Encouraged by Englishman Walter Jekyll, McKay composed his earlier poems in the Jamaican dialect. Many of the poems describe general events of daily life over a century ago and show considerable similarity with Miss Lou's poetry themes. Suppose Claude McKay's dialect poetry marks the emergence of a new voice in Jamaican literature. In that case, Miss Lou's revival and adaptation of the oral tradition is now recognisable as the genesis of performance poetry in the Caribbean.

Louise Bennett sets out to revive Jamaican folk history from the threat of extinction, and her poems are treasured in Jamaican culture, especially for recitation. However, recognising performance poetry as necessary to strengthen national development aroused considerable opposition amongst conservatives of the time who saw it as the sort of thing one found amongst the poor and uneducated. Nevertheless, as the decades progress, poetry and performance reinforce one another, their influence becomes more pronounced, and more pervasive and negative connotations gradually decline.

The transition to previously undervalued works largely the purview of some of the Caribbean's most eminent cultural critics and writers marks a radical departure from the predefined standards of literary value esteemed by the elitist custodians and devotees of European culture. Beginning in the 1960s, this shift in perspective on Caribbean literary history reanimates what Edward Brathwaite calls a "literature of reconnection" (1974: 80). He alludes to those aspects of performance poetry where the poet employs the sacred practices and customs of their ancestors to reconnect with their repressed histories. Protest poetry of the 1970s, designated as Dub poetry, evolved into an outlet for dissent. The poet quickly becomes a mouthpiece giving voice to disenfranchised people feeling alienated and disaffected from their own society. Several of these grassroots activists have distinguished themselves as critically acclaimed through their poetry.

The Jamaican establishment is usually indifferent to Dub poetry's anti-establishment message that resonates with the disenfranchised youth. Aside from sharing similar messages and audiences, each poet's performance style ultimately binds them together as a collective whose general subjects are drawn from current events. Many of the themes that emerged in Dub poetry provide clues to early long-lasting influences, including Miss Lou's dialect poetry, Brathwaite's Afro-Caribbean musings, and the reverberations of black consciousness from the Black Power advocates in the United States.

Dub Poetry is steeped in references to Rastafarianism and the meditations of roots Reggae poet-songwriters from Kingston's crime-riddled slums. For instance, through his Rastafarian-inspired music, Bob Marley introduces an awareness of the racial ideologies that inform the Atlantic slave trade and their impact on the black masses. Many of the themes in Dub poetry complement the themes and subject matter in Reggae songs. Aside from the dissenting voice associated with the genre, the lines are noticeably longer, and more attention is given to the refrain that accompanies Reggae rhythms incorporated in the poems. Performance style shifted significantly as Jamaican popular music D.J.'s utilises different elements to create novel improvisations bringing excitement to outdoor neighbourhood dances and sound system events. The popularity of Reggae music in Jamaica meant more performance opportunities for local Dub Poets and a helpful resource for them to hone their natural skills.

Creative and Aesthetic Features of Orature

Performance poetry is a traditional form of non-material folk culture, often allowing for improvisation. The setting is even more wide-ranging in breadth and scope, and the verse is more distinguishable from those that represent traditional forms of poetry. The stage signifies freedom and self-endowment, a space where verses are stripped of canonical restrictions, permitting a more intimate relationship between poet and audience. Still, performing in front of an audience attracts sustained criticism, especially when the poet's opinion on a particular subject is personal, forcing him or her to bear responsibility. Critics contend that stage presence controverts the traditional bourgeois concept of legitimising a poet. It certainly belies the widely

accepted notion that recognises literary sophistication and profundity of serious art form, worthy of patronage.

In addition to the poet's physical presence on stage, the place of the performance is an important delineating characteristic in performance poetry. A shared history and collective experiences establish a connection between the poet and the same community prompting general malaise among critics based on this association. This further suggests that location provides a contextual frame of reference for understanding the significance of the physical environment in everyday social interaction.

Language and pronunciation have been considered a perpetual problem in Caribbean performance. Depending on the audience, especially for the spoken word poet who employs the local dialect or those writers who represent the working class, the most accessible language is imperative. For instance, the choice of words is based on the intended impact of the message or the reader's expected reaction. Language is a central tool for establishing and sustaining social relations and defining one's identity. It also connects an individual to a particular culture and belief for a sense of belonging. For the most part, language choice is based on the image an individual wishes to project, given the recognition that language is a form of symbolic power.

The choice of language and the audience's attitude to the said language will significantly influence how the writer is received. If the audience approves of the language and the writer uses the right tone to capture their attention and at least evoke an emotional response, the audience tends to be more trusting and align themselves with the characters. The writer relays their thoughts and feelings to the audience, striving to engage with their expectations and concerns and ultimately gain acceptance for their work. Conversely, if the message is communicated using a language deemed corrupt or broken English, the audience is openly disapproving and less receptive to the writer.

The vernacular language resonates with audience members mainly through retelling folk histories and using character emotions to communicate a sense of identity. In addition, it is dynamic and transformative, allowing the audience to become more familiar with African cultural influences and attempt to reconnect with their heritage and celebrate their ancestral past. Much emphasis is

given to the aesthetic value of folk culture and traditions that are reinterpreted in Caribbean culture.

Defying the conventional 'Queen's' English, Jamaican Creole or Patois is the language customarily used for performing. Each poem follows rhythmic and melodic patterns distinctly common to the African continent that force out inflexions, nuances and linguistic subtleties. Nettleford (1978: 14) informs us that "Caribbean languages are more than lexicography, that they are imagery, tone, metaphysical symbolism, and possessing the properties of song, dance, movement even." He outlines the performative characteristics of Caribbean Creole:

> African emphasis on rhythm and on the involvement of self in the imagery; the use of 'nation-language' or Afro-dialect; the cult of the word as sound; its sound value, as for example, when words are concocted to make onomatopoeic sense or nonsense; the concretizing or the grounding, that is, the fleshing out of ideas; imaginative visualisations; Afro-puns and the calypsonic miming of words (Nettleford, 1978: 14).

Through the perceived authenticity of the local vernacular, the poet reaffirms the centrality of cultural expression and traditional knowledge to its speakers. The use of vernacular language and idiomatic expressions, which engender prejudicial attitudes, situate the poet on the periphery, oftentimes where colonial history and ideological positions demarcate social stratification. Indeed, one could say the poet assumes an adversarial position and advocates on behalf of underserved communities signalling a new aesthetic transformation of the prevailing narrative of 'proper' literary creation.

The poet's look is as significant as their use of language, gestures and musical improvisations. They usually adopt a persona that projects an image appropriate to the context of the narrative. Their physical appearance gives an impression of what they advocate and represent. Miss Lou's well-proportioned body emphasises the archetypical projection of a motherly figure. Her lifelong dedication to illuminating Jamaican folklore and appreciation of Jamaican Creole saw her wearing her signature bandana costume comprising a red and white chequered dress or long flared skirt and blouse ensemble, head wrap and hoop earrings.

Capleton, well-versed in his Rastafarian faith, wears custom-made three-piece co-ordinated outfits, including his footwear. In keeping with "the royal or the kingly look," these brightly coloured suits incorporate Rasta's black, green, and gold. Being aware that music and fashion are intertwined, Capleton brings a new sensibility to Reggae music: "It's all about presentation, and that is very important as an artiste as it is a part of how yuh represent yuh music" (Lyew, 2018). This is compatible with the bold statement in one of his songs denouncing Western fashion: "Binghi man nah wear up dem Babylon clothes/ Inna mi turban and mi ancient robe!" (Capleton, 1997). When translation it becomes Binghi man will not wear their Babylon clothes/ In my turban and ancient robe.

Sizzla Kalonji signals by his confident demeanour: "Ina mi turban and robe, Rastafari know mi ready fi the road" (2002b). The turban he habitually wears to wrap his long flowing dreadlocks suggests an identification with the Rastafarian Bobo Shanti. 'Bobo' meaning 'black' and 'Ashanti' meaning 'warrior' symbolise his connection with the Akan tribe from the Gold Coast of Africa, namely, Ghana and Ivory Coast. As with all forms of dress, his style has been subject to hybridisation. It has evolved into denim jeans, blazers and the recurring formal dress or polo shirt. By contrast, Buju Banton likes to sport his long dreadlocks without a turban. A confident swagger in his walk emphasises his tall, slender frame, epitomising his overall sense of confidence. His revolutionary rage forces out poetic lyrics that epitomise unadulterated knowledge inspired by the anguish and deprivation of the masses he invariably references.

Traditional music plays a central role in the fusion of performance and poetry in Jamaican culture, passing on traditional ceremonies and oral histories from one generation to the next. It is an embodied art form that supports knowledge diffusion in Caribbean oral performance. Performance poets present themselves as modern griots keeping alive ancient African traditions under threat from 'Westernisation.' Their respective communities revere them for their expressiveness, creativity, and other technical performance skills.

African folktales are usually performed as a monologue by the oral storyteller, an individual customarily viewed as a repository of oral history and instrumental to storytelling tradition in West African societies. The role of the storyteller

is customarily the responsibility of an elderly female in the community who narrates folk tales and performs folk songs and dances. These women act as a repository for oral histories representing the intangible cultural heritage of enslaved Africans. Folklore is a distillation of oral history, the essence of African cultures and the people's thought processes. It has remained a storehouse of original reference material for Caribbean literature for generations. Gordon Rohlehr asserts:

> The oral tradition is a heritage of song, speech and performance visible in such folk forms as the litanic work songs, chants, battle songs, Queh Queh songs, hymns, thousands of calypsos, mentos and reggae songs, semons of both the grass-roots and established churches, riddles, jokes and word games (Brown et al., 1989: 3).

An analysis of oral poems reveals the following: "mentally stored and written poems performed orally in a communal and social context contain not only ritualistic, performative speech acts but also bear many other similarities on a formal level (e.g. repetition, anaphers, a strong rhythmic quality, additive structures, vocal exploitation of sounds in terms of tone and pitch, etc.)" (Pfeiler, 2001: 151). Teeming with exaggeration and mischief, West African folk tales are adapted to new Caribbean realities and recited by local speakers in languages familiar to the audience. Vernacular expression, traditional wisdom transmitted through rituals collectively recorded and passed down across generations, embodies the folk history of enslaved Africans.

Performance remains central to "the stylization of individual and group relationships" (Abrahams, 1983: 45). The practice of call and response is a traditional religious technique integral to African spirituality and helps establish the performer's relationship with the audience. This rhythmic drumming pattern is a common feature of Afro-Jamaican religious ceremonies like Kumina and Pocomania. The drum is an instrument of communication in African cultures and is connected with the spirit world. It is believed that Burru drumming possesses the purest form of the Ashanti people's cultural expression and employs the 'drumming conversation' in its arrangements.

The Burru drumming technique involves a 'call and response' by what is known as 'talking drums', requiring one drummer to initiate a 'call' through a sequence of 'licks' eliciting an automatic response from another drummer. Davis

(1998: 223) writes that Kumina originates from the Twi words: Akom, "to be possessed," and Ana, "by an ancestor," and is regarded as an authority on the continued existence of traditional African religions in Jamaica. Brathwaite (1982: 46) describes Kumina religious evolution as "the living fragment of an African (mainly Kongo) religion in the Caribbean/Jamaica." Rites of passage and even ill-health involve sacrificial ceremonies that feature a master drummer and singing and dancing.

Similarly, as a syncretic tradition, Pocomania combines certain aspects of Christianity with various West African religious practices and consists of "singing, drumming, dancing, hand-clapping, foot-stomping, and groaning along with the use of prayers to invite possession" (Anonymous, 2021). Because Kumina and Pocomania lead to possession or trance attributed to the influence of a super-natural entity, they are judged atheistic rituals by English missionaries and recognised as a threat to religious instruction in Jamaica.

Enos Nuttall (1842) believed that the return of distinctly African rituals and related practices is tantamount to religious syncretism and sedition. His Christian viewpoint, governed by a European moral perspective, emboldens him to criticise the traditions of the locals. Nuttall's colonial tendencies and religiosity are revealed in his description of the spiritual practices on the island:

> Our methods of work are right in the main but we may need to adapt them in points of detail to the needs of some of our people...What of the unreached and ignorant multitudes from whom, in the main, the occasional outbursts of superstition like August Town and Haddo and Moneague are fed? Are we going to do our duty by these outside multitudes and those other multitudes who are only on the fringes of our churches? (1894: no pagination).

Along with the British invasion of Jamaica came Christian dogma that penetrates deeply into the lives of the locals, who are admonished for lacking godly behaviour as implied by their African lineage. Nuttal is mindful of the social and cultural differences, more so the superstitious observances such as Pocomania, Kumina and Obeah that are prominent among the local population. Therefore, non-Christian religions are deemed threatening and could limit the English missionaries' efforts and the furtherance of religious instruction on the island.

Writing in 1827, Reverend G.W. Bridges reports on the poetic character of sermons and the oral art of preaching in churches in Jamaican: "Every good speaker, independently of the softness of his tones, raises and lowers them in strict musical intervals; so that, in fact, his discourse is as capable of being noted in musical characters as any melody whatever" (cf. Brathwaite, 1970: 17). Besides, he remarks that the members of the church are "naturally most extraordinary judges" (cf. Brathwaite, 1970: 238). Preaching, a sort of stylised ceremony, is a major component of the expressive and communicative dimensions of church life. It follows the dictates of decorum, giving much consideration to the time, place and people to whom it is being delivered. Conversely, 'rhyming' or 'making mock' takes the form of a verbal improvisation in which two individuals, specifically male, engage in a battle of wits. This kind of entertainment also involves musical improvisation. It later becomes the basis of a Dancehall Reggae tradition where D.J.s (Disc Jockeys) try to outdo each other with name-calling, mockery, and insults.

The phrase 'man-of-words' signifies Abraham's account of the male-dominated oral/literate culture in the Caribbean (1983). Admittedly, performance poetry is historically dominated by men, a fact confirmed by this present study. However, this author would be remiss not to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of women performers who help bolster the Jamaican vernacular voice. That being said, the speaker's distinctive voice is also an important aspect of the quality of the performance. Capleton, Buju Banton, and Sizzla Kalonji have impressive stage presence, strong, deep voices, and good pitch control. They deliver a dynamic chant and perfect musical intonation with ease of diction. The howls of laughter and unrestrained 'market woman talk' emitted from Louise Bennett with full force resemble some of the anguish of struggle in jazz music.

Finally, rhythms, sounds, and gestures to which words and phrases in the verses naturally relate provide additional layers of meaning, elements that reify the oral-aural dimensions of performance poetry. Sacred rituals and customs are crucial in transmitting the history of African societies and marking the continuity of traditional values. Many folk elements have been retained or transformed in Jamaica by the emergent Rastafarian culture and Reggae. In Jamaican folklore, elements are highly inflected and expressive; hand gestures, foot-stomping vigorously, repetitive

head tossing and facial expressions and captivating drum dance songs associated with African cultures add emotion or emphasis.

Dialect speakers exhibit rhythmic speech patterns that account for the constant interaction between African languages and English. Caribbean performance poets traditionally use a nonstandard speech form and phrases to produce realistic dialogues, put in motion a character's high-pitched exaggerated tones and emphasise the dynamics of the oral lore. Variations in intonation and inflexion are key features of performances and emphasise the message being conveyed. A change in speech pattern or tone of voice indicates the different ways the performer effectively connects with the audience and captures their attention. McLuhan (1964: 79) comments:

> Many a page of prose and many a narrative has been devoted to expressing what was, in effect, a sob, a moan, a laugh, or a piercing scream. The written words spell out in sequence what is quick and implicit in the spoken word.

The generous application of rhyme and repetition helps to enhance sound and semantic meaning. Brathwaite asserts that besides the enhancing features of sound in performance, "the noise that it makes is part of the meaning" (1984: 17). As an example, one of Louise Bennett's frequently used deprecating terms, "*boogooyagga*" (low-down), stands out. We can also point to the 'decorative noise,' 'woi laaawd,' a recurring feature in many of Buju Banton's songs, the vibrating groan emanating from the belly of Capleton, and the chanting/singing signature sound of Sizzla's 'Jaaahhh, Rastafari.' These performance poets combine a strong vocal presence with attention-grabbing wording as they deliver a compelling message.

Louise Bennett's dramatic monologues are known to incorporate musical interjections that introduce a new dimension to the performance. She fashions herself after loud talking, merrymaking, and outspoken maternal figures when performing onstage. Such unseemly and unladylike behaviour symbolises freedom and authority. The Roots Reggae poets situate their work within the context of the opposition to the dehumanising legacies of slavery. They use Reggae rhythms and the Rastafarian rhetoric of 'word, sound, power' to evoke the freedom of thought and self-determination, a profound symbolism of their Rastafarian faith.

The Problem of Unwritten Literary Forms

This study focuses on performance poetry in both its textual and oral forms. Based on this central idea of an aesthetic continuum, this current dissertation explores four Jamaican performance poets and their works during the 1960s and 1990s. I seek to examine how these conversations presented as literary interpretations of expressly non-literary speech forms figured in re-shaping Jamaican popular culture. It is a point worth reiterating here. Performance poets traverse the boundaries of orality and literacy. Their introspective tone and abstraction bear traces of a radical shift in popular culture. Though performance poetry has an oral and aural orientation, it often exploits written material. Regardless, the challenges and opportunities of oral delivery before a live audience remain a high priority, whether impromptu performance or written. The performance poets in this study routinely record some of their best poems on a page before performing them to the public. Vocalisation helps to elevate the written word on the page and engage audience members in more meaningful ways.

In oral cultures, knowledge transfer proceeds through performative acts and symbolic exchanges between individuals. Sacred chants, storytelling, drawings, rituals, singing, dancing, and drumming are forms of cultural expression common in African tribal societies. Providing safe passage for runaway slaves and being instrumental in planning slave rebellions veiled dance movements, alerting songs, and coded messages are indispensable. The two most well-known slave uprisings are the Tacky War (1760) and The Baptist War (1831-32), the latter leading to the abolition of slavery in Jamaica in 1833.

With the discovery of writing, oral societies develop a reputation for being 'pre-literate'. Unlike the written word, the oral tradition is not considered a permanent record of a society's past or belief systems. Nevertheless, slave literacy was deemed a threat to the colonial system, and among British plantation owners, it was a matter of great concern. Literacy implies freedom, greater opportunities, and awareness of the colonised world. Except for religious instruction, laws were enacted, making it illegal for enslaved people to read and write.

Ong (1982) posits that literacy mastery is made possible by the 'grapholect,' a reference to a standard written language such as English. Writing allows for the

massive expansion of vocabulary, giving a language superior status over spoken dialect. This implies that a civilised society must distinguish itself by its ability to read and write, thereby assuming superiority over the non-literate. Further, a 'man of letters' can set himself apart from his peers, naturally attracting the company of like-minded individuals and gradually becoming elitist. In light of an increased vocabulary through exposure to written texts in formal schooling, particularly literary form and function, an 'oral mindset' remains the predominant mode of communication in Caribbean cultures.

Despite severe erosion during colonial rule, an oral culture has taken roots in the Caribbean. This is also true for parodies of popular folktales, fairy tales, and European origin stories adapted for the Caribbean. These adaptations are sometimes made to ridicule colonialism and European culture from a West Indian point of view. Storytelling finds greater purpose as African histories not traditionally written down are also adapted to reflect the norms and authentic experiences of Caribbean slave societies. Despite attempts by the dominant culture to erase the languages and cultures of enslaved communities, the vibrant cross-cultural exchange between Africans and Europeans constitutes a sense of Caribbean identity.

In some Caribbean communities, a dynamic oral culture still survives in the tradition of non-literate African societies in which their histories and cultural knowledge are generally transmitted orally. Much of this information is disseminated through religious ceremonies, stories, and folk songs. The interconnection between orality and literacy cannot be ignored either. Rastafarians use scripture references as a basis for Nyabinghi, an inherently spiritual occasion involving reasoning sessions and rituals, which we will learn more about in chapter five. 'Western' and the 'non-Western' cultures are differentiated by "deeply interiorised literacy and more or less residually oral states of consciousness" (Ong, 1982: 29).

Writing is conceived as a dynamic concept for developing the writer's self-identity and understanding of the world around them. The advent of writing limits and diminishes primary oral cultures, thereby rendering speech communities unfashionable. Nettleford (1978) notes the opposite as it relates to Rastafarian speech, which has grown more significant over time in different contexts. Noted preference for the English canon's content, writing style and narrative techniques reveals a marked

divergence of opinions about what represents cultural authenticity and even literature.

One of the advantages of writing is information retrieval, where written documents and texts can be obtained at a future date. Writing has been instrumental in developing the human consciousness and some of the most influential thinkers: "What literacy contributes to thought is that it turns the thought themselves into objects of contemplation (Olson, 1996: 277). As our level of consciousness develops, we gain more control over what we learn and how we come by such knowledge. However, as Ong reminds us that Jamaican Creole "is a primary oral culture" where people operate with words that are "spoken, sounded and hence power-driven" (1982: 32). Commonly true of traditional African societies, particular utterances find their meanings depending on context. As a result, meanings are abstract and used in conjunction with contextual factors for interpretation. Popular Jamaican culture relies heavily on orality and orally influenced traditions very differently from scribal cultures.

Performance poetry vacillates between the poet as a performer and the poet as a writer/storyteller. Everyday experiences are given poetic expression and present the discourse in the common language and habits of the local community. The printed text becomes a verifiable formal record and ascribes authority to the written word to which oral performance remains perpetually below standard. The approach to performance poetry in textual form seems to attract much interest in using a non-literary language and non-standard spelling rather than its poetic form. Language is subject to contestation depending on the speaker. For example, the Jamaican language is employed by performance poets as a poetic force that calls into question the perceived higher quality of English. The performance reception, where the audience tries to recreate the performer's experience, relies on the listener's prior exposure to "the oral and other cultural contexts the words imply" (Bennett, 1982d: xi).

Many poems are written with no fixed form or structure, solely for documentation purposes. In the case of Louise Bennett, Mervyn Morris has long held the view that her performance poetry deserves the same level of attention as poems written and published by other more established authors (1963a). Whenever

performance poetry is afforded the same attention and respect as in print, the criterion for judging creativity is quite conservative, triggering harsh criticisms of oral poets. For this reason, this study attempts to transcend oral/scribal boundaries and examine performance poetry as text. Alternately I argue that performance poetry, as a literary form, part of a poet's consciousness, challenges ideological underpinnings of cultural dominance.

The songs of the three poet-songwriters under study in this research that comprise the second group of texts for analysis constitute an implicit connection in postcolonial contexts to the poetry of Louise Bennett. They are afforded the same attentive scrutiny of close 'oraliterary' reading applied to Miss Lou's poems. The upcoming study on Louise Bennett in Chapters three and four is a sufficient warrant for suggesting a postcolonial framework that is rigorous enough to explicate the seemingly complex nature of engaging the poetics of Rastafari. This analysis is very important because it helps assess lyric intelligibility and advance the notion that Reggae songs are worthy of serious scholarly attention. Despite the use of different articulation techniques, these performance texts convey poetics of resistance through a similar use of interpolated narrative when placed together.

So far, we have explored performance poetry as a whole, thinking mainly of the oral tradition. However, popular music has not yet been discussed without losing focus on this dissertation's purpose and straying into the technicalities of musical theory. In keeping with the overall postcolonial critical approach that is thus underway, we will follow the line of argument put forward about traversing the boundaries of literary tradition. Therefore, the examination of Roots Reggae and its relevance to the present study helps expand the scope of analysis and not merely in a cursory manner.

Contemporary critical theory has opened up new challenges to older theories and contributed to a better dialectical model for conceptualising aesthetic and cultural perceptions entrenched in the relationship between literature and music. The language of music is often described as abstract in relation to literature, specifically poetry that deals with a representation of reality, despite the concept of both art forms being profoundly different. Besides these conceptual differences, there exists shared similarities, namely, rhythm/meter, repetition, sequence, and climax.

However, song lyrics in literary criticism have been largely ignored. The awarding of the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature to Bob Dylan represents a defining moment in the history of literary studies, problematising the literary category itself.

Way and McKerrell (2017: 7) present a study of popular music to flesh out "linguistic choices to reveal broader ideological discourses articulated in texts to reveal what kinds of social relations of power, inequalities and interests are perpetuated, generated or legitimised both explicitly and implicitly in text." Likewise, since my discussion and interpretation are grounded in the framework of postcolonial studies, we will avoid focusing too much on the stylistic features of song lyrics. Instead, we will locate them in terms of their discursive origins, considering colonisation as a powerful ideological apparatus. However, stylistics will not be avoided altogether since this is a crucial part of textual analysis. A postcolonial approach is important for two reasons. First, since their emergence early in the twentieth century, Rastafarianism and Reggae music have remained the most significant cultural forms in Jamaica and one of the most important contributions to Caribbean culture. Second, Reggae song lyrics have their own historical specificity that clarifies the artists' attitudes and identities. My interdisciplinary approach leads inevitably to a form of postcolonial analysis that establishes Rastafari as an anti-colonial revolutionary movement and provides a way of understanding Dread talk as inherently counter-discourse.

Kramer (1996: xii), proposes that music should be "understood as part of a general signifying process and still retain its charismatic quality" to expand the ambit of critical discourse. Then, it is possible to identify the key concepts and relevant contexts to discuss the dissemination of Dread Talk through Roots Reggae in relation to transgressive practices that point towards an alternative to undermine hegemonic ideas. Music's innate abstraction does not constitute itself in the same way as poetry and falls typically outside the domain of discourse analysis. However, I have situated the selected songs of popular Roots Reggae within the realm of postcolonial theory that seems more hospitable to the inclusion of Dread Talk dialectics than traditional criticism.

It reflects a determined effort to move beyond rigid disciplinary boundaries and particularly their ostensible disengagement from the alternative Caribbean

aesthetic for an understanding of the Rastafari language of protest in Reggae music. I have chosen this approach that allows for the critical reading of song lyrics whose non-standard speech is in keeping with the postcolonial contextual framework and concerned with identity formation questions.

The early twentieth century played a pivotal role in transforming marginalised voices as writers attempted to forge a discursive space where the oral and the formalist writing tradition converge. We can then say that the function of language and traditional folk forms in the development of national literature over the past eight decades seeks to rediscover the African oral tradition and 'contaminate' English literary culture. Thus far, we have seen that in its socio-historical context, Jamaican Patois presents a significant challenge to the British aesthetic tradition that declares non-standard varieties linguistically 'poor.' It resists classifications that generally consider the local dialect and those to whom it is their first language intrinsically inferior. This has profound implications for the authorial and narrative voice representation in the Caribbean postcolonial space. Indeed, transgressive Jamaican writers and poets are positioned in the discursive space at the time of Caribbean literary transformation, where scholars engage with new literary forms.

While not without its challenges, the transgressive language of marginalised Caribbean performance poets articulates the poetic discourse of the common folk and turns away from Western forms of literary production. Heralded as the new Caribbean aesthetic, the oral lore and traditional folk forms are identified as instrumental in establishing alternative literary histories to the elitism of Western criticism. The prevailing scholarship on 1960s Caribbean literature focuses on the presence of the oral/scribal continuum and rehabilitating a submerged and repressed tradition. Moreover, nearly all of the scholarly literature of this period dealing with Caribbean history and literary tradition has become increasingly more influential in the postcolonial era.

The critical lens of postcolonial theory offers a space in which to interrogate negating constructions deliberately produced in colonial discourse. That is to say, it contextualises the theme of censorship and conformity pertinent to the poetic collection to be studied. Its primary purpose in this thesis is to deconstruct the case of the 'barefoot language' by bringing the work of the featured performance poets to

bear on subjection, repression and the mother tongue as a potential site of subversive resignification.

Considering how language and folk history expose a writer to certain cultural elements, it will be helpful to examine how writers treat language as an element of culture. Louise Bennett produces counter-narratives to reframe the conceptualisation of the dominant/subordinate language and elaborate on the traditional knowledge retained in the oral lore. Namely, African folklore and oral histories embody representations of selfhood as depicted in her performance texts. The discursive terrain of dramatic monologues reveals aspects of everyday struggles through themes that bring the character into full view. In the upcoming chapter, we examine how Louise Bennett uses Patois to deconstruct racial characterisations of non-European cultures as inferior, uncivilised and barbaric. We will also explore the creative writing process; how Patois operates in formulating postcolonial discursive resistance to colonial conceptualisations with particular attention to dramatic monologues.

Chapter 3: Small Axe: Louise Bennett, Dismantling Master Narratives

The emergence of Jamaican popular culture is undoubtedly related to the activity of Louise Bennett, an early performance poet influenced by African folktales and storytelling traditions. The phrase 'small axe' denotes Bennett's status as a dialect poet deemed of little importance and how she dispossesses and devalues English. A well-known voice in Caribbean literature, she makes a strong case for Jamaica as a poetic place. Aside from arguing the significance of the oral lore within the Anglophone literary landscape, Jamaican Creole is adopted as an artistic medium, focusing on its cultural heritage and its crises. Bennett passionately advocates a revival of local folklore and promotes Jamaican Creole as the language of Jamaican literature.

More widely known as Miss Lou, Louise Simone Bennett was born into a working-class family in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1919. After studying Jamaican folklore at Friends College in St Mary in 1943, she became the first black student enrolled at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in 1945 through a scholarship awarded by the British Council. While in England, she hosted the BBC radio shows- *Caribbean Carnival* (1945-1946) and *West Indian Night* (1950-51) for the Windrush Generation of new Anglo-Caribbean immigrants to Britain. See (Newton, 2008: 489-497). Bennett returned to Jamaica, where from 1965 to 1982, she made regular appearances at culture festivals, published a weekly column of her poems in *The Sunday Gleaner* and produced a series of prose monologues for local radio.

Miss Lou articulates all sides of the Jamaican colonial experience and aims to present the nation's evolution from colonisation to independence. Emerging in the late 1930s, she recognises the literary value of her dialect poems. Confined mainly to the dramatic arts, she has played a formative role in both radio and theatre in Jamaica, especially true of the predominant Jamaican speech pattern heard today instead of the accents of British broadcasters usually mimicked by local news presenters. This chapter examines Bennett's struggle to adopt the dialect of the common folk as a tool to overcome oppressive dualisms of European culture: cultured/uncultured, language/dialect and civilised/uncivilised.

Negotiating Cultural Stumbling Blocks

Miss Lou's distinctive poetic style makes her one of the most transgressive voices in Caribbean literature and an exemplar of cultural nationalist thought in the sixties and seventies. Although the Jamaican vernacular occupies a marginal position both in public policy and practice, she has inspired other Caribbean poets and writers to recreate the style and spirit of her poetry. However, perhaps most importantly, her influence on both the literary and scholarly worlds in the Caribbean is evidenced by the prevalence of citations by Caribbean literary scholars, cultural critics, writers and performers worldwide.

Going back to our earlier discussion, Edward Brathwaite's critical survey of Anglophone Caribbean literary history during the 1960s constitutes pioneering work that serves as a model for other Caribbean scholars. Brathwaite signals the dawning of new literature and a new literary era authentic to the Caribbean, making him especially sensitive to how contemporary literary critics approach this new Caribbean literature. His injunction to Caribbean writers is to explode centuries-old conventions and preconceptions about dialect writers that have prevailed in English literature. Indeed, several Jamaican literary scholars have contributed significantly to reconfiguring subalternity from the Caribbean and, more specifically, the Jamaican perspective (Cooper, 1993; Morris, 1963a; Nettleford, 1978). Their scholarship offers invaluable insights into the critical thought and poetry of Louise Bennett as the standard of Afro-Caribbean literary aesthetic to break from what Brathwaite so aptly identifies as the "tyranny of the pentameter" (1984: 32).

Exploring the oral and scribal terrain in creating a new creole aesthetic based on an implicit vernacular culture invites questions regarding linguistic imperialism for a critique of English. The work of distinguished performance poet Louise Bennett provides the foundational model for developing a Jamaican national literary consciousness that redefines purported 'Third World Literature' and relocates the subaltern voice from the periphery to the centre. Jamaican Patois play an essential role in the reconstitution of the nation and the re-evaluation of the concept of cultural identity in the postcolonial era.

The notion of aesthetics in folklore and traditional art forms that seek to subvert the normative assertions of the coloniser about 'the Other' and dismantle

the ideological positioning of English are elaborated continually in Bennett's dramatic monologues. They offer counter-narratives to the 'civilising mission' undertaken by British colonialists who frequently position themselves as saviours of the black race, a race purportedly degenerated by barbarism. She attempts to decolonise English using literary devices and techniques "found in the specific texture and structure, the verbal fabric and rhetorical play of individual poems" (Ramazani, 2002: 139). The deviations and aberrations found in Patois are part of Bennett's attempt to pioneer a distinctive style intended to give a sense of aesthetic appeal.

The debate over Jamaican Creole as a literary medium and the oral aesthetics of Miss Lou's poetry continues to generate considerable interest. Her work has come under scholarly scrutiny in recent years, most notably by Mervyn Morris. He has sought to advance Bennett to the Western canon that has traditionally been elitist and oversees the social exclusionism of English concerning the censure of literature written in dialect. Rex Nettleford laments the traditionally narrow readings of Miss Lou's work and regards the categorisation of Caribbean literature in North American or British literature as oppressive in and of itself. These scholars insist that Bennett's representation of Jamaican culture and aesthetic response to language within the broader postcolonial debate highlight the insularity associated with 'Englishness.'

Through a close reading of Miss Lou's performance texts, Morris attempts to legitimise her as a poet, which has profound implications since he is essentially legitimising her choice of literary language as well. Even in death he eulogised her as one "who championed Jamaican Creole as an artistic medium," and "a patriot committed to correcting the colonial legacy of self-contempt" (Morris, 2006). He helped advance Bennett's search for an Afro-Jamaican aesthetic as she attempts to construct a new space to renegotiate and restore her lost identity while showing contempt for the authoritative literary canon. Throughout this process of self-determination and re-discovery, Bennett becomes the target of criticism and the object of ridicule among "those reflective artists who have made it their business to master the field's logic" (Bourdieu, 1996: 242).

Morris envisages his project as an opportunity for evaluating Bennett as any other well-respected writer and is recognised as the first serious and wide-ranging

examination of her work instead of a glossy opinion. His approach to Miss Lou focuses on gaining insight into how information is presented, identifying characteristic features of her writing, considering thematic issues relating to the history of colonisation, and presenting a clear interpretation of her poems. Morris's work is embedded within the broader realm of postcolonial literature and arouses academic interest in Bennett's collection as a repository of knowledge and encourages a different aesthetic reading experience.

Jamaica Labrish (1966f) is a notable collection of material and as reported by Morris, an attempt by Bennett to uproot linguistic purism and actively engage the 'native' voice as a conscious participant in authentic local literature in Jamaica. Bennett attempts to subvert cultural bias rooted in her own colonial experience and reconstitute the binaries between English and Patois through deliberate word modification and the appropriation of English expressions. Morris summarises Patois as linguistic defiance against the dominance of the English and antithetical to the cultural ideologies of British colonisation.

The inclusion of certain poems in Miss Lou's artistic repertoire prompts the following remark in reference to their momentary appeal: "It would be a great service to her readers if Miss Bennett would present a Collected Poems, dropping all the ephemera and choosing the best of the others" (Morris, 1963a). Further, Morris then turns to delivery, adding that some of Bennett's poems sound like direct imitations of news reports about daily life because of how they are structured and tend to lose relevance. However, he avoids expounding on the relevance of the Jamaican dialect despite carrying out this study at a time when debates around language choice, the oral tradition and their literary value dominate Caribbean literary discourse.

Nettleford is not persuaded by Morris' argument, which he alleges neglects Patois's intricacies and favours conformist literary criticism instead. Indeed, Morris' comments can be interpreted as dialect stereotyping and imposing the standard that has historically muted and excluded the voices of the dialect writer. Moreover, Nettleford believes that Bennett's dialect writing offers an alternative to the carefully curated literary refinements of the English canon and introduces an overt and forceful authorial voice in Jamaican literature. Bennett's discursive practice is

thus heralded as the direct opposite of the prevailing ethos of the Western canon that contests dialect interference in writing.

Nettleford disapproves of Morris's normative approach but admits Jamaican Creole is indeed prone to excessive, exaggerated expressions, which may account for the new report format of Miss Lou's poems. This idea of embodiment in dramatic monologues leads us to another crucial point- poetry must capture the expressive style and mood of the character together with thought-provoking imagery. We will come to this point later when we discuss characterisation. Aside from characterisation, the oral tradition, especially storytelling, accounts for African cultural expression aspects that remain invaluable and relevant to Bennett's work.

The tendency to privilege oral history and storytelling over literary tradition is a common feature of Bennett's work. Critics mainly concerned with the history and practice of dialect interference in Jamaican literature have repeatedly maligned her as a performer instead of a writer. The decision to employ Patois as an artistic medium is seen as an obstruction and impediment to international success because of its perception as a non-standard speech variety. Moreover, because her poetry is mainly presented as folk narrative, it may be well suited only for the local and regional markets. Such opinions persist throughout Bennett's professional life and represent the ongoing struggle to defend her focus on Patois and her unorthodox approach to literary production. Literary criticism, adherence to which is historically rigid and uncompromising, invalidates oral forms of cultural transmission and excludes Miss Lou's poetry from mainstream acceptance.

The exclusive use of Patois in Miss Lou's dramatic monologues liberates her muted voice from the iambic meter traditionally seen in English poetry. She is endorsed as a "documenter of aspects of Jamaican life, thought and feeling" (cf. Bennett, 1982d: 10). Nettleford rejects the Western forms as inappropriate for truly conveying the lived experiences of local inhabitants genuinely. Reflecting on Bennett's struggle to affirm Patois and Jamaican folklore as authentic cultural elements, he reaons:

> In a quarter of a century, she has carved designs out of the shapeless and unruly substance that is the Jamaican dialect, the language which most of the Jamaican people speak most of the time and raised the sing-song patter of the hills and towns to

an art acceptable to and appreciated by people from all classes (cf. Bennett, 1982d: 9).

One of the most distinct differences scholars identify is the contrast between the more restrained scribal texts and the freedom of oral performance. Rohlehr (1970) negotiates similarities and differences in Trinidadian calypso and Bennett's poems helping to understand the cultural environment within which these manifestations of culture emerge. He compares Miss Lou's dialect poems to Trinidadian calypso, where she transforms her character voice in a dramatic monologue performance, almost like a musical instrument. The repetitious nature of Bennett's written poems resembles for Rohlehr "hymn-book monotony," whereas her performance poetry is "a complete departure from the stress patterns which the ballad form would seem to be imposing" (1992: 15).

There are also concerns over the problem of Jamaican Creole prosody, which has implications for interpreting and conducting a literary analysis of Bennett's poems. Highlighting prosodic problems and the ongoing dilemmas for Caribbean literary criticism, Rohlehr envisages a new approach to analysing poetry, refocusing performative utterances instead of the predominant iambic meter. The framework of musical performance has been advanced as a more favourable approach (Brathwaite, 1984; Rohlehr, 1971, 1992). Nettleford, unperturbed by the metrical constraints and its provocations, notes that Jamaican Creole drags out these contemplative strains "iambic rhythms are natural to the Jamaican drawl" (cf. Bennett, 1982d: 11). Prosodic agency considered, the vital questions remain, whether Bennett's poetry encourages other Caribbean writers toward a Creole aesthetic or is itself part of the development of a recognisably and authentically West Indian literature.

Bennett firmly reproves Western canon using her ordinary voice as a conduit for rebellion, incorporating adaptations of folk tales through a constant balancing of her authorial voice and the multiple voices of her community. While the pattern or rhythm of the ballad may allow her to freely "manipulate the tonal range of the language," her authentic tongue produces a more dramatic effect (Bennett, 1982d: 47f). This technique evokes a sense of familiarity and trustworthiness, but importantly, it effectively engages the audience during performances.

In his introductory comments, Morris mentions that "the poem in print is fully available only when readers are in touch with the oral and other cultural contexts" (cf. Bennett, 1982d: xi). Unlike the early publication, *Jamaica Labrish* which Morris admits is "unashamedly, a collection of poems, chosen primarily for their literary merit," *Selected Poems* takes a more methodical approach and deals with more substantive issues (cf. Bennett, 1982d: xi). Extolling Bennett's oral performance skills, Nettleford clarifies that: "if on the printed pages her poems appear to be dated frozen jingles, in the renditions she gives of them they take on vitality and meaning" (cf. Bennett, 1982d: 16).

Familiarity with Jamaican Creole relative to its social contexts provides essential clues for interpreting what Bennett tries to convey in each poem. Miss Lou's dramatic monologues are an expression of Jamaican culture and attest to the character of the Jamaican folk. Both Nettleford and Morris agree that given Bennett's multifaceted collection, including songs, folk tales and poems, any "approval extended equally to all her work is a dubious homage" (cf. Bennett, 1982d: xi). The consensus indicates serious concerns about the literary and aesthetic treatment of her oral performances.

Miss Lou forges a discursive space to dismantle the dominant narratives and enables the retelling of African folklore expressed artistically through her mother tongue. The study of her work by scholars in the Caribbean region provides an opportunity for a critical discussion of Jamaican Creole in performance texts as a subject of academic enquiry. Further, such enquiry seeks to advance the Jamaican language as a counter-hegemonic tool for the subversion of dominant discourses as well as dismantling simplistic European conventions underpinning Jamaican identity formation.

Revitalising Repressed Traditions

West African traditions are important to Miss Lou's dramatic monologues, and as such, we now briefly explore these crucial constitutive elements. Since childhood, Miss Lou is cognizant that "All the things in our oral tradition, handed down to us from generation to generation, were very much alive and vibrant around and about me" (cf. Morris, 2014: iii). Even so, she is deeply frustrated that the things

she greatly admires are not well-regarded and considered primitive. The assertion of Jamaican folklore is subject to harsh criticism: “They were not the things to which one should aspire, not the things that one should desire to learn about or indulge in” (Pearn, 1985: iii). As in other British colonies, the inhabitants who attempt to construct culturally relevant understandings of their history and seek to embrace folk music, folk dances, and storytelling are the bastions of extreme backwardness. Nonetheless, Bennett is determined to recover and revalue the oral histories of her African ancestry even if they are “deplored and despised as coming from the offspring of slaves who were illiterate” (cf. Pearn, 1985: iii).

Bennett’s poems are inspired by Jamaica’s rich cultural heritage and the oral histories of West African societies transmitted by slaves in the British Caribbean. She relates effortlessly to the country folk and their life experiences. Such unique elements are intricately interwoven into her performances, allowing her characters’ personalities to unfold seamlessly through their behaviour and actions. She shares memories and specific events from her childhood that has left a lasting impression:

> When I was a child, each day contained a poem of folk songs, folk stories, street cries, legends, proverbs, riddles, tales of Moonshine darlin’ or Ring Ding, ni-nights (ninth night), Dinkey Miny, Duppy stories, Rolling calf, Whooping boy and oh, I was fascinated by the drums at nights coming from the hills, the Pokomina drums, Kumina drums, Burro drums. At Christmas time I loved to watch the John Cunno dancers and listen to the tales about the different characters in the masquerade, how Koo-Koo who dances with a house on his head is really the symbol of our strength...How Ass Head is the clown of the masquerade (cf. Pearn, 1985: iii).

Inspired by storytelling and other folk traditions passed down from elders in her community Miss Lou combines aspects of Jamaican folk culture in her dramatic monologues. It comes as no surprise that many of these elements have been featured in her work, especially stage performances at cultural festivals. She endeavours to reclaim Afro-Jamaican folk practices and incorporates some of the most recognised features in her performance poetry, laying a solid foundation for other Caribbean writers.

In the time of slavery, the Jamaican plantocracy and English missionaries see rituals and ceremonials characteristic of indigenous African societies as signifying blasphemy. The antipathy of Jamaican plantocrats toward enslaved Africans who endeavour to keep much of their sacred culture alive is reinforced by missionary reports that immoral behaviour and malevolence are rife among slaves. Most popular among them, duppy or rolling calf, are folk characters mentioned in the above block quotation denoting malevolent spirits or manifestations of the dead in human or animal form. It has long played a crucial role in plantation life, for witchcraft and casting spells to haunt the living.

Jonkunnu, "a grotesque character, equipped with a ludicrous and enormously large false head," is a costumed masquerader who appears at Christmas (Dutton, 1800: 20). It is an integral part of a spectacular street procession accompanied by a band playing folk music with instruments like rattle drums, shakas, graters and conch-shell horns. Traditionally, the elaborate characters comprising 'King and Queen,' 'Cow Head,' 'Horse Head,' 'Devil,' 'Pitchy Patchy,' 'Red Indians,' and 'Belly Woman' are played by males. Their faces remain hidden, and their conversations are disguised in a coarse whisper.

One of Bennett's most memorable childhood experiences was attending a *Dinki Mini,* a West African tradition practised predominantly in Jamaica's eastern parish of St. Mary. Like *Kumina*, the ritual involves nine nights of singing and dancing, the final night being the most lively and exciting as a symbolic gesture to uplift and console the family in mourning. On the plantations, *Dinki Mini* is one of very few events where slaves are allowed to converge unrestricted by their owners. Miss Lou recaptures her childhood experience:

> At this time they took full advantage of the opportunity to practise an old tribal custom for banishing grief. No sadness is allowed at the Dinki; gaiety and jollity prevail. People sing their loudest, laugh their loudest and dance with exaggerated abandon. Many of our old Jamaican folk-games and mento-dance and songs generate the mood of the Dinki...The nature of the Dinki makes it a sort of creative centre for producing new folk-material. The demand for continuous gaiety stimulates the imagination and sets the mood for displaying creative talent. Anything of interest which happens before or during the time of a Dinki becomes a topic and inspiration for new activities.

> New words are made up to old tunes, old songs are set to new dance-patterns, stories and proverbs are dramatized (Bennett, 2003).

Dinki Mini is a juxtaposition of emotions: happiness amidst sorrow, distress and feelings of sadness and the celebration of life when confronted with death. Baxter (1970) illustrates, "In folk culture, the lowering of the spirit is counteracted by prescribed ritual acts. Folk theatre in Jamaica employs the remedial catharsis of laughter to the same end." Reflecting on Jamaican Creole as a creative outlet, Bennett proclaims, "I have found a medium through which I can pretend to be laughing. Most of the time when we laugh it is so that we may not weep. Isn't that so?" (cf. Narain, 2002: 60). She believes that "the nature of the Jamaican dialect is the nature of comedy," and this is consistently evident throughout her collection (cf. Narain, 2002: 60).

The popular tales of 'Bredda Anancy' have remained influential in Jamaican culture and still inspire thought-provoking conversations about moral turpitude. Renowned within Caribbean cultures, Anancy is the main protagonist and plays the role of a trickster in Ashanti folktales. Remarkably, Anancy and Anancy stories have remained permanent features of Jamaican folklore long after the names of many African deities have become obscure and unrecognisable locally. Senior (1983: 5) believes that Anancy embodies "the qualities of survival and the triumph of the weak over the strong, attributes which the enslaved Africans, torn from their homelands and forced to labour in a foreign land must have found particularly satisfying." She gives an account of the practice of storytelling in Jamaica:

> The telling of Anancy stories is part of the tradition of African villages where everyone gathered around a fire at night to hear the old tales. In Jamaica, as in Africa, Anancy stories were in the past never told in the daytime. Among adults they are still told at wakes and moonlight gatherings (Senior, 1983: 6).

Anancy plays a vital role in Jamaican folklore, and almost every Jamaican can identify with this shrewd character and uncannily relatable stories. Each storyline retells the legend of this cunning spider god, famous for his sly humour and commonly associated with acts of resistance to colonial authority.

Rohlehr (1992: 82) comments on the narrative style that Bennett skillfully employs to help dramatise folkloric figures like Anancy in her oral performances:

> The narrator has to indicate this by using different tones of voice for Anancy, and another for his victim, while preserving a neutral narrator's tone. Sometimes, too, the narrator has to sing in the story. The problem is how to do all these things without breaking the rapid movement of the tale and losing a created tension. Louise Bennett is able to do all this to preserve the relationship between voice and mask.

Generally, audience members appreciate Anancy as a positive influence; yet, in Bennett's work, he is ascribed with inherent human tendencies: deviousness, maliciousness, selfishness and deceitfulness. Anancy's lethargic, ignorant and overly dramatic characterisation should not be interpreted as representing stereotypical images of Black people that are pervasive and help justify colonial oppression. Importantly, Anancy stories do not necessarily extol immorality. Instead, they expose human vulnerability and "shows how easily we can be injured and destroyed by our greed or stupidity or by confidence in the wrong people and things" (Bennett, 1979: xiii).

For some people in conservative circles, Anancy undoubtedly personifies a dishonest trickster. Even educators question the significance of Anancy and seek to diminish his value in the traditions of Jamaican folk culture because he is deemed to represent implicit and negative stereotypes. Ralph Thompson reacts to the waning influence of Anancy stories in contemporary Jamaica:

> The sentimental attachment to this character is now spent. What was once a means to an end is no longer appropriate for a black nation facing the new challenges of its destiny. It is time to say good-bye to Anancy in our schools, to be reminded of him only as a quaint curiosity, no longer a suitable role model for our children (2001).

While the preceding argument reflects critics' opinions in the context of education and raises concerns about the influence of Anancy on school children at an impressionable age, others are more adversarial. Such debates have remained constant over time and have a relative impact on dialect and dialect speaking characters in Jamaican literature. These responses likely reflect insufficient knowledge about the history of Anancy stories or a misconception about Anancy as a symbol of collective resistance in African folklore. In a letter to the Editor of the *Jamaica Observer*, one reader suggests there are clear manifestations of Anancy-like traits in contemporary Jamaica:

> Anancy is no longer a mere spider that fills the corners of our houses but has grown into a gigantic insect that has woven webs of deception, greed, corruption, murders, lies, and more over our country, Jamaica. Anancy's "ginnalship' trickery now pervades the society (Dennis, 2012).

Ranny Williams defends the symbolic role of Anancy in folklore and indicates that readers are, in fact, primarily attracted to trickster stories. He explains that Anancy stories give some semblance of gratification and dismiss arguments that they are immoral and set a dangerous precedent for youngsters. Marshall (, 2012: 9) observes that Anancy folk tales "have continually metamorphosed, each storyteller adding their own embellishments and meanings." Likewise, Olive Senior notes that these stories have been appropriated and transformed extensively over the years. Thus, Anancy stories are adapted continuously or customised to suit varying circumstances to enhance the impact of the message the storyteller wishes to convey.

Bennett reflects on the education policies which promoted British colonial interests and remained an insidious part of Jamaica's compulsory curriculum. She recalls, "We were taught and encouraged to sing the songs of foreign countries, to learn foreign folk dances and stories as these foreign things were considered infinitely better than things West Indian" (cf. Pearn, 1985: iii). Aiming to preserve and protect Jamaican folklore and original language Bennett arouses a sense of national pride. She feels the absolute need to educate the younger generation about the historical importance of their African heritage. This momentum helped lay the foundation of the radio programme *Ring Ding* (1968-1980), "a Saturday morning children's programme on JBC TV" (Morris, 2014: 39). This project was an alternative to colonial pedagogy to help, as Bennett puts it "de pickney-dem learn de sinting dat belong to dem" (cf. Dance, 1986: 37). This is translated: the children learn the things that belong to them. The *Ring Ding* series comprises "Jamaican folksongs, ring games, jokes, folktales, proverbs, riddles" to highlight some of the distinct elements coming out of traditional African societies which contribute to Jamaican culture (Morris, 2014: 89). Miss Lou has highly regarded these traditions and practices that have become virtually the binding force in reclaiming her voice and constructing her own identity.

Ring Ding came up against strong opposition, emphasising Jamaican folklore and its strong Afrocentric orientation. Morris claims, "*Ring Ding* reached more Jamaicans, probably than any other aspect of Louise Bennett's career" (2014: 89). *Ring Ding* focuses on essential aspects of Jamaican culture and emphasises the importance of storytelling and the role of the storyteller in West African societies. The radio series displaces the pervasive discourse of British values that perpetuates colonial peoples' subordinate status and the notion of cultural inferiority through the education system.

Sketches of the Miss Lou Subject

One recurring theme in postcolonial literature is the writer forsaking their native language when confronted with the overwhelming influence of English. This is typical of most early twentieth-century Jamaican writers, De Lisser and McFarlane referenced earlier, who tend to suppress their voices to identify more with the dominant culture. In so doing, they create a separation between themselves and their dialect-speaking characters. However, Miss Lou takes a nonconformist approach to poetry and presents us with forceful and leading personas to dismantle colonialist thinking and reveal societal hypocrisy. Her performance poems interrogate British condescension directed to varieties of English, the marginalisation of non-English speakers and the struggle to ward off repressive ideologies and construct an authentic representation of self in postcolonial Jamaica.

Masks are of social significance in slave societies, and Miss Lou's use of masks in her poems serves a dual purpose: to disguise her own voice and "disguise up de English Language" using the native tongue that makes it difficult to understand much of what is being said (Ramazani, 2002: 130). Bennett synthesises authentic character voices and believable personas, skilfully separating them from herself. She manipulates words and phrases to produce humour, reflecting her versatility and creativity. Highlighting apparent contradictions and ambiguities in Bennett's poems, Brown notes that her work contains many different voices that show each character's distinct persona and determine the nature of the dialogue (Brown, 1984: 116):

> If there is any inconsistency or puzzling lack of clarity in her voice, if she seems to move from one position to another [...] her audience always needs to remember that her voice has been subordinated to the personality that it describes; and that in this regard her art comes as close as art ever can to a kind of objectified reality.

As Glissant puts it, "the Creole language was constituted around this strategy of trickery" and echoes the slaves' exhaustive attempts to rebuff plantation owners (1989: 12). He defines the "counterpoetics" of Creole as a site where "a need for expression confronts an inability to achieve expression" (Glissant, 1989: 12). This necessity stems from the conflict between the mother tongue and the language imposed by the coloniser. Further, it is suggested that Creole signifies a "conspiracy to conceal meaning" and is manifested through various forms of expression, mainly hand gestures that accompany dancing and chanting and the use of certain sounds that are politically and socially meaningful to the community (Glissant, 1989: 12: 125). Miss Lou combines improvisations, parables, mispronunciations, repetitions and rapid dialogue to elicit certain reactions and heighten audience response.

Bennett devises relatable characters who present a particular viewpoint and have a lasting effect on her audience. Generally, her anti-colonial characters are made to criticise the destructive hegemonic codes and colonial legacies. These characters or masks allow her to flagrantly imitate well-known public personas and realistic scenarios in social commentary. DeCaires mentions that Bennett presents a range of critical poetry around current affairs and politics:

> In the breadth and range of issues tackled, Bennett's poems provide a fascinating catalogue of current events over an extended period (roughly the 1940s to the early 1970s); read alongside more conventional, historical accounts of the period, her poems offer distinctive and insightful comments from the "marginal" perspectives of "ordinary Jamaicans" (2004: 60).

Miss Lou's creative imagination allows her to construct a narrative voice that conveys certain deep-seated emotions to the reader and lets her real self evolve. While disguising her voice, she avoids being too judgmental, allowing the audience to interpret her poems and preserve the autonomy of her characters.

Brown (1984: 116) reasons that "her poetic voice fascinates and challenges her audience precisely because her characters seem to be so irrefutably independent

of a controlling artistic vision or authorial judgment." Sinfield (1977: 32) adds that an audience is easily impressed by a relatable character and "feel drawn into his point of view, but at the same time are aware that he is a dramatic creation and that there are other possible, even preferable, perspectives." Through humorous poems featuring peculiar characters speaking Jamaican Creole, Miss Lou sets out to educate her audience while simultaneously exposing the harsh realities of independence and the process of decolonisation in Jamaica.

The names of characters are deliberately peculiar and practically self-explanatory. A few examples include "Stocious (pretentious), Dim-Dim, Flimsy, Leggo Lawless (out of order, undisciplined), Dundus (albino), Edge-Up (social climber), Boodoom (the sound of an explosion)" among others (Morris, 2014: 48). Miss Lou uses the expression 'Listen, no!' to engage the attention of her audience at the beginning of each dramatic dialogue and waves 'Ay yayie!' signalling the end. Borrowing from British Music Hall comedy, undoubtedly Miss Lou is inspired by the delivery of each punchline or the funniest part of a joke that coincides with a burst of laughter.

Many of the distinct female personalities in Miss Lou's collection mimic women she grew up around, some of whom she deeply admires. Some of these personas frequently appear in her poems, either criticising or the subject of criticism. Still, her childhood experiences and the memory of her grandmother Mimi, from whom she inherited a repository of folk songs, folk tales, and folk customs, have been formative and lasting. Miss Lou imitates her grandmother symbolically through female characters such as Aunty Roachy and Miss Matty. In such character depictions, she is "repossessing and transforming the colonial stereotype of the large-bodied, maternal, black woman and the image of nation as fecund but passive mother" (Ford-Smith, 2006).

We can now turn to Miss Lou's alter ego Aunty Roachy, who speaks powerfully yet provides an objective view of the day. Aunty Roachy embodies subtle simplicity in Bennett's dramatic monologues and frequently uses Jamaican proverbs for expressing opinions and transmitting traditional knowledge. Fundamentally, Jamaican proverbs are wise sayings that serve to impart knowledge and present the basic principles of sound judgment. Proverbs evoke a sense of familiarity

among the audience, which contributes to them becoming increasingly more engaged with the content of the performance. On the relevance of proverbs in Jamaica, Bennett stresses:

> Proverbs are used to emphasise a point...but mostly as warning or advice. They draw vivid pictures, provoke thought and are mostly short, to the point, neat and memorable in form. One is able to see and feel the truth of the expression readily and that's why the proverbs are such a strong and vital force in the spoken Jamaican language. The Jamaican proverbs are rooted in the consciousness of our people and spring readily to the tongue (cf. Morris, 2014: 49).

Indeed, Bennett favours certain elements, and she knows precisely the best way to bring across her message using figurative language that conveys an impression of her serious yet playful personality and helps connect with the audience.

Aunty Roachy laments the prevalence of demeaning stereotypes directed at Afro-Jamaicans: "Sad but true, as smaddy clap dem eye pon a black smaddy, dem start class dem as low-class so-till dem fine out she dat dem got high education or dem got big job, or political backative, or big motor car" (Bennett and Morris, 1993: 13). In Jamaica, having a dark complexion is offensive and an obstacle to social mobility since lighter skin tones are associated with the ideal aesthetic profile and are more favourable to socioeconomic status.

Acting as the poet's mouthpiece, Bennett's character also frankly conveys her disapproval of slave owners attempting to force slaves to speak English exclusively and prohibit the use of their mother tongues. The imposition of English would gradually lead to slaves abandoning their traditional languages and resulted in the creation of Patois, a new variety of English. Bennett, who uses dialect in her work and affirms her Afro-Jamaican identity laments the pervasive linguistic discrimination against Patois and the social position of its speakers. She aims to forge a space where she can elevate the status of her mother tongue and celebrate its uniqueness:

> Some thought Jamaican English was vulgar, out-of-order language. It came out of the African heritage and, at that time, anything African was bad: hair, colour, skin, language, music. But I thought it was fascinating. Everything had a rhythm. It was a creation of the people. One reason I persisted in writing in dialect in spite of the opposition was because nobody else was doing so, and there was such a rich material in dialect that I felt I wanted to put on paper some of the wonderful things

> that people say in dialect. You could never say 'look here' as vividly as 'kuyah' (cf. Scott, 1968).

For this reason, Bennett is hugely critical of anyone who objects to her use of dialect. Moreover, she highlights the frustrated rage of Aunty Roachy, who complains of the purposeful denigration of Patois in favour of English. Aunty Roachy's sensitivity to suggestions that Patois is corrupted English and an indication of the coarseness and worthlessness of its speakers is evident in the following:

> My Aunty Roachy she dat it bwile her temper and really bex her fi true anytime she hear anybody a style we Jamaican dialec as "corruption of the English language." For if dat be de case, den dem shoulda call English Language corruption of Norman French an Latin an all dem tarra language what dem she dat English is derived from. Oonoo hear de wud? 'Derived.' English is a derivation but Jamaican Dialec is corruption! What a unfairity! Aunty Roachy seh dat if Jamaican Dialec is corruption of de English Language, den it is also a corruption of de African Twi Language to, a oh! (Bennett and Morris, 1993: 1).

Bennett also renegotiates women's passive, subordinate position and the struggle against patriarchy and patriarchal norms that are primarily misogynistic. Thus, Aunty Roachy is sometimes cast as a feminist, regularly advocating for women's rights and identifying and addressing social barriers to gender equality. Elsewhere, she appears as a crafty, cunning woman and typifies how Jamaican women, though stressed and besieged, remain hopeful and are determined to get ahead in life through sheer willpower. Cooper (1993: 48) notes that the "cunning, rather than overt male/female confrontation" designates "the preferred strategy for maintaining domestic harmony." Further, Cooper reveals that:

> The Cunning Jamaican woman, celebrated and satirised with equal gusto in Louise Bennett's ample corpus, is a composite character - an aggregation of the multiple personae employed by Bennett, the ventriloquist, to voice the lives of representative Jamaican women of all social classes. This multifarious heroine victim of Bennett's comic/satirical sketches presents a diversity of social class values and behaviours that attests to the verisimilitude of Bennett's detailed portraiture (1993: 47).

The women represented in Miss Lou's poems are very shrewd individuals who undergird domestic family structures and family life. Miss Lou conveys the

subjective experience of the average woman in Jamaica and the impact of these experiences on their social identity and participation in nation-building.

Rather than merely portraying prescriptive gender stereotypes, Bennett probes the oppressive nature of patriarchy that underpins the subordination of women. Female characters are reconstructed as multifaceted, determined, influential, and flawed and have become symbols and archetypes representing a broad range of female experiences that elicit impassioned reactions. She gains inspiration from what is happening around her and accentuates these experiences using a relatable voice and characters that can appropriately articulate everyday issues. Bennett exposes the vulnerability of women disenfranchised by their gender and the resilience of women as a symbolic representation of power.

Another equally important character, Miss Matty, contributes to the persistence of female 'labrishers' or gossipers in Bennett's poems. Comparable with other female characters that occasionally appear in Miss Lou's dramatic monologues, Miss Matty ideally personifies the familial relationship that is not necessarily biological among women in the Jamaican countryside. Her spirited dialogue and animated expressions permeate the air revealing personal experiences, misconceptions, long-standing social roles of women and ultimately, the various issues affecting ordinary citizens. Indeed, this labrisher serves in the dual capacity of Miss Lou's poetic interlocutor revealing the average Jamaican character and providing some form of comic relief. Similar to the previously discussed *Dinki Mini* celebration, Miss Matty's fictional character reinforces the common theme of interweaving tragic and comedic elements.

The treatment of dialect-speaking characters in colonial texts promotes degrading stereotypes and derogatory labels, leaving the audience with the impression they are frivolous and of little importance. Colonial assumptions about non-European cultures serve to reaffirm the coloniser's 'civilising mission.' This Eurocentric discourse permeates Jamaican literature and influences the writer's relationship with the English language. When placed in the context of literary tradition, it is easy to understand why Bennett's dialect-speaking characters are deemed less refined and the opposite of the purported intellectually sophisticated English-speaking personalities characteristic of early-twentieth-century Jamaican literature. In chapter two,

we have already explored some of the beliefs underpinning this way of thinking and deeper issues that disadvantage dialect-speaking characters.

Aiming to appeal to the masses, her dialect-speaking use everyday speech, even with the threat of having her poems categorised as marginal because they go against the standard. She portrays relevant characters immersed in local life and depict the grim realities of Jamaican history. In many of her dialogues, she employs dynamic techniques that underscore her character's colonial mentality and show consideration for their victimisation. Compared with English classics, she limits the use of English giving much attention to performative techniques, namely sharp, witty dialogue, movements and gestures. Her dynamic rendering of verbal exchange between characters can be genuinely appreciated relative to the different themes and poetic devices she employs.

Rooted in the Subversive Potential of Patois

A lack of cultural sensitivity to non-European languages encourages reflection on the dominance of language ideologies. Why does Bennett struggle to articulate her thoughts and experiences in the English language? What conditions influence or induce English favouritism compared with the treatment of vernacular speech, specifically the Jamaican Creole biases? How does she advance Jamaican Creole, the language peculiar to Jamaicans, and use it as a form of artistic expression to protest against the conventional?

Jamaican Creole as a literary language functions as an alternative that allows her to transform words from their traditional meaning through the deconstruction of master narratives. As Tiffin writes: "Understandably, it has become the project of postcolonial writing to investigate European textual capture of places and people and to intervene in that originary and continuing containment" (cf. Ashcroft et al., 1995: 221). Therefore, she undermines English, choosing a language instead naturally at her disposal to reject constructs of 'Self and the 'Other.' This discussion is conducive to answering questions about Bennett's dramatic monologues as a form of cultural experience that disrupts colonial ideological structures.

Instead of embracing the conventional ideologies of English, Miss Lou uses Patois to respond to the stark social realities of daily life in Jamaica. She aims to

retain, transmit, and transform Jamaican culture, rebuffing the coloniser's insistence on cultural manipulation. Bennett's unique writing and performative styles - facial expression, gestures, posture, and movement - conflict with the rigid conventions of the English literary tradition. Her poems began to appear in the early 1930s, gaining popularity during the 1960s despite the country still being under the influence of the dominant culture. During this period, anti-colonial thought by leading political figures in Jamaica triggered increased nationalist sentiments and fueled demands for independence from Great Britain.

Bennett sees English and colonial education as representing what Marxist theorist Louis Althusser calls the 'ideological state apparatus' its concepts, values and attitudes, whereas Jamaican Creole means Jamaican cultural identity (1972). Speaking from a political standpoint, Michael Manley takes exception to Eurocentric models that displace and alienate the Jamaican folk:

> We can take everything that English education has to offer us, but ultimately, we must reject the domination of her influence, because we are not English ...nor should we ever want to be. Instead, we must dig deep into our own consciousness and accept and reject only those things of which we from our superior knowledge of our own cultural needs must be the best judges…Around us and before our very eyes are stirrings of the first shoots of a deeply felt 'national' artistic and intellectual life (1971: 109).

Undoubtedly, Miss Lou is dedicated to stirring Jamaican 'national consciousness' and contributing to shaping the Caribbean cultural milieu. Her poems articulate the Jamaican reality and evoke themes specific to identity formation in a bit to discredit the claims used to justify colonisation. However, her position creates discomfort among critics who are extremely sensitive to any attempt at reconceptualising colonisation in Jamaica and displacing the dominant colonial language with Jamaican Creole.

In 1943, *The Sunday Gleaner* introduced readers to what would become a weekly column that regularly incorporates a critique of Jamaican society into insightful social commentary. Many of these opinion pieces were later included in Miss Lou's collections. Her column addressed topical issues about Jamaica and applicable to the wider Caribbean region. In addition to the popularity of her pantomime performances,

her radio monologues titled 'Miss Lou's Views' (1965-1982) greatly enhanced the opportunities to orally transmit Jamaica's folk culture and history and grow her audience considerably. Through vibrant and energetic characters, Bennett appears more relatable in terms of social class and the common issues such as poverty, independence, language, and equality addressed in her poems. The consequences of Bennett's reverence for Jamaican Creole are far-reaching as her poems begin to resonate powerfully with the working class.

Attempt to elevate Patois to the status of English is disparaged by critics who marginalise Miss Lou's poems and newfound popularity. They argue that Patois is a corruption of the English language. Public opinion is divided between supporters who appreciate and value her creativity and detractors who strongly believe that "No one will ever be able to speak the standard language again if Louise Bennett is allowed to continue" (Morris, 2014: 19). Such reaction is somewhat understandable because for the leading newspaper of the day to dedicate a special column to publishing dialect verse means exposing its more conservative readership to presumed linguistic indiscipline.

Speaking to fellow writer Dennis Scott, Miss Lou defends her decision to use her mother tongue:

> For too long, it was considered not respectable to use the dialect. There was a social stigma attached to the kind of person who used dialect habitually. Many people still do not accept the fact that for us there are many things that are best said in the language of the common man (1968: 101).

As already mentioned in this paper, African-derived words and African-influenced expressions found in the Jamaican language are condemned by language purists. Bennett's assertion that Jamaican Creole is a repository of ancestral traditions and a dynamic mode of expression that makes itself felt in any situation is greatly discouraged. This language bears a peculiar brash tone that is characteristic of Bennett's style and mirrors the speech pattern of ordinary folks. She skilfully reconceives and reformulates colonial themes directed at Jamaican Creole and its speakers.

Preference for the dominant language results in disregard and the suppression of folk expression. Moreover, the mother tongue is deemed a 'bad' and uncouth

form of communication. Bennett's quote reveals that the word 'bad' carries negative connotations:

> When I was a child, nearly everything about us was bad, you know; they would tell yuh she yuh have bad hair, that black people bad...and that the language yuh talk was bad. And I know that a lot of people I knew were not bad at all, they were nice people and they talked this language (Bennett, 1976).

However, Bennett declares, "I think in the dialect," rebuffing language imperialism which denigrates indigenous languages as depraved, corrupt and inferior to English. Bennett (Anonymous, 1982: b) reveals, "You didn't have to be white; you didn't have to look white, but you had to behave white." Acting white is synonymous with talking white and is a continual challenge in postcolonial Jamaica. Such behaviours render Patois, children's first language in Jamaica, with negative connotations such as uncultured tone and speech.

The hostile reaction to her preference for using Patois highlights not only middle-class snobbery but also disdain from many black writers. Bennett insists on using Patois "instead of writing in the same old English way about Autumn and things like that" and writes poems that reflect her own identity and describe her everyday experiences (Bennett, 1982d: 47). Her performance texts are generally accepted as objectionable and distasteful in literary circles mainly because she attempts to elevate an informal language found to be indispensable in disseminating African indigenous knowledge embodied in Jamaican folklore. As Bennett points out:

> From the beginning, nobody ever recognised me as a writer. "Well, she is 'doing' dialect", it wasn't even writing, you know. Up to now a lot of people don't even think I write. They say "Oh you just stand up and say these things!" (cf. Scott, 1968: 98).

Due to the substantial use of dialect words and phrases, Miss Lou's dramatic monologues are labelled substandard and transgress the prevailing literary standards of the day. Undaunted, she continues to extol Jamaican folklore despite disapproval "because nobody else was doing so and there was such rich material in the dialect that I felt I wanted to put on paper some of the wonderful things that people say" (Ramazani, 2002: 110). Nevertheless, transforming language ideologies means

interrogating and displacing the hegemonic imposition of English and the established meaning of Englishness in Jamaica.

The use of Patois as a literary dialect is characteristic of Bennett's work representing the Jamaican speech pattern and depicting the social background of her characters. As Russell acknowledges, "Jamaican folk speech" projects realism "with honest observation and without the attitude of superiority or scorn" (1868: 22). Bennett defends her choice of language, despite Patois being associated with enslaved Africans, dispossessed and demeaned by a system of colonial oppression. Further, she dismisses suggestions that Patois is vulgar, does not portray intelligibility, and should not receive the same special attention bestowed on English. Selwyn Cudjoe writes: "Bennett used the power of Jamaican speech to explore the complexity of the Jamaican experience and, in so doing, forced the members of the upper and middle classes to face their own linguistic and class biases" (1990: 26).

Bennett positions Patois as a language that is "unhampered by the rules of (Standard English) grammar, a free expression" (1966f:9). However, it is never free from the dominant hegemonic ideologies related to language disguised as racism, cultural prejudice and linguistic privilege. Despite the tepid response and lack of exposure as a literary language, Bennett contends: "As it is used by the people to express their feelings, the dialect is very adaptable. You can twist it, you can express yourself so much more strongly and vividly than in Standard English" (Scott, 1968: 97). Her transformative dramatic monologues have promulgated 'orality' and storytelling to reconnect with an idealised past and her African heritage.

Miss Lou avoids the genres used by the Jamaican literary elite that does not advance black consciousness, nor does it represent cultural authenticity and a sensitivity to the authentic Jamaican voice. In challenging deeply embedded concepts of hegemony and racialised inferences about blacks that are destructive and rooted in racism, she contends, "You can't just look at a person, or at a whole group of people, and decide that those are low and those are not, you know" (Pearn, 1985: 53). Despite her popularity, Bennett's dialect poems are excluded from the local journals and anthologies, presumably because they are written in Patois. It was hard to hide her disappointment:

> I have been set apart by other creative writers a long time ago because of the language I speak and work in…You know, I wasn't ever asked to a Jamaica Poetry League meeting. I was never thought good enough to 'be represented in that- anthology Focus (Scott, 1968: 98).

The conspicuous absence of Bennett's poetry in the H.G de Lisser's annual magazine *Planters Punch* and *Focus,* a literary anthology occasionally edited by Edna Manley, has been confirmed by (Cobham-Sander, 1981). Also among the publications that excluded Bennett's work are *The Challenge of our Time*, *A Treasury of Jamaican Poetry*, *A Literature in the Making*, all compiled by (McFarlane, 1945, 1950, 1956). Against the background of the ongoing debate surrounding the issue of language choice, we can understand how the colonial mindset and language ideologies influence editorial selection. Even in later years, amongst a younger generation of Caribbean writers, the reception of Miss Lou's ongoing decolonisation efforts reveals biases and prejudices underlying the dominant perspectives about European supremacy.

Derogatory references "Cro-Magnon" and "Aunt Jemima" are ascribed to Miss Lou by fellow Jamaican writer Colin Channer. He also describes her tone of voice as "comedic and countrified," even referring to her work as "mento-minded minstrelsy" (cf. Edmondson, 2009: 92). Moreover, Channer contends that Bennett merely epitomises a "colonial-style nostalgia act, someone whose cheerful evocation of city life is akin to a 'countrifying' of the city, a denial of the violence and complexity of urban reality" (cf. Edmondson, 2009: 92). Channer's remarks echo the sentiments of a disgruntled audience member jeering, "A dat yuh modder sen yuh a school fa?" during one of Bennett's earlier performances (Cooper, 1993: 46). These remarks are characteristic of Miss Lou's detractors, who conform to known stereotypes about the folk history and the mother tongue.

English becomes the language of oppression, repression and manipulation, a dominant force that strips enslaved Africans of their cultural identity. Centuries of chattel slavery systematically force African slaves to 'leave their minds in Africa', leading to self-abasement and the formation of an inferiority complex. Miss Lou employs the rich vocabulary of the Jamaican language to expose institutionalised racism and oppression disguised as colonisation while striking a balance between

the language and culture of the coloniser and the colonised. Though language purists revile Patois, the everyday expression of Jamaicans, Bennett insists that it is not static and refuses to be constrained by the English language.

Throughout her body of work, Miss Lou exploits the prevalence of storytelling in the African tradition, primarily unrecorded, recited and transmitted orally, frequently relying on the audience's knowledge of cultural expressions to decipher their complex nuances. Despite being strongly criticised for her actions, she claims oral lore is the most authentic form of Afro-Jamaican artistic expression. Bennett devotes her career to revitalising Afro-Jamaican folk traditions and "make language stammer, or make it 'wail,' stretch tensors through all of language, even written language, and draw from it cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities" (Deleuze et al., 1988: 104). She argues in favour of folk traditions and envisages Patois as an indispensable instrument capable of reproducing the authentic voice. This transgression of literary conventions unsettles received narratives that impoverish vernacular language and inaugurate a resignification of the oral lore in Jamaica.

Through Patois, Miss Lou provides her audience with a unique cultural experience, which she believes they lack. The reclamation of oral forms of cultural expression in traditional African societies helps to regenerate interest in African storytelling and folklore. This African-inspired creative expression resonates with Jamaica's new generation of performance poets mentioned in this thesis. They contribute to conversations about the discursive construction of identity specific to the Caribbean, issues surrounding language choice and cultural authenticity.

The poetic language with which Miss Lou composes her dramatic monologues implies authority and a sense of uniqueness. Her choice of language is an authentic expression that is realistic, evocative and expressive. As a literary instrument of choice, Patois allows her to communicate her messages confidently to a much wider audience. She remains undeterred by the willful indifference of the middle class, who seize any opportunity to undermine her work. Her subversive use of the Jamaican language as counter-discourse symbolises independence and self-determination.

Miss Lou's Dramatic Stage

Miss Lou occupies the dual roles of poet and performer. Renowned for valorising oral forms as the most powerful means of representing the Afro-Jamaican consciousness, she uses dramatic monologues as her preferred method of performance. Her stage performances involve impromptu dialogue with the audience and offer perhaps the most lively and engaging conversations even where they are unfamiliar with Jamaican Creole. She forms a balance by combining the right pitch and rapid speech in repetitive sequences to mesmerise her audience and prompt a range of reactions. Also important for the musical effect, Bennett is known to dance and sing while she recites engaging performance poems to engage the audience's attention and keep them entertained.

Humour remains a common feature in many of Bennett's poems, characterising the resilience of Jamaicans and illustrating how people use humour to cope with adversity. Bakhtin (1984: 123) explains that "Laughter purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant, and the petrified; it liberates from fanaticism and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naivete, and illusion, from the single meaning, the single level of sentimentality." For instance, the popular and comic tales of Brer Anancy recited in the Jamaican dialect capture the adventures of a wily character that sees the funny side of even the most absurd situations and reveals Miss Lou's extraordinary virtuosity in creating a balance between wit and humour. Anancy, known for his role as a trickster, demonstrates unfailing perseverance in response to antagonism. Despite being misinterpreted as boisterous behaviour, Miss Lou's adaptation of Anancy folk tales verbalises social concerns and highlights existential anguish, hostility and the inherent colonial mentality among Jamaicans.

Baxter (1970: 266f) observes the receptiveness of the audience to light banter and "shrieks of laughter at the most serious and the saddest parts" rather than "the open and mass display of emotions on a tragic or serious note." Miss Lou recognises the importance of humour and employs literary elements, devices and techniques to induce reverberations of uncontrollable laughter in her subversive performance poetry. Her verses are culturally mediated that explicate the values, customs, and practices of African societies.

Morris (2014: 69f) holds the opinion that Bennett's poems reveal her skill of poetic communication and resistance to conventional forms:

> They often represent contrasting voices in dialogue. They make skillful use of repitition, rhetorical lists, memorable antithesis, careful balance, aphorisms, onomatopoeia and verbal coinages. They play with puns, which are sometimes pointedly emphasised- a king of humour which can work very well in performance, as in music hall or pantomime.

For decades, Bennett has honed these skills, understanding the subtleties of literary devices and techniques to preserve and transmit the oral tradition in the post-colonial Jamaican context. Bennett's inherent ability to infer people's thoughts and emotions is reflected in the close connection between her literary language and tone. She tends to rely on hand gestures, facial expressions and body language to communicate more artfully. The distinctive voice of her various characters expresses her opinions as she struggles to negotiate "a treacherous network of conflicted discourses" (Ford-Smith, 2006).

In her dramatic monologues, many fictional characters are quite relatable and often share viewpoints similar to her audience. A shared concern for daily life in Jamaica, she highlights the primary cause of economic hardship despite independence, which poses enormous risks to political and financial stability. While much of her poems are composed for recitation featuring the rhythmical stress pattern, she also gives prominence to the issue of language and its relation to class and social mobility in Jamaica. Miss Lou performs using Jamaican Creole to foster camaraderie based on shared principles and a sense of identity with the audience, which helps eliminate any awkwardness or signs of anxiety. Her subversive dramatic monologues scrutinise the dominant narratives about colonised subjects that augment negative images of blacks in her poems. Ultimately, colonial expansion is mocked as calculated aggression and an aberration born out of European greed.

In the early twentieth century, we discovered that customarily, Jamaican writers are forced to adopt the traditions and writing styles of the Western canon and align with the interests of the literary elite. Opposingly, Miss Lou explores Afro-Jamaican aesthetics through dramatic monologues offering a new telling and a fusion of voices manifesting the black Jamaican subject experience. Bennett's work

dramatises the conflicts that arise as she struggles with English's pre-eminence and shifts Patois from the periphery to the centre.

Bennett's poetry is explicitly presented in the form of dramatic monologues intended for stage performances, most notably at cultural festivals along with local folk music. The format of many of the poems in her collection remains quite simple and written in four-line stanzas. Admittedly, her tendency to retain the rhyme form of the imperial centre should not be construed as an attempt to perpetuate colonial tradition. Such practices can be attributed to British education policies and the imprint of the colonial curriculum that forces students to learn British classics.

Standardised spelling ordinarily seen in English is absent from her collection when recorded in text. Jamaican Creole has no conventional orthography. Writing is simply a way of recording her dramatic monologues in what Lashey calls "the sort of bastardisation of Standard English spelling" (cf. Morris, 2014: 68). In the same way, Bennett is not limited by the fact that Jamaican Creole has no grammatical structure: "There is no poem on the page. What you have on the page is a rough and ready method of recording" (cf. Morris, 2014: 68). She summarises her approach to writing with a clear explanation of word modification:

> We have tried to ensure that the poems are easy to read. The spelling assumes that the reader is accustomed to English and that anyone familiar with Jamaican Creole will 'hear' the Creole sounds even when the spelling looks like Standard. Previous collections have printed 'me', for example, where it would be sounded 'mi', and 'one' for 'wan'. We have taken that process further, thus 'soldier' for 'solja', 'finger' for 'finga', 'white' for 'wite' etc. We have avoided spattering the text with apostrophes; but as spelt in this volume many of the Creole words clearly suggest their Standard English relations: 'respec', 'frien', 'oman', 'fader', 'modder'; 'lie-' an-story' rather than 'lian story'. The spelling is more or less consistent throughout; the occasional variant signals the pronunciation required in a particular context (pickney/ pickinni, independence/ independance, tedeh/ teday etc) (Bennett, 1982d: xx).

We should note that since the 1960s, several unsuccessful attempts have been made to standardise Jamaican Creole, most notably by Jamaican linguist Frederic Cassidy. Unlike English, 'The Cassidy System', named after its inventor, "has no silent letters, and each letter or letter combination is always pronounced the same way" (The Jamaican Language Unit/ Di Jamiekan Langwij Yuunit: 8). This classification

system departs from well-structured, standardised English insofar as it heavily relies on the spoken word. It aims to simplify Jamaican Creole spelling to facilitate writing and improve reading. Additionally, standardisation serves to affirm the uniqueness of Patois to Standard English.

Besides textualising her lived experiences and the complex interactions that characterise daily life in early twentieth-century Jamaica, she distils oral renditions of traditional storytelling. Through her dramatic recitations, Miss Lou attempts to dispel the myths and what many call the absurdities of African folk tradition, drawing parallels with Jamaican plantation society. Bennett subverts conventional notions of culture, which esteems English writing forms superior, to release Jamaican Creole from linguistic oppression. She also transgresses the boundaries that repress and confine writers to scribal conventions and imagines new possibilities for Jamaican folk values. Naturally, this radical approach attracts much attention leading to a decades-long debate about the literary value of the Jamaican language and its relevance and suitability as an official language. Persistent throughout most of the criticism is the consensus that her writing style is undeveloped and her delivery disqualified as a serious form of artistry. Because she employs Patois exclusively as her literary language, her work is received unenthusiastically by local and regional critics attempting to disqualify her as a genuine writer and performer. Such remarks contextualise the perception of the dialect writer and the language attitudes that remain prevalent during the postcolonial era.

Louise Bennett employs Jamaican Patois to write back to the imperial centre and defy the conventions of the Western canon. Along the way, she discovers that the prevalence of colonisation contributes to the internalised oppression of many Jamaicans. Struggling to advance her natural language in the public sphere, she realises that writing and speaking in a non-standard variety is frowned upon and deemed reprehensible.

Bennett connects the abrogation of English with the historical trauma of colonisation. Undoubtedly, Jamaican Creole denotes a haunting of English in its vocabulary, grammar, and idiom. The cultural status of Jamaican Creole in the literary and sociolinguistic contexts makes the dialectical process of decolonisation more difficult. Particularly in the era of the anti-colonial movement mobilising deep-rooted sentiments of

nationalism and political allegiances are shifting, nebulous and rife with paradox. This is because it occupies a marginal position within the English literary culture.

In the current chapter, we explore Miss Lou's problematic approach to dialect poetry and examine the relationship between writer and choice of language. Chapter four expands the use of Jamaican Creole as a transgressive literary language in a selection of Miss Lou's dramatic monologues. According to Mervyn Morris, Bennett's dramatic monologues centre on "the oneness, the wholeness of a completely realised experience" (1963a: 71). Henceforth, we delve deeper into Bennett's oral poetics and consider displacement and cultural repression themes as the epitome of the postcolonial dilemma. Besides, we will understand how rhythm, figures of speech, and voice inflexion as a means of inference about life situations and social issues express the attitudes and opinions of Miss Lou.

Chapter 4: The Subversive Mockery of English in Miss Lou's Dramatic Monologues

In her active time, Louise Bennett was undoubtedly the most famous Caribbean performance poet whose dramatic monologues offer a compelling rendition of the coloniser/colonised relation and its relevance to cultural practices. This Jamaican cultural icon creatively exploits her African heritage. She attempts to restore the oral tradition, a rich source of ancestral knowledge, from obscurity and marginalisation to a creative place. Like many other marginalised Caribbean writers, Miss Lou struggles to assert the legitimacy of Patois against English, the imposed language that ensures the pervasive influence of British culture.

The scope of this chapter is to investigate Bennett's dramatic monologues in the light of oral/literacy and the poetic use of Jamaican Creole in general. We will consider the significance of Jamaican Patois in an attempt to rethink the narrative position of English colonialists. Bennett interrogates the overarching themes that connect the coloniser and the colonised, emphasising British colonial rule in Jamaica and the repeated insistence of language throughout many poems selected for interpretation. Moreover, this chapter reflects on Miss Lou's poetry alongside the inherently racist British colonial rhetoric concerning colonial subjects. Her dramatic monologues function as counter-narratives to the narrow and elitist English canon, resolutely Eurocentric and chauvinistic.

A discussion on how hegemonic binaries good/bad, cultured/uncultured-suppress the distinct languages and traditions of enslaved Africans is already covered in chapter one. It also highlights cultural arrogance used to impose the language of the coloniser on the colonised. Consequently, Bennett's interrogation of English is positioned within the broader historical context in which the British colonisation of the Caribbean took place. Her poetry functions as a counter-discourse to refute the colonial thesis of traditional African societies as necessarily primitive.

Two main themes emerge in analysing Patois positionality in Jamaican literature, popular culture and the public domain. The first theme concerns recovering the subject position of the 'other' and counter-narratives contesting a certain kind

of 'Englishness.' The decolonisation thesis espoused by Bennett aims at purifying Jamaican culture of remnants of British colonialism and imperialism, which she insists are retained long after emancipation. For Gonzalez, decolonisation "has mostly appeared in the form of what has been described as epistemic disobedience and border thinking…strategies of resistance to the modernity that perpetuates the colonial condition" (2018: 267).

The second theme tackles the contradictions of language imperialism in Jamaica. Bennett's dramatic monologues show the conception of Englishness associated with dominance, the contradictory coloniser/colonised relationship, and the harmful stereotypes of dialect speakers. Bennett's counter-narratives examine the subject position of the colonised, subjugation and the postulation of a new Afro-Jamaican identity. Most of the work produced by Bennett since independence is cathartic, and there is a determined and concentrated effort to recover the abject black body from wretchedness, a condition recognised as Jamaica's development predicament. Deployed in poetic form, she attempts to disrupt the notion of 'Englishness,' deconstruct master narratives and eventually decolonise the Jamaican mind, as illustrated in the following analysis. Like her contemporary Frantz Fanon, the intellectual, theorist and practitioner of decolonisation in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Bennett fell back on the exact binary oppositions emblematic of colonial discourse. From the point of view of domination, this signals a gradual reversal of relations between Jamaican and British culture.

In her poetic manifesto, Louise Bennett employs the strategies of abrogation and appropriation of English to write back to the centre. As Ashcroft explains:

> This literature is therefore always written out of the tension between the abrogation of the received English which speaks from the centre, and the act of appropriation which brings it under the influence of a vernacular tongue the complex of speech habits which characterise the local language, or even the evolving and distinguishing local English of a monolingual society trying to establish its link with place (1989: 39).

Bennett's dramatic monologues appear at different stages of Jamaica's postcolonial reconstruction. She engages with the cultural legacy of colonialism that affects mother

tongue positionality and questions the problematic Jamaican identity. Interspersed throughout her body of work:

> The breadth and range of issues tackled, provide a fascinating catalogue of current events over an extended period (roughly the 1940s to the 1970s); read alongside more conventional, historical accounts of the period, Miss Lou's poems offer distinctive and insightful comments from the "marginal" perspectives of "ordinary Jamaicans (Narain, 2002: 60).

Each poem is dramatic and negotiates the consequences of binary opposition and the use of paradox to depict language and culture in postcolonial Jamaica.

In general, the performance texts relate her experiences of colonisation and subvert colonial mannerism reflecting how the obligation imposed upon individuals and the ideological effects of Western colonial thought govern attitudes and aspirations. They also promote cultural preservation and central themes that are universal and to which almost everyone can relate. Compared with her early poetry in the 1930s and 1940s, Bennett's later works are markedly different in focus and more attuned to the anti-colonial thought helping to strengthen nationalist sentiments and mobilise the nationalist movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Ultimately, themes later in her poems include independence, Rastafarian repatriation, black power, politics, and socio-economic disparity.

Stan' Up Pon Wi Dignity

Miss Lou's satirical pro-independence poems constitute implicit admonition against British colonial rule and expose the upper-class's hypocrisy and general moral indignation. Her independence poems are "raising questions about the promise of decolonisation," as stated by (Ramazani, 2002: 118). The appeal of independence articulated by Miss Lou in "Nayga Yard," a subversive response to colonial subjectivity, has nationalist overtones; but despite that, this brilliant satire invites us to laugh. Revolutionary anti-colonial movements of the 1960s and the emerging nationalist movement in Jamaica symbolise that tumultuous decade's political ferment and radicalism.

"Nayga Yard" discloses the populist sentiments of political leaders Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante. Both are committed to the struggle for independence from British rule, which envisions the decolonisation of Jamaica. Beneath

the satire, however, Miss Lou questions Britain's continuing influence and control over Jamaica. She is adamant that the Jamaican people are capable of self-government and demands Britain relinquish control. Further, Miss Lou raises whether Jamaica belongs to Jamaicans or the British government. In addition, independence will grant complete freedom or if colonial systems inherited from British predecessors will arbitrarily hinder the transition process.

The poem begins in a serious and biting tone:

Cock cyaan beat cock	Cock cannot beat cock
Eena cock own yard	In cock's own yard
We all know dat is true	We all know that is true
Is who-for yard Jamaica is?	Jamaica is whose yard?

(Bennett, 1982d: 103f)

The first line is a Jamaican proverb that is intended to "widen significance of a particular incident or situation" (Cooper, 1993: 42). Affirmation is seen in the second line. In the context of control, the word 'cock' alludes to the domesticated fowl, known to be fiercely territorial and commonly found in backyards in the rural countryside. Bennett makes this connection to reclaim possession of her homeland and display hostility towards colonial authority. However, history shows that independence is a complex phenomenon.

In the struggle to attain freedom from the British spheres of influence in Jamaica, figurehead bourgeoisie serving the interests of imperialist powers dominated a neo-colonial state facilitating Britain's economic aggression in the form of capitalism that has subsequently strengthened its hold on the country. Nearly sixty years since independence, successive governments have engaged in political corruption, namely, tribalism, cronyism and nepotism, resulting in economic stagnation and dampening initial expectations of transformative leadership, eroding public trust and confidence.

Confronting the hegemonic whiteness that pervades culture, institutions, and social relations, Miss Lou disputes the marginal position of blacks with the declaration "Nayga dah reign predominant!"(Negroes reign predominant) (Bennett, 1982d: 103f). (Please see marginal note to introduction on Negro). In the line "De place belongs to we!" (The land belongs to us) Miss Lou declares the

land, its wealth and possessions belong to the Jamaican people. She enquires, in a harsh tone: "Who is fooling who?" (Bennett, 1982d: 103f). In a bold display of self-confidence, Miss Lou's "Nayga Yard" is an expressed desire for democracy and independence and the need to assert a new Jamaican identity recognising the achievements credited to the black race.

The economic well-being of well-educated blacks that could help dismantle barriers to social mobility also comes into focus. The thrust of Miss Lou's protest defies the pervasive British influence and the dualistic racial model about the inborn superiority of whites and the intellectual inferiority of blacks. The speaker candidly tackles questions of how to contend with implicit racism and historical injustice:

Who is de greates barrister?	Who is the greatest Barister?
A Jew? A Syrian?	A Syrian? A Jew?
Him white? Is Chiney? Coolie? No.	He's white? Chinese? Indian? No.
Him is a nayga man!	He is a negro man
Call fi Jamaica fastest sprinters	Call for Jamaica's fastest sprinters
Gal or bwoy, an den	Girl or boy, and then
De foremost artis, doctor, scholar	The foremost artist, Doctor, scholar
Nayga reign again!	Negroes reign again!
Go eena every school, as fi	Go into every school, ask for
De brightes chile dem got	The brightest child they have
An nineteen out a twenty time	And nineteen out of twenty times
A nayga deh pon spot!	A negro is on spot
So, nayga people, carry awn;	So, negro people, carry on
Memba de place a fi-yuh	Remember the place is ours
Jamaica is nayga yard	Jamaica is the negroes yard.
(Bennett, 1982d: 103f)	

In a show of black pride, Miss Lou insists that blacks dominate in the creative arts, medicine and academia, implying they have made appreciable contributions to the country's development. Hence, she contradicts implicit biases shown by whites against blacks that perpetuate racial stereotypes and demonise the black race. She pleads with Jamaicans to "Leggo yah talents broad" (Let go your talents abroad) and aim for international success. However, above all, "Memba de place a fi-yuh/ Jamaica is nayga yard" (Remember the place is yours/ Jamaica is the negroes yard),

an unequivocal reminder that Jamaica is home (Bennett, 1982d: 103f). "Nayga Yaad" is a bold and unflinching assertion of national consciousness and emphasises structural inequalities in the pursuance of self-determination.

Bennett's anti-colonial poems analyse the discursive construction of subjective identity and reconceptualise blackness as a site of resilience. Nonetheless, the black/white binary that characterises many of Bennett's verses in this thesis cannot adequately account for the presence of Chinese, Lebanese, Indian, Syrian ethnic and other groups in Jamaica. The fact that Afro- Jamaicans are viewed as inferior to whites does not place them in the same category as mixed-race Jamaicans. Certain pre-defined criteria exist in which mixed-race individuals who identify as neither black nor white is grouped with whites in the Jamaican social context. Hence, differences in socioeconomic status, ethnicity and historical circumstances are intended to distinguish social categories.

Miss Lou often expressed her own opinion through a clearly identified character acting as an unmediated mouthpiece. This mouthpiece contrasts the poet's persona and succeeds in bringing together two important aspects of Miss Lou's writing, the transgression of established standards and coming to terms with her natural and authentic voice. James Arnold shares his opinion on the integration of the personal and impersonal and the different voices in Miss Lou's poetry. He detects "the always changing distance between Bennett the person, and the artist and her poetic persona…one can never be sure that the speaker is fully conscious of all the irony in her monologue and that, at certain moments, the reader may be amused as much *at* her as *with* her" (Arnold et al., 2001: 247).

Miss Lou's dramatic monologues frame the continued tensions and struggles for Jamaican independence. Also, the emergence of nationalist sentiments assiduously promoted by nationalists explicitly reverberated anti-conquest discourse along with political discourse to incite patriotism and was later adopted by the Rastafarian movement. In this respect, Miss Lou's poetry of the 1960s was characterised by Ramazani as "broadly nationalist" since it "indigenizes literary language, personifies vibrant local voices and ironizes colonial domination" (2002: 133). Using indigenous language in Jamaican literature is a powerful weapon to dismantle hegemonic power.

In “Jamaica Elevate” Miss Lou conveys “the inverse relationship between the colonised and the coloniser during the nationalist struggle for independence” (cf. Ramazani, 2002: 128). Known as an authoritative and anti-colonial voice of the independence period, “Bennett responds to Jamaica’s grand moment of political independence with ironic guile and Anancy-like complexity, turning inside out the dominant rhetoric, ideology and symbolism of the moment” (Ramazani, 2002: 131). She speaks of astonishment as she reacts to independence:

So much tings happen so fas’	Some things happen so fast
an quick	and quick
Me head still feel giddy!	My head is still feeling giddy
Biff, Referandum!	Biff, Referendum!
Buff, Election!	Buff, Election!
Baps, Independence drop pon we!’	Baps, Independence drop on us!

(Bennett, 1966e: 114)

Although independence had become a reality, Morris comments that in the poem: “It is implied for example that Jamaicans are acted on, not acting, in the Federation referendum, the subsequent Jamaican election and the transition to independence” (Morris, 2014: 116). The poem features the onomatopoeic words ‘Biff-Buff-Baps’ that mimic the sound of someone getting punched and battered. These words elicit similar reactions from listeners and show confusion and discord rippling beneath the surface. Morris further comments on the given reality of the time “Independence was given not won and that it might be something of a misfortune” (2014: 116).

Miss Lou likens the series of events culminating in independence as a sudden occurrence and many people stumbling into the celebrations merely by accident. Morris notes: “The poem implies that Jamaica’s elevation into the international councils is less significant than the elevation within Jamaica of the ordinary black person or someone with whom the ordinary black person readily identifies” (2014: 44). As Jamaica celebrated its independence from Great Britain on August 6, 1962, the concept of autonomy eluded many citizens partly due to ignorance and lack of awareness. This is especially the case for those who live in rural communities. Nonetheless, in classic Miss Lou style, she adds a touch of humour in stanzas one and two:

An we get congratulation	And we get congratulations
From de folks of high careers;	From the folks in high careers
Dah rub shoulder an dip mout	Rubbing shoulders and mingling
Eena heavy world affairs.	In heavy world affairs

(Bennett, 1966e: 114).

As implied in Miss Lou's high-spirited statement, Jamaica has become a sovereign state and will have to make foreign policy decisions whether or not it is prepared.

While Jamaican independence is met with much jubilation and fanfare, Miss Lou seems perturbed and doubtful about Jamaica's preparedness for inevitable problems. Another dramatic monologue, "Independance," portrays the independence festivities through the perspective of the impulsive character, Miss Matty. She thinks deeply, "Jamaica start grow beard, ah hope/We chin can stan' the strain!" (Jamaica starting to grow beard, I hope/Our chin can stand the strain). The use of the "ah hope" creates doubt and uncertainty as to Jamaica's preparedness for self-government and one of her scepticisms upon which critics focus: "Instead of adopting a pose of unflinching self-assurance, Bennett gives voice to doubts about the preparedness and faith of the postcolonial nation" (Ramazani: 136). Cooper makes a note of the speaker's hesitation and suspicion as she chit-chats with Miss Matty: "She concludes, somewhat derisively, that independence requires a capacity for self-sacrifice which she is not sure that big-chat Jamaicans like Miss Matty are ready to demonstrate" (Cooper, 1993: 178).

Miss Matty starkly juxtaposes Jamaica achieving nationhood with the image of a young boy becoming a man. She hints that progress will involve constant and frequently problematic change, but change is necessary. The growing beard marks Jamaica gaining independence, the affirmation of self-determination through disassociation. In lines that personify Jamaica growing beard, Ramazani observes that Bennett is "Literalizing the cliched association of national with personal maturity" (2002: 136).

Miss Matty epitomises working-class female voices and appears animated as she gives her interpretation of Jamaican independence in the following:

Matty seh it mean we facety	Matty says it means we are feisty
Stan' up pon we dignity	Stand up on our dignity

An we don't allow nobody	And we don't allow nobody
Fi teck liberty wid we	To take liberty of us
Independance is we nature	Independance is our nature
Born an bred in all we do	Born and bred in all of us
An she glad fi see dat Govament	And she is glad to see that the government
Tun independant to	Turned independent too

(Bennett, 1966e: 118)

For Miss Matty, "independence is independence from disrespect and imposition" (Ramazani, 2002: 137). An overzealous Miss Matty shares her vivid thoughts about Jamaica's geographic size and raises concern about its total area as represented on the world map. In an overbearing and intimidating tone, she expects the newly elected leaders to "caution worl-map" and take care Jamaica is represented in a respectful manner rather than its current illustration:

Fi stop draw Jamaica small	To stop drawing Jamaica small
For de lickle speck cyaan show	Because the little speck cannot show
We independantness at all	Our independence at all
Moresomever we must tell map dat	Moreover we must tell map that
We don't like we position	We don't like our position

(Bennett, 1966e: 117f)

Miss Matty pleads, "Please kindly tek we out o' sea/An draw we in de Ocean" (Please kindly take us out of the sea/ and draw us in the Ocean), indicating that the concept of independence means advancement for her, progression and maturity. She compares the sea and the ocean to highlight their relative size and geography. This is another attempt to illustrate retrogression and insignificance contrasted with expansion and relevance.

"Independence," serves to "reverse the maps of domination" to use argument the argument preferred by (Willis, 1982). Although as Ramazani points out, "little will have changed if Caliban is as blindly self-aggrandizing as Prospero" (2002: 137). This argument essentially displaces "the coloniser's grand self-perception" and regressive thinking shaped by the concept of hegemony that states precisely the dominance of the imperial centre proportional to its geographic distance from the margin (Ramazani, 2002: 137).

The poem "Independence" can also be read as awakening national consciousness as the writer emphasises Jamaica's newfound confidence and freedom and its elevation to the world stage. Bennett understands that independence celebration is even more historical than just revelry and festivity. National and cultural identity, language and national symbols, and other powerful expressions of nationalism are best attained through independence.

Exploitation colonialism aimed at the country's natural resources and the redistribution of native lands has enduring consequences for independence resulting in inevitable hardship and 'privation' for citizens. Miss Lou warns there will be no reward without a lot of hard work and compromises along the way:

No easy-come-by freeness tings	No easy-come-by freeness things
Nuff labour, some privation	Lots of labour, some deprivation
Not much of dis an less of dat	Not much of this and less of that
An plenty studiration	And plenty studying

(Bennett, 1966e: 119)

Ramazani's reading of the poem agrees that independence is actualised and asserted due to "self-restraint, hard work and economy" (Ramazani, 2002: 138). No handbook or blueprint guarantees Jamaica will attain its independence objectives or meet basic human needs. This has proven especially true nearly sixty years since gaining independence. In the last stanza, the lines "Jamaica start smoke pipe, ah hope /We got nuff Jackass rope" (Jamaica starts smoking pipe, I hope/ We have enough tobacco) is an ominous warning about worrying times ahead (Bennett, 1966e: 119). The fictional character Miss Matty is particularly concerned that elected government officials lack the necessary experience and support systems to respond effectively to existing problems and the overarching issues facing independent Jamaica.

In one of the most unreserved criticisms of the independence celebrations, Miss Lou reconstructs the ironic reversal at Jamaica's transition from British colonial rule and subsequently gaining autonomy. The humorous poem "Independence Dignity" uses parody to produce the imagery of a nation "recaptured by the fomented fervour of independence" (Ramazani, 2002: 134). It describes a situation in which the once colonised are reclaiming not just their black identity but also recovering indigenous knowledge.

Miss Lou articulates the interplay among consciousness, emotions and behaviour that resembles the manifestations of Emile Durkheim's 'collective effervescence.' Elaborating this sociological theory, Durkheim asserts that when the crowd gathers, "a sort of electricity is formed by their collecting which quickly transports them to an extraordinary degree of exaltation….The passions released are of such an impetuosity that they can be restrained by nothing" (Durkheim and Bellah, 1973: 178). Ramazani (2002: 133) explains that by: "Implicitly critiquing the celebrations, she stages a poetic celebration that is richly ambivalent, concerned to preserve a space for the independence of the poet's and other individual's non-conformist irony and doubt even at a moment of massively orchestrated collective feeling."

Similar to other poems written by Bennett during the independence era, the sensationalist "Independence Dignity" dramatises the celebratory mood of such an unforgettable event. The character Cousin Min is informed thus, "you miss sinting" (You missed something) (Bennett, 1966e: 116). The energised speaker conveys the sheer excitement and euphoria of independence to Cousin Min, who is believed to be living abroad. The speaker taunts playfully to evoke the fascination that usually accompanies such excitement and provokes guilty or jealous feelings from Cousin Min. She is unable to experience Jamaican independence for herself:

Yuh should be over yah	You should be over here
Fi see Independence Celebration	To see independence celebration
Capture Jamaica	Capture Jamaica

(Bennett, 1966e: 116).

The word 'capture' implies that Jamaican independence has seized and overwhelmed the nation and the attention of its new citizens, compelling everyone to display perfect behaviour.

A fusion of joy and sorrow takes effect in Bennett's comical parody of Charles Wolfe's 1817 poem "The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna," as she juxtaposes the death of British colonial rule and the birth of an independent Jamaica (cf. Stallworthy, 1984: 83f). Morris (2005: 117) explains that Miss Lou's mimicry follows the same rhythmic pattern as the well-known British poem: "it is as if the coloniser is being buried while a nation is born". The first stanza of the Wolfe original reads:

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried

Miss Lou uses a concentrated blend of imagery and slow rhythm of the Wolfe original to recreate the same effect deliberately. Much of Miss Lou's parody is done in a specific manner using words throughout to express the speaker's experiences and the public's response to independence, skilfully playing to the different emotions of the audience:

Not a stone was fling	Not a stone was thrown
Not a samfie sting	Not a trickster succeeds
Not a soul gwaan bad an lowrated	Not a soul acted bad and low-class
Not a fight bruk out	Not one fight broke out
Not a bad-wud shout	Not a bad word shouted
As independence was celebrated	As independence was celebrated

(Bennett, 1966e: 116)

Even though some readers might not be familiar with the parodied text, they nonetheless sense Bennett's malapropism and contemptuous disregard for the English language. Referring to the stanza which parodies the original, Morris claims:

> Allusions often enrich the poems. They are usually playing with knowledge most Jamaicans have (of proverbs, folksongs and the King James Bible, for example); and some they connect with English or American literature encountered in colonial schools (2014: 39).

Miss Lou describes the unfolding events in "Independence Dignity" and captures the subtle nationalist and anti-colonial overtones with mischievousness and furtive mockery. Dramatic irony is revealed through the re-enacted scenes of Jamaican independence on August 6, 1962, indicating this momentous occasion is more consequential than it appears.

The recognised status of Jamaica as an independent country means citizens are expected to behave respectfully and dignified, following the criterion for acceptable behaviour in public places. Bennett reacts to the well-behaved crowd:

You wan see how Jamaica people	You want to see how Jamaican people
Rise to de occasion	Rise to the occasion

An destant up demself fe greet	And decent up themselves to greet
De birt' o dem new nation!	The birth of their new nation

(Bennett, 1966e: 116).

Morris (2005: 117) points out that such an unusual display of 'destant' behaviour is only momentary because independence brings heightened awareness about problems that are entrenched in Jamaica's colonial past:

> The arrant commercialization, the much pretence which cannot be expected to last beyond independence time. The dignity might prove temporary. 'De behaviour was gran' transforming people for a time; but the mention of the unruly and ill-mannered, the lazy, the disunited the feeble, serves to remind us that the good behaviour might not long survive the occasion to which everybody has risen. The unpleasing reality is set ironically against the hope embodied in the national anthem. The poem seems to welcome the celebrations, but in its unillusioned irony allows for the struggles that may have to follow.

The speaker provides a hilarious account of the reaction of the patrons, who are well-known for their appalling conduct. Miss Lou mentions that while the celebrations following independence can compel people to display more appropriate behaviour even for one day, many will soon revert to their typical 'low-rated' mannerisms. The pressure to act appropriately and display good conduct proves too burdensome and pretentious for many Jamaicans.

Bennett uses figurative expressions to heighten the imagery of rowdy celebrants and the extravagant displays during Jamaica's independence. In the poem, the speaker notes the distasteful and disruptive behaviour of some spectators who attempt to express their feelings about their newfound freedom. The speaker dramatises the sheer magnitude of the historic occasion and intentionally uses words that have an exaggerating effect: "From night till soon a mornin" (From night until early morning) (Bennett, 1966e: 116). Miss Lou fascinates Cousin Min by using words to visually recreate some of the sights, sounds and scenes of the unfolding event. "Independence Dignity" reacts to independence in humour and a mocking farewell as Great Britain relinquishes control over Jamaica. Nevertheless, given the current economic uncertainty and impending problems for the ordinary Jamaican, it is evident that post-independence will be full of conflict, contradiction and deception.

What a Devilment a Englan'

On July 23, 1948, the Empire Windrush arrived at the Port of Tilbury in Essex, England, with 492 men from Jamaica and Trinidad aboard. Mead (2009) contends the myth of "The conventional history which asserts the event as a decisive moment of cultural change also hides synchronous transnational stories of migration, and in doing so obscures its own possible role in a history of transnational crossings." The reverse irony in Bennett's "Colonisation in Reverse" highlights the subtle distinctions between the arrival of British colonialists in Jamaica in 1655 and the mass migration of Jamaicans to Great Britain in 1948. The poem takes the form of narrative comedy, which details the story of the wave of immigrants from the Caribbean to the 'mother country' in the mid-twentieth century. Edward Brathwaite's "Middle Passages" could also be read as a historical reversal (1993). On this journey, he returns to Africa, "recovering its traditions - the animism, the rituals and the rhythms of the Ashanti nation- a more creative, spiritual use of masks can emerge (Alexander, 2001: 167).

At the end of the Second World War, Britain's material and human costs had an extraordinarily devastating effect resulting in economic misery for the empire. Some of the poorest in Jamaica joined post-war reconstruction efforts in Britain, motivated by employment opportunities compared with a severe lack of jobs in their own country. "Colonisation in Reverse" chronicles Jamaican immigrants' migrant experience and relocation from the margin to the centre. Miss Lou highlights the inescapable ironies, sometimes with a sarcastic overtone:

What a devilment a Englan!	What devilment in England
Dem face war an brave de worse	They face war and endure the worst
But I'm wonderin' how	But I am wondering how
Dem gwine stan	They are going to take
Colonizin in reverse	Colonizin in reverse

(Bennett, 1982b: 106f)

Arguably Bennett's best-known dramatic monologue "Colonisation in Reverse" depicts how economic migration has provided the colonised with an opportunity to exact retribution against the coloniser. Featured here is the proverbial character, Miss Matty, albeit a passive listener but a character with whom the reader can

readily identify and understand. In Bennett's work, Miss Matty exemplifies the Jamaican female 'labrisher' archetypes. In the opening lines, an excited Miss Lou gives an ironic reflection of British colonisation:

Wat joyful news, Miss Matty	What joyful news, Miss Matty
I feel like me heart gwine burs	I feel like my heart is going to explode
Jamaica people colonizin	Jamaican people are colonising
Englan in reverse	England in reverse

(Bennett, 1982b: 106f)

Miss Lou's retrospective overtone is reminiscent of her anti-colonial narratives. Although not stated unequivocally, the speaker in "Colonisation in Reverse" is most likely not travelling with the migrant group. It is possible that the speaker is unaware and might unconsciously ignore the traumatic experiences among migrants in Great Britain, including racism and xenophobia worsened by job dissatisfaction.

The compelling image of large groups preparing to set sail to England conveys a sense of desperation and poverty driving migrants to leave Jamaica. Miss Lou addresses the determination of her fellow citizens euphorically:

By de hundred, by de tousan	By the hundreds, by the thousands
From country an from town	From country and from town
By de ship-load, by de plane-load	By the ship-load, by the plane load
Jamaica is Englan boun	Jamaica is England bound

(Bennett, 1982b: 106f)

Also, the reversing of colonisation occurs as Jamaican migrants transpose their cultural "bag an baggage" to the mother country (Bennett, 1982b: 106f). Carolyn Cooper highlights the influence of Jamaican food, language, music and culture as they are transferred to the seat of the British empire. In her reading of the poem, she marks the 'reverse colonisation' as Miss Lou "gleefully celebrates the transforming power of Jamaican culture as it implants itself on British soil in a parodic gesture of 'colonisation.' History is turned upside down as the 'margins' move to the 'centre' and irreparably dislocate that centre" (Cooper, 1993: 175). Jamaican culture and folklore infiltrate Great Britain and attempt to "tun history upside dung!" (turn history upside down) (Bennett, 1982b: 106f)). They inevitably help transform and become entrenched in mainstream British society.

In 2018, British prime minister Theresa May issued an unprecedented apology for the appalling treatment of Caribbean immigrants, some of whom arrived in Britain on the Empire Windrush in 1948. After a lifetime of living, working and paying taxes, they are unemployed and rendered unemployable. This is compounded by the threat of homelessness and 'no recourse to the public fund.' Since the 1960s, immigration policies under the guise of protecting the British public have been designed to introduce a hostile environment and restrict illegal immigrants in the United Kingdom and are directly responsible for the emergence of the 'Windrush Scandal.'

The Windrush generation left Jamaica as British subjects but, on arrival in Great Britain, are faced with the reality that they are immigrants. In fact, despite the history of the British Empire in the Caribbean, many white British citizens refuse to acknowledge Caribbean migrants as British or the many contributions made by the Caribbean community. Instead, the Windrush generation is treated as aliens who do not belong in Britain, and their presence is likely to worsen anxieties around racial tension and widespread resentment.

These sentiments become the focal point of a documentary addressing the illusion of racial threat to traditional British families as black British subjects from overseas colonies are transplanted to the imperial metropolis (BBC Television, 1955). The following statement reinforces such provocations: "Not for the first time in our history we have a colonial problem on our hands. But it's a colonial problem with a difference. Instead of being thousands of miles away and worrying other people, it's right here, on the spot, worrying us" (BBC Television, 1955). The colonialist mentality still pervades the imperial centre and reflects the xenophobia built up around the Windrush scandal.

Bennett sharply criticises her fellow Jamaicans for entrepreneurial profiteering with the remark "open up cheap-fare-/ to-Englan agency," (Bennett, 1982b: 106f). She accuses them of "shippin off/ Dem countryman like fire" (shipping off/ their countryman rapidly) and no different to the British colonialists profiteering from chattel slavery who establish large plantations in Jamaica to take advantage of the massive demand for sugar in Europe (Bennett, 1982b: 106f).

The poem also highlights the plight of West Indian citizens who have been "forced to seek economic refuge in the very bosom of the appropriated motherland" (Cooper, 1993: 176). It critically reflects the influx of migrants taking up menial jobs in England to earn a living. However, many will end up with unfulfilled aspirations as the myths about living and working in the diaspora come undone. The speaker punctuates the following lines using the words "pour out" to emphasise the rapid pace at which aspirants are leaving Jamaica and accepting "big-time job" offers for a better life in England:

Dem a pour out a Jamaica	They are pouring out of Jamaica
Everybody future plan	Everybody's future is planed
Is fe get a big-time job	Is to get a big-time job
An settle in de motherlan	And settle in the motherland

(Bennett, 1982b: 106f)

As suggested by Cooper, the use of the word 'plan' corresponds to a particular intent in both active and passive senses:

> The placement of 'plan' at the end of a line that optimistically asserts the anticipated benefits of migration - everybody's future is planned - seems conclusively to confirm the almost proverbial certainty of expected success. But the reading of 'plan' as an active verb is immediately revised in the next line which turns 'plan' into a somewhat more passive noun of intention (Cooper, 1993: 176).

That repositioning allows the word to function alternatively. Thus, Miss Lou applies 'plan,' so it aptly reflects both the naivete and pretensions of the West Indian newcomers. Due to unfavourable socio-economic circumstances at home, the wildly exaggerated prospect of England promising real financial and social benefits may seem incredibly alluring. However, immigrants are chiefly oblivious that they are entering a hostile new environment that will make their experiences anything but 'joyful.'

Many Caribbean writers adopted different writing modes in ways that negotiated some of the paradoxes of home and exile. The journeys and experiences of fellow West Indians headed to England searching for opportunities denied them at home are also chronicled in George Lamming's *The Emigrants* (1954). The series shares similarities with Miss Lou's "Colonisation in Reverse" in that most of the migrants are unskilled, from poor backgrounds and "the same darkness" as recalled

by Lamming himself (cf. Williams, 1982: 205). The racism and colour issues are all too familiar to Lamming, and we note his comment that "to be black in the West Indies is to be poor" (Lamming, 1960: 33).

Cooper emphasises the collective experience of deferred dreams at home that often leads to migration: "Indeed it is the common poverty of British subjects in the commonwealth that precipitates the mass reverse colonisation process" (Cooper, 1993: 176). As such, the rhetoric of exile often appears as "a text of many distinctive, and perhaps, even disparate narratives" (Brah, 1996: 183). But in Frank Schulze-Engler's articulation, the disparateness of these narratives either "militates against or constructs a recognisable 'rhetoric' of exile" (2009: 242).

One of the most elemental questions asked by writers in the Caribbean diaspora is 'Where do I belong?' as they yearn to feel a sense of belonging. Schulze-Engler (2009: 242) addresses the pervasive theme of rootlessness in Caribbean literature:

> It is not surprising that in early poems exile should be articulated as a painful experience and that the notion of home should remain unquestioned: one belongs to the place one comes from and remains a stranger in the host country (this sense of 'unbelonging' is obviously also exacerbated by the experience of racism).

These stories explore the different facets of life abroad and echo the despair of the Caribbean writer living through uncertain conditions. Schulze-Engler (2009: 242) cites Una Marson's dialect verse "Quashie Comes to London" as she testifies to a sense of loss and never being quite at home. For more insightful readings of the migrant figure in "Quashie Comes to London," an earlier model for Miss Lou's "Colonisation in Reverse," see (Marson, 1937: 21). The poem passes on to the reader allusions to a disconnect with London and missing home, a story often repeated by others even decades later.

The recent 2018 Windrush Scandal shows that "it is not the crossing but the arrival that is remembered" (Mead, 2009). Even though the British government appealed to migrant workers from its former colonies in the West Indies to help rebuild its weakened economy and appeared welcoming, in reality, many newcomers ended up homeless, vulnerable and exploited by the system. What is more striking, the Windrush generation "may have had British passports, may have been citizens of the

United Kingdom and Colonies, but because they were black, they were not and never could be British to the first degree" (Mead, 2009).

The arrival of English settlers in Jamaica in the seventeenth century is similar to the influx of Jamaicans to England in the mid-twentieth century. Both scenarios result from opportunism. To clarify, the word "settle" in the lines "Some will settle down to work/ An some will settle fi de dole" can be interpreted differently (Bennett, 1982b: 106f). As can be seen, "The migration of the word from one meaning to another - "to establish a colony", "to take up residence," and finally "to be content with" - is emblematic of the shifts in the direction of the poem's irony" (Ramazani, 2002: 127).

Shortly after arriving in England, the character Jane intends to exploit the welfare system and claim her right to benefits. She reports that the British government is paying her "Two pounds a week fi seek a job/ Dat suit her dignity" (Two pounds a week to seek a job/ That suit her dignity). Miss Lou immediately dismisses Jane's excuses for remaining unemployed as she has a reputation for laziness and unwillingness to find a job. She pokes fun at Jane for her tardiness with the taunting remark:

Me seh Jane will never fine work	I said Jane will never find work
At de rate how she dah look,	At the rate she is looking
For all day she stay pon	Because all day she stays on
Aunt Fan couch	Aunt Fan's couch
An read love-story book	And reads a love-story book

(Bennett, 1982b: 106f)

In addition to claiming social benefits payments from her coloniser, Jane also adopts the pompous welfare language about preserving her dignity. It is accurate to say that Jane, like so many other immigrants living in England from Britain's former colonies, has already started the process of reverse colonisation. The ecstatic mood of the poem trails off, revealing the truth that Jane has become a financial parasite instead of a productive worker in England.

The poem also deals with another aspect of the migrant experience in the 1960s; the irony of independence. As former British subjects, Jamaican citizens now seize the opportunity to reconcile economic and financial losses and figuratively "box

bread/ Outta English people mout" (box bread/ Out of English people's mouth) (Bennett, 1982b: 106f). The Jamaican expression, which means to deprive someone of their 'bread' or primary means of support, indicates a transformation and transition from the oppressive system of colonial subjectivity to freedom and opportunity. Framing the irony of the evolving issues, Miss Lou exaggerates the situation as a "tunabout" (turnabout):

> Oonoo see how life is funny? You see how life is funny?
> Oonoo see da turnabout? You see that turnabout?
> (Bennett, 1982b: 106f)

There is much fervour among Jamaicans for migration to England, "Fi immigrate an populate/ De seat a de Empire" (To immigrate and populate/ The seat of the Empire) (Bennett, 1982b: 106f). However, the realities of adapting to living in England are unpleasant. For decades Caribbean writers have been writing about living in England and addressing the issues of unemployment, xenophobia and racism and feelings of separation that overshadow their migrant experiences. This brings us to another important point worth noting in this discussion.

"Colonisation in Reverse" also marks a turning point in the Caribbean literary tradition. Until Louise Bennett disrupted the Caribbean literary space in the 1950s, "for many decades the literary experience of Caribbean displacement and exile has been mainly narrated and represented by male voices" (Ruiz, 2012: 37). Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz sees a radical shift from the "so-called 'Windrush generation,' which conventionally marks the beginning of the Caribbean literary tradition through the work of male intellectuals migrating to the mother country and contributing to the 1950s and 1960s literary boom" (Ruiz, 2012: 37). In particular, Bennett is countering:

> The "myth of foundation" of Caribbean literature has reproduced and transmitted the stereotyped gender roles assigning men the honour and responsibility of creating a literary tradition through migration, and to women the silent function of inspiring muse or transposed image of the island mother celebrated in exile (Ruiz, 2012: 38).

Usually, men migrated, so most transatlantic Caribbean intellectuals were unsurprising of this gender. This pioneering generation is well represented by V.S.

Naipaul, George Lamming, Samuel Selvon, Andrew Salkey and Wilson Harris.

Nonetheless, "Colonisation in Reverse" is an effective satire. Bennett uses humour to do more than ridiculing those who subscribe to the concept of 'Englishness' but features tactics Jamaicans like the character Jane employ as a survival strategy. Bennett also compels her audience to recognise the snide remarks from British citizens arising from the fear that Britain would soon be overwhelmed by unwanted migrants. This is especially true of television historian David Starkey, who laments the social and cultural impact of the Jamaican language on Britain. He bemoans the influence of Patois and dwells on the fact that it has transformed social interaction among certain groups:

> Black and white, boy and girl, operate in this language together, this language which is wholly false, which is this Jamaican patois that's been intruded in England, and this is why so many of us have this sense of literally a foreign country (Starkey, 2011).

In "Colonisation in Reverse," Bennett's "irony oscillates in the gap between a series of mirror-like oppositions - between coloniser and colonised, centre and metropole, white and black, dialect and standard" (Ramazani, 2002: 128). Accordingly, the "ironic inversions" implicit in the conflicts and contradictions subsumed in the language reiterate the sensitivity that postcolonial reality is "sameness-with-a-difference" (Ramazani, 2002: 128).

Hard-time Still Een Wi Shut

In poems that examine the economic disparities, income and poor living conditions affecting many Jamaican citizens, Bennett demonstrates an incredible mastery in her tone of voice and articulation. "Dutty Tough", one of her most humorous yet sensitive poems, meticulously details the extent of living in extreme poverty and tackles individual circumstances directly. The speaker fervently relates the plight of Jamaica's poor in a very candid and explicit form of complaint. The distressing utterances by the speaker in the first and last lines of the opening stanza carry a similar tone and produce the same agonising effect:

Sun a shine but tings no bright	Sun is shining but things are not bright

Doah pot a bwile, bickle no nuff	Though the pot boils, food is not enough
River flood but water scarce, yawl	River is flooding but water is scarce
Rain a fall but dutty tough	Rain is falling but the ground is dry

(Bennett, 1966b: 25f).

Brathwaite argues that English sound patterns often become nativised in dialect poetry. He cites as an example the first lines of the poem where Miss Lou uses African loan words, 'noh, nuff, and yaw' establishing a counterpoint playing against the iambic meter (cf. Hayes, 2022: 161). The phrase 'rain a fall but dutty tuff' echoes 'mi belly full but me hungry.' These proverbs can be examined from the perspective of someone dealing with drought and water scarcity and coping with abject poverty.

Bennett uses descriptive words and a serious tone to provide insight into the harsh economic realities that offer little hope or opportunity for many Jamaicans. The dichotomy of hope and despair is intended to evoke positive and negative emotions revealing that vulnerable individuals at risk of becoming poor or remaining poor are subjected to the perils in the present state of affairs. Miss Lou reveals their lamentable plight: "We dah fight, hard time a-beat we" (We are fighting, hard times are beating us) (Bennett, 1966b: 25f). Morris explains that independence does not instantly transform the economy and generate prosperity for the poor: "Hard Time is personified. Hard Time is "eena we shut" (penetrates our shirts) and "beat we"; is, in other words, a slave master, lashing the backs of the poor" (cf. Bennett, 1982d: 130).

Whereas "Dutty Tough" is a sorrowful poem that echoes the resounding cry of desperation, Bennett would be certainly remiss not to include a bit of humour. For instance, she complains that the price of bread is unconscionably excessive, forcing people to avoid it purposely:

De price a bread gwan up	The price of bread has gone up
So high	So high
Dat we haffi agree	That we have to agree
Fi cut we yeye pon bread and all	To cut our eyes at bread and all
Tun dumpling refugee!	Turn dumpling refugee!

In a surprising twist, Miss Lou indicates mockingly that skinny people who usually mock her due to her large frame will now be forced to eat dumplings due to unreasonable price increases of food staples. The lines read thus:

An all dem marga smaddy weh	And all those skinny people who
Dah gwan like fat is sin,	Are acting like fat is sin
All dem-deh weh dah fas wid me	All those who are being rude to me
Ah lef dem to dumplin!	I will leave them to dumpling!

(Bennett, 1966b: 25f)

Not only does the comparison between 'marga' and 'fat' relate to the verbal and emotional abuse attacking her well-rounded figure, but it also reflects self-mockery.

Almost immediately, in a cunning rearrangement of the lines, the speaker's voice reverts to anguish and frustration. In the opening stanza, Miss Lou alternatives between optimistic and the drearier expressions:

Sun a shine	Sun is shining
An a pot a bwile, but	And a pot is boiling, but
Tings no bright	Things are not bright
bickle no nuff	Food is not enough
Rain a fall,	Rain is falling
River dah flood, but	River is flooding, but
Water scarce and	Water is scarce and
Dutty tough	The ground is dry

(Bennett, 1966b: 25f).

This simple arrangement is repeated throughout the poem to represent contradicting statements and is repeated predictably in subsequent lines. The dualism of 'hope and despair' is the common theme in the poem "Dutty Tough" as Miss Lou explores poverty and future uncertainties in Jamaica.

There are instances when some of the themes of Bennett's pre-independence dialect verse aligned with Reggae songs written decades later. Klive Walker highlights the apparent thematic similarities within "Sun-a-shine but tings noh bright" and "No sun will shine in my day today," the opening lines to Miss Lou's "Dutty Tough" and Bob Marley's "Concrete Jungle" (2005: 74). Furthermore, Walker cites the lines "A rain a fall but dutty tuff / A pot a cook but the food noh

nuff from Marley's "Them Belly Full" as the updated version of "Rain a-fall but dutty tuff / Doah pot a-bwile, bickle noh nuff" from "Dutty Tough" (2005: 74). It is worth mentioning that Reggae has allegorical resonances linked to Louise Bennett's poetry and is heavily influenced by her use of Patois as an artistic medium. Such influences are evident where Reggae composers use the conspicuous Jamaican folk idioms in their compositions, thus casting the spotlight on Jamaican folklore that Miss Lou often promoted.

Yuh Haffi Come From Some Weh Fus

The subject of migration is again revisited in "Back to Africa." Except, this time, Bennett takes on the divisive discourse of the 'Back to Africa' crusade that is strongly influenced by the Rastafari movement. We will explore this subject in greater detail in chapter five. Miss Matty's role in "Back to Africa" is not only the silent listener in Miss Lou's dramatic monologue but also a sympathiser of the Rastafarians and their demands for repatriation to Africa.

Bennett posits that absolute chaos will ensue if every Jamaican demands to return to their ancestral homeland. On the other hand, Miss Matty expresses a great desire to go back to Africa but is abruptly interrupted by the speaker, who advises that she might want to rethink her migration plan. Bennett (1966a: 104) warns:

Back to Africa, Miss Matty?	Back to Africa, Miss Matty?
Yuh noh know wha yuh dah-seh?	Do you know what you're saying?
Yuh haffi come	You have to come
From some weh fus	From somewhere first
Before yuh go back deh!	Before you go back there

The speaker tries to convince Miss Matty that she cannot simply return home. In fact, despite what Miss Matty would have us believe, she is not an African, but instead, she was born and raised in Jamaica. Although she can trace her African lineage through her "great great great Gramma" (Great-great-great Grandma), the speaker reminds her, "doan yuh great great great Grampa was an Englishman?" (Wasn't your Great-great-great Grandpa an Englishman?) (Bennett, 1966a: 104). Emphasising Miss Matty's European heritage, the torment continues:

Den is weh you gwine, Miss Matty?	Then where are you going, Miss Matty?

Oh, you view de countenance,	Oh, you notice the colour of your skin?
An between yuh an de Africans	And between you and the Africans
Is great resemblance!	There is great resemblance
(Bennett, 1966a: 104)	

While Miss Matty represents vehement advocates of Africa repatriation, the speaker repeatedly derides and berates such controversial issues. The common Patois word 'gwine' seen in the expression "Den is weh you gwine, Miss Matty?" is interpreted 'going to' and functions the same as the English verb 'going' (Bennett, 1966a: 104). Given the context of the dialogue, the literal translation renders the question, "Then is where you going to, Miss Matty?" (Bennett, 1966a: 104). Other Patois words, 'den' and 'mus' featured in "Back to Africa" have the English equivalent 'then' 'and' 'must.' It is interesting to note there are certain expressions in Jamaican Creole that have no English equivalent.

An enduring legacy of colonisation and slavery, colonial mentality embodies internalised oppression in blacks and the notion of racial and cultural inferiority. This subject has been thoroughly discussed in chapter one (Césaire, 1972; Fanon, 1963, 1967; Memmi, 1991). Therefore, the challenge for Bennett is to construct counter-narratives that respond to the inequitable assumptions that mark the colonised as inferior and degenerate.

No Massa, Noting No Go So

Negative attitudes to the Jamaican dialect are expressed from different perspectives in "Bans A Killin" and "Noh Lickle Twang" (Bennett, 1982d). Ramazani describes "Bans A Killin" as "an apt treatise for a vast array of postcolonial poets from the former British colonies who reclaim oral cultures and foster a participatory approach to cultural regeneration through performance" (2002: 167). Rex Nettleford's statement that "Bans [a] Killin' stands on its own as a kind of declaration of Bennett's belief in the strength and inner consistency of the language which she has chosen for her art" is to some extent an introduction rather than a critical judgment of her poem (cf. Bennett, 1966f: 22). Such conclusions are drawn from Miss Lou's skilful use of ordinary folk and folk speech. She employs "gossip-or labrish-based knowledge, produced and exchanged in the female realm of the Jamaican

yard" to unmask the hypocritical behaviour of male colonial figures engaged in and committed to language death as Mass Charlie (Ramazani:114).

Miss Lou's persona mocks Mass Charlie, who thought it was his duty to write to the editor of the Jamaica Gleaner objecting to Miss Lou's dialect verse in the poetry column and threatening to "kill dialec" (Bennett, 1982a). Ramazani takes issue with the conflict-generating nature of Mass Charlie's plot, which he finds self-destructive:

> Repeated through much of the poem, the verb "kill" at first represents the vehemence and violence of Mas Charlie's dialectophobia. But as the poem shows that the word's objects would logically have to include not only Jamaican but other dialects…"kill" becomes the ironic emblem of his imploding viewpoint. Far from narrowly targeting an ignorant group, his violent impulse turns out to be indiscriminate and finally self-directed (2002: 112).

Mass Charlie reiterates the claim that "creole talk…both in pronunciation and in diction, is anything but elegant" (Cassidy, 1961: 22). He has such determination to obliterate African dialects. Conversely, Bennett fervently asserts Patois as authentic cultural expression and interrogates Mass Charlie's contentious opinion that it is mere confusion and corrupted speech.

She accosts Mass Charlie in an arrogant and scornful tone:

Soh yuh a de man me hear bout!	So you're the man I heard about!
Ah yuh dem seh dah teck	It is you, they say, is taking
Whole heap a English oat seh dat	Lots of English oath saying that
Yuh gwine kill dialec!	You are going to kill dialect! (Bennett, 1982a: 4f)

The speaker is mystified by Mass Charlie's adverse reaction to the Jamaican dialect and the resulting bias and discrimination against its speakers. To use Adler's 'Redeemer Theory,' Mass Charlie "conspicuously" exhibits a patronising mannerism. By this Mass Charlie reaffirms his moral duty arising from the necessity for the separation of English and dialectal varieties to "save or redeem" the uncivilised world of savages (Adler et al., 1956: 74).

Questions arise concerning the privileging of English and the discourses justifying English language imperialism. Miss Lou exposes Mass Charlie's underhanded and condescending comments:

Meck me get it straight	Let me get it straight
Mass Charlie	Mass Charlie
For me no quite understan	Because I don't quite understand
Yuh gwine kill all English dialect	Are you going to kill all English dialect
Or just Jamaica one?	Or just the Jamaican one?

(Bennett, 1982a: 4f)

Bennett reminds Mass Charlie that around AD 500, English, a language which enjoys a privileged status today, was nothing more than "a collection of dialects spoken by marauding Germanic tribes who settled in the part of the British Isles nearest the European continent" (Svartvik and Leech, 2016: 7). She believes Mass Charlie's contemptuous characterisation of Patois is entirely disingenuous and seriously misguided. The questioning continues:

Dah language weh yuh proud a	That language that you are proud of
Weh yuh honour an respeck	That you honour and respect
Po Mass Charlie!	Poor Mass Charlie!
Yuh noh know sey	You did not know
Dat it spring from dialect!	That it springs from dialect!

(Bennett, 1982a: 4f)

Her probe immediately weakens Mass Charlie's claims. Millward (1989: 367) advises that "diversity among the regional dialects of England, particularly in pronunciation, is greater than in any other part of the world where English is spoken as a native language." Moreover, Bennett offers some insight into the transformation of literary writing form and style during the Middle English period in the fourteenth century. Although English is the everyday speech of the British Isles, French enjoys the status of overt prestige and remains the *lingua franca* in educated or wealthy circles. By the time Shakespeare's dramatic works appeared in print, there was no standardised spelling, giving writers complete discretion to conceive their own orthography relying on logic.

The speaker implies that Patois is the common language of Jamaicans and can effectively communicate feelings and emotions in the same way as Standard English. The extent of Bennett's frustration with critics who generally do not appreciate authentic folklore and unfairly disparage Patois as a 'corrupt' expression is evident. Cooper (1993: 40) points out in her study of the poem:

> A di Norman French an di Greek an di Latin we dem se English 'derived from'. Unu hear di wod? English 'derive' but Jamaica 'corrupt'. No massa, noting no go so. We not 'corrupt', an dem 'derive.' We derive to Jamaica derive."

Cooper questions the logic of English language imperialism maintained by hegemonic practices and colonial language policies in Jamaica, citing the transformation from old English to the present. In "Bans A Killin," the speaker shows that the English language has changed throughout history to reflect elements from a larger number of foreign language influences, much more than in the newly formed Patois. Nonetheless, Patois is relegated as inferior to English and given an informal classification because of the degree of influence from West African languages.

There is also a concern about excluding "de Lancashire/De Yorkshire, de Cockney/De broad Scotch and de Irish brogue" (Bennett, 1982a: 4f). The coloniser's attempt to manipulate the local culture, dehumanise and 'kill' non-standard varieties help reinforce the inferior position of the 'Other'. As we discussed before, Patois is discriminated against as 'slave talk' and 'barefoot language' that encourages backwardness and is only spoken by illiterate people. For this reason, the sigma around Patois can hinder social mobility in Jamaica and has implications for employment prospects.

The speaker disapproves of Mass Charlie's repressive policies against Jamaican Creole and his overt campaign to rid English of all traces of foreign influences, essentially threatening the very foundations of the language. Indeed, the speaker warns Mass Charlie:

Yuh wi haffi get de Oxford Book	You will have to get the Oxford Book
A English verse, an tear	An English verse, and tear
Out Chaucer, Burns, Lady Grizelle	Out Chaucer, Burns, Lady Grizelle
An plenty a Shakespeare!	And a lot of Shakespeare!
When yuh done kill	When you are re done killing
'Wit' an 'humour'	Wit' and 'humour'
When yuh kill 'variety'	When you kill 'variety'
Yuh wi haffi fine a way fi kill	You will have to find a way to kill
Originality!	Originality!

(Bennett, 1982a: 4f)

Mass Charlie's wanton disregard for Jamaican Creole subdues creativity and deepens cultural and national identity tensions. The poem refocuses attention on the issues of preserving folklore and traditional knowledge stemming from the problems of cultural revitalisation. Bennett's earlier poem looks ahead to John Agard's "Listen Mr Oxford Don" (1985: 44). These two dialect verses are connected in their basic theme, a confrontation with the cultural establishment.

"Bans A Killin" conveys Miss Lou's exceptional ability to create humour and evoke laughter in response to the conflicting ideologies influencing language practices in Jamaica. The speaker contends that language purists deride Patois, the everyday speech of Jamaicans, even though it is an English dialect that captures the diversity of Standard English. The speaker in "Bans a Killin" expresses grave concern over the suppression of Patois, which ironically places people like Mass Charlie whose ordinary language is English, in a serious dilemma:

An mine how yuh	And be careful how you
Dah read dem English	Are reading those English
Book deh pon yuh shelf	Books on your shelf
For ef yuh drop a "h"	Because if you drop an "h"
Yuh mighta	You might
Haffi kill yuhself!	Have to kill yourself

(Bennett, 1982a: 4f)

The last stanza appears somewhat confusing but indicates a relevant clue that unmasks Mass Charlie's true identity. Ramazani (2002: 112) concludes that Mass Charlie's pronouncement becomes an interesting focal point at this stage:

> If Mass Charlie lets his guard down and drops an 'h' he might reveal himself as a Jamaican speaker, for all his hyper corrective efforts. In this climactic rhyme, the ironic disjuncture between the poet's dialectophobic perspective is at its sharpest and wittiest [...] to drop a 'h' would be to commit such a shameful mistake that he might have to redirect upon himself his ferocious desire to "kill" dialect [...] the poet suggests the opposite meaning by her rhyme: that to drop 'h' would be for Mass Charlie finally to climb down from his high "self" and give life to his Jamaican "self."

Miss Lou uses poetry to depict the subjugation of Patois and the social status designated to its speaker. She recognises Patois as a language of distinct expressions

largely unrepresented in English and the significance of the oral lore as authentic expressions of Jamaican culture. Moreover, Patois relates how Jamaicans articulate their thoughts and experiences. Bennett tries to dismantle the discourses that promote cultural domination through language by initiating thought-provoking counter-narratives to language imperialism. Bennett's persona in "Bans A Killin" is emphatic that, because both Patois and English contain known foreign language influences, speakers of Patois, despite its marginal position, are just as 'civilised' as speakers of Standard English.

"Dry-Foot Bwoy" is a return narrative that journeys into the subtle and distinct psychological landscape of Cudjoe, internally oppressed by colonial conditioning. Unlike other poems where several different characters serve as Miss Lou's mouthpiece, Donnell and Lawson suspect that "The situation is presented through the poet as storyteller rather than directly through characters" (1996: 196). The speaker shows disdain for Cudjoe, who has returned to Jamaica with "a bad case of linguistic amnesia" (Lodge, 2017: 666):

Wha wrong wid	What is wrong with
Mary, dry-foot bwoy?	Mary's dry-foot boy?
Dem gal got him fi mock	The girls have him as a joke
An when me	And when I
Meet him tarra night	Met him the other night
De bwoy gi me a shock!	The boy game me a shock!

(Bennett, 1982c: 1f)

Cudjoe, who speaks with a pompous British accent, is ridiculed, and his condescending tone makes the speaker feel annoyed and insulted. Although initially, the speaker expresses some level of concern for his health, it is only a momentary interest because she soon realises that his acquired foreign accent interferes with his pronunciation and enunciation:

Me start fe feel so sorry fe	I started to feel so sorry for
De po bad-lucky soul	The poor unlucky soul
Me tink him come a foreign-lan	I thought he came to a foreign land
Come ketch bad foreign cole!	Come catch bad foreign cold
Me tink him get a bad sore-troat	I thought he had a bad sore-throat

But as him chat-chat gwan	But as be continued to talk
Me fine out seh is foreign twang	I found out it was a foreign twang
De bwoy was a put awn!	The boy was putting on

(Bennett, 1982c: 1f)

The satirical emphasis of the poem concentrates on a fellow villager Miss Mary whose son, Jamaican born and raised and well known to all, refuses to communicate with anyone in Jamaican Creole. The speaker, frustrated with Cudjoe's seemingly uncharacteristic behaviour, shouts angrily: "Bwoy kir out!/ No chat to me wid no hot pittata/ Eena yuh mout!" (Boy go to hell /Don't talk to me with hot potato/ In your mouth) (Bennett, 1982c: 1f). The famous Jamaican phrase "hot pittata/eena yuh mout" means to speak rapidly and frantically.

In response to the criticism, Cudjoe answers:

How silley!
I don't think that I really
Understand you, actually
(Bennett, 1982c: 1f).

The irate speaker is baffled by Cudjoe's uptight behaviour and ponders whether he is the same person she has known since childhood. The speaker recalls earlier days when Cudjoe would frequently stop by "Nana," a word for referring to the elderly, and "Gi laugh fi gungoo soup!"(Joke around and have fun) (Bennett, 1982c: 1f). For this reason, it is shocking and alarming that Cudjoe appears awkward and uncomfortable with his community.

Towards the end of Bennett's dramatic monologue, Cudjoe's duplicity becomes apparent, and the speaker realises that he is merely pretending to appear more intelligent than everyone else. The speaker asks slyly, "Wha happen to dem sweet Jamaica/ Joke yuh use fi pop?" (What happened to those sweet Jamaican jokes you used to give?) as she reminisced about Cudjoe when he was fun-loving and cheerful (Bennett, 1982c: 1f). The speaker appears emotional, and the reader detects Miss Lou's characteristic witty and dramatic tone in "Dry-Foot Bwoy." Jamaicans who acculturate to the predominantly white British values and behaviours are epitomised by the fictional character Cudjoe in Miss Lou's implicit satire. She unleashes a critique of the embodied notion of the dominance of English, a language that promotes

imperialist influences. Her work demonstrates the adaptability and flexibility of Jamaican Creole: "You can twist it, you can express yourself so much more strongly and vividly than in Standard English" (Scott, 1968: 97).

Miss Lou demonstrates disconsolation by reversing the typical dramatic situation of "Dry-Foot Bwoy" in "No Lickle Twang" says (Ramazani, 2002). How dramatic then are the disgruntled mother's words that seem to endorse those values imposed by the dominant language as she angrily confronts her son.

> Here the speaker is the alazon, sharing a negative view of Jamaican English with the dry-foot boy and Mas Charlie, but her vivid creole ironizes her foolish sense of inferiority about her indigenous language (2-4). Like Mas Charlie and the dry-foot boy, she has internalised the linguistic hierarchy that elevates the Standard English of the metropolitan center (now the United States) above the "bad," creolized talk at the margins (Ramazani, 2002: 115).

Miss Lou's "Noh Lickle Twang" offers a vivid evocation of social status and the tendency for Jamaicans to mirror clear biases toward their own language, neglecting the importance of Patois to their cultural identity. The female speaker appears as a Jamaican parent, constrained by cultural expectations and naturally disappointed when her son returns from a brief trip abroad and speaks without the enviable American accent. Miss Lou relates the mother's bias against her own language due to the perception that English has more prestige. Although the speaker welcomes her son with "Mi glad fe see yuh come back, bwoy" (I am glad to see you come back, boy), her voice quickly grows louder, emitting a sound of disappointment (Bennett, 1982a: 4f):

But lawd, yuh let me dung	But Lord, you let me down
Me shame a yuh so till all a	I am so ashamed of you, till all
Me proudness drop a grung	My pride fell to the ground
Yuh mean yuh goh dah 'Merica	You mean you went to America
An spen six whole mont' deh,	And spent six whole months there
An come back not a piece betta	And came back not one piece better
Dan how yuh did goh wey?	Than how you left here?
Bwoy yuh noh shame?	Boy, you not ashamed?

Is soh you come?	Is that how you are?
Afta yuh tan soh lang!	After you stayed so long!
Not even lickle language bwoy?	Not even a little language boy?
Not even little twang?	Not even a little twang?

The mother judges her son as a let-down compared to his sister, who appears to have adopted the American accent and assimilated effortlessly within American society. An emotionally distraught speaker, much upset and feeling disgraced, erupts in anger:

An yuh sista wat work ongle	And your sister who worked only
One week wid Merican	One week with Americans
She talk so nice now dat we have	She talks so nice now that we have
De jooce fe understan	The juice to understand

(Bennett, 1982a: 4f)

Miss Lou pokes fun at the mother, who does not indicate that she struggles to understand when her daughter speaks with a superficial foreign accent. The mother endorses English in preference to Patois, helping boost her daughter's self-esteem in social circles by her ability to 'talk nice.' In these circumstances, English loses its implied significance and is transformed into a mere 'twang' used to impress high-minded individuals with social aspirations.

The poem highlights several factors to infer that the speaker is not just focused on the language her son speaks authentically or lacks. Her offensive ridicule indicates deep distress in the line: "Bwoy, yuh couldn improve yuhself!/An yuh get soh much pay?" (Boy, you couldn't improve yourself!/ And you got so much pay?) (Bennett, 1982a: 4f). In Jamaica, the desire to travel abroad equates to improved socio-economic status associated with wealth, a refined appearance, and cultural exposure. Therefore, the speaker's son returning from America is expected to be outfitted in the latest clothing trends: "a drapes trousiz, or/ A pass de riddim coat?" (a draped trousers, or/ A pass the rhythm coat?) (Bennett, 1982a: 4f).

Bennett uses hidden word clues in the expression "pass de riddim coat" to denote a type of coat that 'passes' or falls below the 'de riddim' or buttocks. Likewise, a selection of accessories, including "gole teet" (gold teeth) and "gole chain roun yuh troat" (gold chain around your neck), instantly add an extra touch of glamour. Each

is seen as a status symbol and regarded as proof of higher socioeconomic status (Bennett, 1982a: 4f). As a result, the speaker feels disappointment at the revelation that her son "spen six mont a foreign, an/ Come back ugly same way?" (spent six months abroad, and/ Came back ugly just the same?) (Bennett, 1982a: 4f). One gets the impression that somehow "The persona of the poem deems it better to be impressive than to be intelligible - a comment not only on attitudes to language but also on colonial reverence for whatever comes from abroad" (Benson and Conolly, 1994: 114).

The speaker worries that villagers will soon become aware of her son's predicament, and she will become the subject of rude and mocking remarks. The line "Dem hooda laugh after me" (They would laugh at me) illustrates the speaker's fears of becoming an object of ridicule (Bennett, 1982a: 4f). She also fears people will assume that her son did not travel to America but "spen time back a Mocho," another community in rural Jamaica. "Not even lickle language, bwoy?" (Not even little accent boy?) the speaker asks, as she continues to berate her son (Bennett, 1982a: 4f).

"Noh Lickle Twang," Miss Lou's poem on language attitudes in Jamaica, tackles the colonial mindset and its influences on self-identity and highlights some of the issues confronting the literary representation of Jamaican Creole. The poem attempts to convey powerful feelings and provides profound insights about Jamaicans, exalting the virtues of English and castigating anyone who speaks the everyday language.

Kezia Page (2010: 49) reads "No Likkle Twang" and "Dry foot Bwoy" as complementary poems wherein Miss Lou "contraposes in the voice of the folk who stayed at home, two satirical responses to migrants returning home." The theme of language in differing contexts complements and expands upon Miss Lou's more general reference to the separation between the civil and uncivil and the cultured and uncultured in Jamaican culture. In both poems, Patois retains a contemptuous signification for both Cudjoe, the returnee in "Dry Foot Bwoy," and the distressed mother in "No Likkle Twang." This is keeping with the mentality that Patois is the fragmentary remnant of African savages. What is certain is Miss Lou dramatises

the tensions between the Jamaican folk speech and Standard English with a juxtaposition of two contrasting views of "the insignia of exile" (Page, 2010: 49).

> There is the one who has returned - as it were, remitted himself to the Caribbean - without anything to show for it in the form of a "twang," a linguistic altering that would have been the signal that he has returned not fully Jamaican but partly English. Then there is the persona who has returned carrying exactly the "twang" that the other has failed to acquire or achieve. This persona is equally castigated for losing his identity—in other words, for failing to employ the insignia of exile that would have shown his psychological strength and national, anti-colonial affiliation (Page, 2010: 49).

Page argues that the two poems contribute to the debate on language and social integration from a postcolonial perspective by providing essential socio-cultural and historical context. Viewed from a different angle Miss Lou's approach summarises this entire debate. Here we are provided with specific examples of "people's awareness of the complexities of claiming (reverse colonisation), belonging (diasporization) and exile (home commitment) created by migrancy, and the ways they retained the right to judge the remitted products of all three" (Page, 2010: 49). The poems share a key element in that ordinary folk are aware of the perceived inferiority of their mother tongue. They see in it the degradation and disillusion of their own identity.

The significance of Patois in Bennett's dramatic monologues is a compelling way of characterisation, especially how characters speak and how they register displaced anxieties about postcolonialism. Bennett situates her poems in place whilst identifying the distinct socio-cultural peculiarities that exist, in different ways, between Britain and Jamaica. This very creative and well-strategised ploy is used for transforming the protracted struggle to decolonise English, an attempt to eliminate the obstacles posed by the extraordinarily dominant and pervasive colonial discourse. Ultimately, Bennett uses dialect poetry to explicate Jamaica's validity as a poetic place, retell its colonial history and its experience of colonisation and help bring about "the change in language consciousness which gave rise to the notion that patois language existed" (Cooper, 1993: 280). Perhaps Louise Bennett's insistence on 'Jamaicanness' and the African narrative tradition exemplifies what Ngugi

wants to permit in terms of using the everyday language for local literature and cultural production (1986).

At the start of her career, Miss Lou struggles to describe her own experiences with her voice and on her own terms, constantly contending with Eurocentric constructions that designate coarse and irrational indigenous language expressions. Indeed, Miss Lou is occupied with the struggle to find her own voice in light of attempts to suppress expressions in the mother tongue and indigenous cultural practices. When she eventually recovers her silenced voice, she starts counteracting the unsettling renderings that support the thesis of cultural hegemony, reinterpreting it as manipulation and deception.

Frustrated by language purist adulation of English which has led to the marginalisation of Patois to function primarily as the language of a poor, uneducated Jamaican, Bennett rebuffs the unnecessarily narrow, almost perfunctory concept of English language domination. Her general contempt of English seeks to undermine and dismantle an alien language, validate and promote the prototypical indigenous language, and broaden or introduce the idea of a new Creole aesthetic and linguistic forms in Caribbean literature.

Before proceeding to the next chapter, it is important to bear in mind that the indigenisation of language and the radical redefinition of culture are significant themes that have emerged in the postcolonial literary scholarship. Though stylistic differences in the dramatic monologues and songs fall outside the purview of traditional literary analysis, the current study takes advantage of postcolonial categories of interpretation to help us clarify the writer's struggle with identity in the performance texts. In chapter Five, we discover that the impetus for an Afro-Jamaican aesthetic and the absorption of these vernacular forms into popular culture is aided by the speech of Rastafarians, Dread Talk. It, too, sets out to transform the fundamental underpinnings of cultural hegemony. Through a postcolonial lens, Rastafari demands a rethinking of cultural authenticity.

I also want to emphasise that there is a scarcity of academic comments on the younger Roots Reggae artists similar to Louise Bennett in her early career. She was likewise marginalised for showing us the potential of the Afro-Jamaican aesthetic and revitalising the traditional modes of folk expression. In addition, this

researcher has decided not to dedicate much space for thoroughly discussing Bob Marley and others. This is not a gap in the study's argument. They are mentioned but for obvious reasons, with less emphasis here.

Chapter 5: Recentring the Margin: The Rastafarians of Jamaica

The Rastafarian movement is perhaps the most profound outward expression of the aesthetic and the political in Jamaica. In the 1930s, Rastafari emerged as a powerful oppositional voice seeking to challenge neo-colonial aspirations for a 'new Jamaica' and the 'brown man' government so named because of its composition of the educated middle-class. Rastafari anti-colonial rhetoric of resistance and reconstruction of African identity remains a prominent discursive space even today. Through nonconformist practices contradictory to the value systems of European settlers, Rastafarianism resonates deeply. It supports the African liberation struggles of the 1960s to end racism, segregation and discrimination against blacks. To understand the history of the Rastafarian resistance movement, we first need to examine "those places where the slaves could apply various subversive practices and strategies to evince the active accomplishment of opposition and self-assertion, though they were held captive" (Zips and Frisch, 2009: 23).

Critics argue that colonialism reinforces exploitative relationships; it can be assumed that anti-colonial movements like Rastafarianism are embedded within the broader struggle against systematic oppression. If a slave is an 'objectified' entity obliged to obey its proprietor following the coloniser/colonised dichotomy advanced by Albert Memmi, the Rastafarian anti-colonial movement is thus civil disobedience (1991). The academic literature points to the history of the Rastafarian movement as a topic that has already been sufficiently investigated, albeit either "as an aberrant and exotic object of inquiry; as an eclectic and fragile plausibility structure; or as a potentially explosive social problem" (Johnson-Hill, 1995: 42). For further reading see (Albuquerque, 1976; Barnett, 2014; Chevannes, 1978; Simpson, 1955). I need not, therefore, repeat the same here.

This present chapter discusses how British spheres of influence frame idealised cultural models and the prejudice, social exclusion and discrimination of Rastafarians. A historical overview of the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica, complimented by Reggae and Dread Talk synthesis, helps us better appreciate transgressive modes of resistance. Although still evolving Dread Talk remains relevant in articulating postcolonial Jamaican identity as displaced and fragmented.

The Rastafarian movement is a blatant expression of counter-culture against British colonialism in Jamaica. The movement professes to continue the struggle against forms of domination and the influence of the bourgeoisie. Lamming shares the following sentiments:

> Rastafari has extended from a small and formerly undesirable cult into a dominant force which influences all levels of national life; and it has done so against formidable odds, political harassment and general condemnation. The Rastafari has dramatised the question that has always been uncomfortable in Caribbean history, and the question is where you stand in relation to blackness" (cf. Campbell, 1985: 1).

Like the rebel slaves who settled in the hilly interiors across rural Jamaica and established maroon communities, the Rastafarian movement denounces structures of domination through their unique language, distinctive physical appearance and disruptive cultural practices. In the same way, these escaped slaves were instrumental in launching slave revolts bringing about the 1838 abolition of slavery in Jamaica; the Rastafari has played an important role in development efforts in postcolonial Jamaica.

The Smadditization of Rasta

The history of colonisation provokes feelings of discontent and contributes to aggravation and dissatisfaction. Thomas Cooper reported in chapter one that the coloniser perpetually manipulates, degrades, and dehumanises enslaved Africans into submission physically and mentally (1824). Against the background of the 'civilising mission,' a slave becomes the legal property of its owner and is forced to relinquish its independence, becoming a "bare-footed serving wench" and remaining an abject dependent (Thackeray, 1892: 211). Under such restricted conditions, the African slave understood that the concept of freedom and independence did not exist. Their sole duty and obligation is obedience which can be accomplished only by loyalty to their master. Here again, we come across 'bare-footed' and are reminded immediately of the term 'barefoot' used in the title of this dissertation and why it was specifically chosen.

Horace Campbell (1985) identifies Rastafarianism as "The convergence of the heritage of the Maroons, the religious movement called Ethiopianism- and the

emergent Pan African movement." Others describe Rastafarianism as "a messianic movement unique to Jamaica" with "clear visions of where society should be going" (Barrett, 1988: 1). This means they have faced the challenge of redefining their subject position relative to the dominant centre and destabilising the unequal self/other dichotomy. The Jamaican environment is not always receptive to advocates and supporters of the movement, who are often ostracised and victimised based on their coded speech and unkempt appearance.

The counterculture Rastafari movement runs counter to the nationalist agenda of 1950s Jamaica, causing group members to be ostracised. Furthermore, people tend to evaluate 'Dread Talk,' the unique vocabulary of the Rastafarian community, as far too aggressive and, for the most part reflecting the ramblings of lunatics. The social awareness of Rastafari arises out of the lived experiences of racism, cultural manipulation and historical practices that ensure blacks would remain inferior and always see themselves as an oddity.

Charles Mills (1997: 55) describes "*smadditizin*" as the assertion of self-determination: "the struggle to have one's personhood recognised in a world where, primarily because of race, it is denied." The Rastafari language of protest, 'Dread Talk' in the context of Mills,' *'smadditizin'* concept, operates as a distinctive counter-hegemonic struggle for "their philosophical, spiritual and political identity" (Pollard, 1994: 81). We could look at the history of colonisation in Jamaica as a lens to view the transformative Rastafari struggle for freedom from colonial repression and the formidable attempt to be legitimised as '*smaddy*' (somebody). Therefore, the narrative of identity reconstruction and combating prevailing European ideals associating the black race with negative concepts are the genesis of Rastafari discourse.

The concept of '*smadditizin*' aligns with Rastafari efforts to reject imperial ethos and expose "the underlying lack of social conscience among the more fortunate classes in Jamaica" (Nettleford, 1978: 54). Rastafari is perhaps one of the most visible representations of resistance against any form of oppression in Jamaica's history. Belinda Edmonds (1998: 23) points to a need for approaching Rastafarian cultural analysis methodically:

> Any interpretation of the significance of Rastafari must begin with the understanding that it is a conscious attempt by the African soul to free itself from the alienating

> fetters of colonialism and its contemporary legacies. To accomplish this freedom, Rastas have unleashed an ideological assault on the culture and institutions that have dominated the African diaspora since the seventeenth century. In Rastafarian terms, this consists of 'beating down 'Babylon.' They have also embarked on an ambitious endeavour of 'steppin' outa (out of) Babylon' to create an alternative culture that reflects a sense of heritage.

Rastafarians embody the more radical approach of anti-colonial activists who present ideas of black pride, black unity, and self-determination, laying the foundation critical for the mobilisation of blacks in Jamaica. This involves reclaiming black subjectivity through a reconstruction of black culture to alleviate the psychological vestiges of British colonial rule. *Smadditizin'* redefines the 'Other' through a contemporary rereading of the European historical record and its profound effects in postcolonial terms and introduces a transformative view of Dread Talk as anti-colonial resistance. However, repressive structures upheld by the ruling upper-class complicate the attempts to disrupt discursive features of history regarding the exclusion of certain members of the society and problematise Rastafari struggle to exist as '*smaddy'*/somebody.

Marcus Garvey's Enduring Influence

Rastafarianism is fundamentally grounded in the teachings of Pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey, whose messages resonate with many blacks from marginalised communities both in Jamaica and the United States. The guiding principles of Pan-Africanism are the affirmation of black supremacy and unity for the reclamation of African ancestry and recovering the black identity. Proclaiming 'One God, One Aim, One Destiny', Garvey relates the aspirations of liberty and equality of opportunity for the black race. He aims to strengthen the lower position of people of African descent and instil racial pride and solidarity to "lift one's voice against the savagery of a people who claim to be the dispensers of democracy" (cf. Garvey, 1983: 213). However, because his militant proclamations conflict with colonial narratives, he becomes the target of scrutiny and criticism of colonial sympathisers.

Richard Hart (1999: 28) argues:

> Garvey gave to the down-trodden and dispirited Negro in the Western world the encouragement and the will to respect himself as a man at a time when he had come to believe that he was an inferior being. After the millions had heard Garvey's eloquent and inspiring oratory, they were no longer ashamed to be black. And it is only upon this foundation of racial self-respect that any militancy and determination to improve their conditions has been possible.

One of the Rastafarian movement's concerns is racial discrimination against blacks in Western society. Many of those attracted to the movement include "the disenfranchised and forgotten people of the shanty towns, which were, in the first flush of the island's independence, more than ready for a new Messiah, especially a black one" (Sheridan, 1999: 12). The legacies of colonial institutions combined with 'political tribalism,' the designation for zealous party rivalry, directly impact the stability of Jamaica's political system, disenfranchised citizens and their electoral participation. Hence, the Rastafarian protest aims to radically de-politicise their identity and deconstruct the ideologies that force them into a subordinate position.

The twin concepts of African repatriation and a black god help to advance the group's aspirations and transform Garvey's teachings into the fundamental principles of the movement. The unprecedented call for repatriation, a far-reaching proclamation, stimulated sensitivity to the British slave trade and the resultant problems for displaced Africans in the Caribbean. This is later reflected in Rastafarian philosophy and plays an essential role in Jamaica's 'Back to Africa' mandate in the 1970s. The fascination with African redemption is born out of the historical connection between Egypt and the bible. Garvey responds directly to white superiority and European projection of God-like qualities with perhaps his most enduring contributions to the Rastafarian movement: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God" (Psalm 68:31).

While the Christian doctrine in British colonies sought to disseminate images of a white God, Garvey encourages blacks to see God through "their own spectacles," thereby mooting the idea of a Black Christ (Campbell, 1985: 60). With the fervent cry to 'affirm your ancestry, claim your history,' Garvey urges the descendants of African slaves to embrace their black heritage (1967). Rastafarians attach importance to Garvey's scriptural allusions. Like many of his religious utterances,

the overture to "lay down burdens" and "sing our songs and chant our hymns to the God of Ethiopia" helped radicalises the movement (Garvey, 1967: 120). Years later, Rastafarians would openly pledge allegiance to the former Empire of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I and revere him as "the Black Messiah who appeared in the flesh for the redemption of all Blacks exiled in the world of White oppressor" (Barrett, 1988: 1). His prediction that a black African king would eventually lead the emancipation of the black race is almost always referenced to legitimise Rastafari philosophy. It becomes somewhat of a spiritual call to its followers.

Garvey's emphatic advocacy for black liberation and his predictions of a black African king is well-received and adopted as a symbol of hope by the now fledgeling Rastafarian community. Barrett (1988: 78) believes that the "messianic dimension of Garvey's movement" provides a sense of belonging and significantly impacts Rastafari. Still, he sees Garvey's posturing as not only a blatant "revolutionary thrust" but also instituting within the black community a sort of black philosophy that serves further to infuriate critics of the 'Black Power' movement (Barrett, 1988: 78). Garvey's attempts at empowering the black race through his proclamations about black superiority are still venerated and repeated by his admirers today. Rastas set out to deconstruct colonial assumptions and transform "the crooked path straight and the rough places plain" (Barrett, 1988: 78).

'Better Mus' Come' with Michael Manley

The 1938 labour riots have long-lasting effects on Jamaica's economy. Worsening economic and social climates trigger unrest as the general public starts to resist existing colonial policies. These conditions foment the creation of the nationalist movement, bringing to the forefront of public discourse the social and economic factors that isolate Jamaica's poorest and most vulnerable citizens. A state of national consciousness emerges, inspired by the worldwide discussions emanating from the anti-colonial and national liberation movements. The absence of equality presents an opportunity for political establishments that perpetuate the strengths of democracy and crusade against social and economic disparities brought on by colonial rule.

Many poor black working-class individuals attach little importance to the racial difference between themselves and the white or coloured middle-class nationalists. Instead, they tend to search for a middle ground between their values. These rules of conduct persist because middle-class neo-colonial political figures predominantly target supporters from lower socio-economic backgrounds and manipulate them into believing they have an equal share in the collective benefits of nation-building. Indeed, such a compromise of their independence essentially relinquishes power to politicians determined to win self-governance and restrict the influence of the British government in local political affairs.

One of the guiding principles proliferated by the earlier nationalist movement explicitly emphasises what Obika Gray calls "Jamaican exceptionalism" (1991: 54). Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante reckoned: "People in the world have come to point at Jamaica as a leading example…of a country where races work and live in harmony with ever-increasing respect for each other" (cf. Gray, 1991: 54). Such incipient nationalist sentiments of one-ness and solidarity characterised Jamaica's independence in 1962, implying a singular national identity based on multi-culturalism. However, Wynter challenges this notion by comparing 1960s pre- independence Jamaica to its colonial past: "A society reluctant to examine its premises, evasive of its past, uncertain of its identity, afraid of its own promise, worshipping its white heritage, despising its Black, or at best settling for the current view of being a multiracial, multicultural 'Out of Many, One,' is in danger" (Wynter, 1967: 23f).

The nationalist movement spearheaded by Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante succeeded in gaining independence from Great Britain on August 6, 1962. Still, it also produced much apprehension and anxiety relating to a new Jamaican national identity. An individual's interpretation of self-identity demonstrates the lasting impact of hegemony on social structures. Therefore, the complex issue of a hybrid or multicultural identity "closely interact in the social evolution of contemporary Jamaica" (Nettleford, 1978: 10). Furthermore, the ruling class would perpetuate the patterns of behaviour displayed by the Jamaican plantocracy that still strongly influences people's attitudes and assumptions about themselves and others.

Rastafarians view the postcolonial economic framework as reproducing the ills of exploitation colonialism. Since gaining independence in 1962, the difference between poverty and unemployment within the Afro-Jamaican community and the "highly selective though somewhat increased prosperity" of the indiscriminate minority elite has grown tremendously (Nettleford, 1978: 63). The rhetoric of Rastafari could therefore be understood as a natural reaction to the discriminatory practices of the bourgeoisie and suggests a reconsideration of public policy.

During the 1960s and the 1970s, Guyanese political activist and academic Walter Rodney and Michael Manley of the People's National Party (PNP) allied with Jamaica's Rastafarian movement. Rodney sought to "attach himself to the activity of the black masses" (1969: 67). Rodney (1969: 61) states, "In our epoch the Rastafari have represented the leading force of the expression of black consciousness." Essentially, he aims to transform the utopian vision of Rastafari and introduce Rasta discourse and counter-hegemonic practices into academia to re-problematise the assigned space of the 'Other' in Caribbean culture.

Campbell highlights Rodney's interest in the movement and his unrelenting efforts to qualify Rastafarianism as a legitimate Caribbean culture:

> In Jamaica, Rodney perceived the Rastafari community as a major force in the efforts towards freeing and mobilizing black minds; and he offered his knowledge and experience to the Rastas and all sections of the black population who wanted to break with the myths of white imperialism. The history lessons on Africa which Rodney took to all sections of the community brought uneasiness and fear to a pretentious leadership which never considered itself black, for Rodney stated simply that "being black was a powerful fact of the society. (1985: 129).

Despite his best intentions to enhance the social and economic status of Rastafarians, Rodney suspects that, with good reason, critics might raise legitimate concerns and take exception to his close association with the movement. Still, he believes that if he could effectively communicate the fundamental principles of Rastafarianism, he would add credibility to similar anti-establishment movements globally. In so doing, the Rastafari movement could integrate within the more exhaustive dynamic process of social reconstruction.

Like Rodney, former prime minister of Jamaica Michael Manley sets out to change people's fundamental outlook on Rastafarians. Leaning on the political ideology known as democratic socialism, the younger Manley embraces the values of self-reliance and aspires to build a 'new Jamaica' founded upon equality and democracy. It would be remiss of him to overlook the significance of the Rastafarian movement or the powerful reverberations in the poetic and emotive Reggae music that elicit an emotional response in listeners. Manley's agenda for a 'new Jamaica' exerts broad political appeal and uses this influence to forge an alliance with members of the Rastafari movement.

Popular with Kingston's inner-city youths, Manley becomes fascinated with Reggae, which draws his attention to the issues of the Rastafari. Hailing Reggae as a legitimate cultural form, he notes that it is essentially folk music and social commentary, distinguished by its unique language. In the following statement, Reggae music is discussed as emergent anti-colonial protest music:

> Like all folk music, it is all essentially commentary; but what is unique about this commentary is that it reflects in every thought, in every musical pulse, something to do with survival and accommodation. The children of the Diaspora struggle for a place in society to this day. Worse, they struggle for their identities, mislaid as the slave ships made their way to the New World through the Middle Passage. Therefore, their commentaries must deal with these realities (Manley, 1982).

Manley immersed himself in the rhetoric of Rastafari anti-establishment expression, further helping popularise Reggae's musical explosion in the 1960s and 1970s. He appropriated Rastafarian speech and integrated the poetic lyrics of Reggae music in election campaigns. The unabashed echo of 'Hail de man,' 'Peace and love,' and intermittent occasions of Reggae songs build momentum on the campaign trail. Adopting the Rastafarian lexicon and symbolic gestures to mobilise voters is a common strategy employed by the People's National Party (PNP). Even Edward Seaga, then leader of the Jamaica Labour Party JLP, used Rasta words like "troddin' creation," "Jah Kingdom," "Youthman," and "daughta," which excited his supporters (Edmondson, 2009: 89). Seaga is from the same light-skinned, elite social class as Manley and has a history of involvement in representational politics.

Manley's vision for a better Jamaica was conveyed effectively through the song lyrics of Clancy Eccles, Junior Byles and Max Romeo. They were popular musicians at the time, who helped to bridge the gap between politics and the emerging Rastafarian culture. The prolific slogan "Better Must Come" highlighted in the PNP election campaign in 1972 refers to the famous lyrics of a song by Reggae musician Delroy Wilson. An apt description, the slogan brings to the fore social and economic factors affecting most Afro-Jamaicans and calls for leaders to review outdated British colonial policies. 'Better Must Come' exerts a positive influence on people who are conflicted, feel insecure, unhappy or dissatisfied and lack confidence in the Jamaican government.

Michael Manley's 'Better Must Come' political rhetoric provides a semblance of reassurance and clarity for the most disadvantaged, uneducated black constituents. The dual threat of the increasingly popular Rastafarian movement and Reggae music locally leads inevitably to political compromise. On this account, an unusual alliance emerges as political leaders appropriate carefully selected elements of Dread Talk and the Rastafari anti-colonial discourse in political speeches. Commenting on Manley's radical election campaign, Waters notes that: "Her Majesty's loyal opposition, in contrast to the "racial harmony" of the previous campaign, was now saluting with clenched fists and threatening to "beat down Babylon" (1985: 106).

In the 1970s, the Manley administration's prioritisation of social policies gives much-needed attention to Rastafarianism and the undeniable influence of this new social movement. When asked, "What role did the Manley government play in the growth of Rastafarianism?" one insightful responder states:

> The Manley regime provided a backdrop in which the Rastafarian movement could reveal itself to the Jamaican society. Manley provided space for the Rastafarians...It was during this frame of time that we saw the massive expansion of the Rastafarian value system throughout the Caribbean and North America (Barrett, 1988: 221).

The very nature of Rastafari invariably raises moral and ethical questions about the group's association with political leaders, considering each function on different principles. But some sceptics interpret what would appear as a sincere gesture towards Rastafarians as a mere political façade. Others see Manley's relentless pursuit of social equality as a revolutionary promise, inspiring changed attitudes towards politicians.

Still, the Manley administration from the 1970s through the 1980s is hamstrung by external forces that continue to impact Jamaica's political and socio-economic transformation.

Perceptions of a 'criminalised subculture'

The social construct of Rastafari is better understood in the context of the group's fundamental principles and how these principles shape an individual's perception of the cultural and political influences foregrounding the movement. Rastafarians epitomise, problematically, the enduring labels associated with countercultures worldwide. Followers of the movement find themselves at the crossroads of "in-betweenness and half-identification" (Nettleford, 1970: 21). As such, the enduring labels lunatics, troublemakers and social outcasts engender the isolation of Rastafarians from conventional society and rob them of social opportunities. This labelling also lends itself to the heterostereotypical images of dirty ragged looking, homeless Rasta who will never achieve equal status with the mainstream.

Quite possibly, the public's tendency to form disapproving opinions of Rastafarians arises from misunderstandings about the movement. Simpson made this comment in (1955):

> The attitude of middle-class Jamaicans, as well as of Englishmen and Americans living in Jamaica, toward Ras Tafarians is one of contempt and disgust...it is widely believed that the members of this cult are hooligans, psychopaths, and dangerous criminals. Ras Tafarians are often referred to as 'those dreadful people.'

Early studies on the Rastafarian movement are largely tendentious, dismissing it as a 'cult' (Kitzinger, 1969; Lewis, 1986). Comments concerning the movement's "total ignorance of the world, economic affairs, and any sense of history" are harsh and insensitive (Morrish, 1982: 89). These studies clearly ignore the strong case for Rastafari as a millenarian movement and reflect interpretive biases (Albuquerque, 1976).

The first ethnographic study of the movement was conducted in the early 1950s (Simpson, 1955). More than a decade later, the University College of the West Indies (later the University of the West Indies) commissioned a report that paved the way for relieving some of the tensions between Rastafarians and Jamaican society. On Rastafarians, Rex Nettleford states: "some were indeed committed

to a political and military struggle, others revivalist in orientation and in origin, some quietist but all deeply involved with the poverty and deprivation that was their climate of prime concern" (cf. King and Bays, 2002). The in-depth report attempted to remove certain traits of negative stereotypes commonly associated with the group. Though this immense effort did not immediately affect public perception and reaction to Rastafarians, it clearly emphasised that their emergence on the scene was driven to some extent by dire socio-economic conditions. Other studies have since sought to relieve pre-existing misconceptions and redeem the image of Rastafari in Jamaica (Barnett, 2014; Chevannes, 1978, 1994; Edmonds, 1998; Nettleford, 1970).

Rastas critique European aesthetic practices and the familiar narrative of black inferiority to deconstruct historical concepts of hegemony. They replace the coloniser's one-sided version of history with 'Dread history,' begin to rethink the colonial narrative, and expand a traditional understanding of imperialism by seeing it first and foremost through the eyes of the colonised. Because many Afro-Jamaicans still exhibit a colonial mentality, Rastafarians insist on disseminating an Afro-creolised discourse and representation. Hence, Rastafari ideology calls for a reconstruction of colonial history and criticises independence as simply colonialism by another name that remains fundamentally impervious to self-determination.

Colonial legacy has left an indelible imprint on institutions in Jamaica and has profound consequences in framing Rastafarian ideology that repeatedly vilifies colonial-era power dynamics. The events of the 1938 labour riots conditioned the development of the nationalist movement deepening social and impeding options for the working class. Rastas rebuked nationalism as merely a political exercise to oppress the black race further. On observation, Nettleford laments the great tragedy of the black man in Jamaica:

> We the black majority who has helped plow the soil, planted the vineyard and gather the fruits thereof, we are not the benefactors. Those who benefit are the protectors. They share the crops, they boss the work and own the shares...the majority of Jamaicans are black - why then are not the black supreme here? Jamaica's independence means a well without water, a treasury without money (1970: 61).

In renewing academic interest in the "criminalized subculture," Nettleford aims to shift the attention away from Eurocentrism to Rastafarianism (1970: 13). He highlights their contribution to Caribbean identity:

> More generally the role of the Rastafarians has been to bring to the attention of the Jamaican society the urgent need to root identity and national cohesion in a recognition of the origins of its black majority and to redress the imbalance of history's systematic weakening of any claim to achievement which descendants of Africans would otherwise make in the New World. In this they have been a revitalizing force, albeit a discomforting and disturbing one (Nettleford, 1970: 61).

Rastafarians accuse the government of exercising neo-liberal policies that exert unyielding influence over the economy and have long-term effects on the majority black population. Despite the populist proclamation to promote the will of the Jamaican people, Rastas decry political independence as playing only a secondary role in the overall development of the economy. This is because the black masses and, in particular, members of Rastafari continue to struggle even though Jamaica is an independent nation. Mostly, they remain socially, economically and politically isolated from the more influential and well-integrated upper class.

Rastafarians focus on the seemingly ambitious demand for repatriation to Africa as a possible solution to their disenfranchisement in Jamaica and try to gain sympathy for their cause. The call for repatriation includes the contentious debate about reparations for slavery which demands that descendants of enslaved Africans receive compensation from the British government. When contemplating their future, Rastafarians insist repatriation and restitution must be treated as a national priority. Nonetheless, some critics see the campaign for repatriation and reparation as the ideal opportunity for the Jamaican government to eliminate the dark stain of Rastafarianism.

Any discussion of the notion of repatriation must start with a conversation on how the Rastafarian sect conceptualises the idea of home and define their experiences at home. Generally speaking, having a connection to a specific place or home is defined as "the incorporation of being with one's own in a place that has come to be associated with that group and community over time" (UNHCR, 1985: 185f). The psychosocial discourse of collective identity is established through well-structured

homogenous associations, wherein one group member's self-identity and social identity are identical to the others in the same group.

We could consider the socio-economic and political factors that lead to homelessness and the adverse effects on the professed 'homeless' Rastafarians in Jamaica to understand why the notion of repatriation easily provokes a yearning for that ideal place called home, the ultimate utopia. By all accounts, claims of cruel treatment and systematic oppression provoked the Rastafarian 'Back-to-Africa movement.' Indeed, calls for repatriation and persistent demands for slavery reparation were then beginning to interfere with the desire for normalcy in postcolonial Jamaica.

Rastafari promotes black solidarity, an ideological thrust inconsistent with individualism prevalent in Western societies. Perhaps most importantly, Rastafari uses a distinct voice to articulate the experiences of 'sufferers' and distinguish their unique culture. Like other protest movements against the malaise that colonialism engenders in postcolonial states, they usually find themselves defenceless against physical abuse from the police and find the unsympathetic response of the justice system. For instance, violent police raids of Leonard Howell's Pinnacle commune in the 1930s and 1940s and its ultimate destruction in 1954; the Claudius Henry Affair of 1959-60; and the 'Holy Thursday Massacre' in 1963 are sobering reminders of the dark underside of Rastafarian history.

Dreadlocks, the trademark hairstyle of Rastafarians, are subject to strict scrutiny. The lumpen position of Rastas explains why the local security forces enforced a flagrantly discriminatory policy against Rastas. Regarding the Nazarite vow, the assertion "no razor shall come upon his head" strongly influences the Rastafari interpretation of growing long hair and refusing to cut or groom it (Samuel: no pagination). Therefore, allegations about the forced cutting of hair by the Jamaican police leaves Rastafarians disempowered and emasculated. Compounding this situation was the widely held belief about head lice infection in dreads.

Alexander Bustamante, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, said, "Bring in all Rastas, dead or alive, if the prisons can't hold them, then Bogue-Hill Cemetery or Mad-house can" (Barnett, 2014: 6). This order comes in the aftermath of 'Bad Friday,' the Dread Talk term associated with the altercation between a group of

Rastas and the police in the now infamous Coral Gardens massacre on Good Friday in 1963. According to one report:

> During the Coral Gardens massacre, under government orders, hundreds of Rastafarians were rounded up, murdered, brutally beaten, shaven, tortured and imprisoned following an incident on Holy Thursday, in St. James, in which two policemen were killed by persons thought to be Rastafarians. Ironically, it took place during the Easter week, one of the holiest weeks in the predominantly Christian island (Barnett, 2014: 5f).

In those days, the physical appearance of Rastas was a negative stereotype and determined most absurd. Chevannes (1994: 158) reports that Rastafarians are perceived as "mad derelicts and outcasts" virtually overlooked in Jamaican society. Dreadlocks symbolise non-conformity; therefore, any Jamaican who wears them is "a despised vagrant outside society altogether" (Chevannes, 1995: 94). This severely limits interaction and integration with mainstream society. Even in generally more tolerant circles of society, the pervasive nature of social heterostereotypes has shaped attitudes about Rastafari identity and has assisted in determining their place in late colonial or postcolonial Jamaican society.

Dreadlocks are also a political statement, namely one other declaration of Black Pride and Power in the African diaspora or along the Black Atlantic. It is an anti-colonial, anti-oppression statement that contravenes the principles of conservatism. Campbell (1985: 1) states that:

> The Rastafari movement, in all its contemporary manifestations, challenges not only the Caribbean but the entire Western World to come to terms with the history of slavery, the reality of white racism and the permanent thrust for dignity and self-respect by black people.

Nonetheless, "dreading risks losing its oppositional and resistant meanings in recent years because of its popularity" (Association, 1998: 463). This is because the dreadlocks hairstyle has become fashionable among non-Rastafarians and individuals who do not share the movement's values, transforming the hairstyle into a mere fashion statement and causing it to lose its original function.

Allegations about traumatic experiences and troubled relationships at home are disputed by critics of the movement who respond defensively, "society did not

reject the Rastas, they rejected society" (Howell, 1960). As one critic suggests, "the Rasta nightmare is born out of laziness", and instead of demanding repatriation to Africa, they should instead "return to work" (Howell, 1960). Some critics would even have been more pleased if Rastafarians "as they profess to desire, all be shipped off to Ethiopia" (Parchment, 1960). In one of several opinionated commentaries around the turn of the 1960s, *The Gleaner*'s columnist Clinton Parchment went to great lengths detailing Rastafarian atrocities of the worst kind and questions their value or worth:

> Something might be forgiven them if, perhaps if they were merely harmless lunatics, but the fact is that they constitute a highly dangerous nucleus, capable of exploding in any crisis. Any natural catastrophe might turn them into murderous looters, any time of tension into sparkers of civil disorder, any period of acute criminality into a reservoir of more criminals...Lawless-ness, disorderly, ignorant, irresponsible, pugnacious, the Rastafarians are an anti-social group doubtly dangerous in a country where blood runs hot and law and order are anyway little more than skin deep. Jamaica could do without them (cf.King and Bays, 2002: 76).

Discrimination against Rastas is often the result of common misconceptions and misunderstandings about the basic principles of Rastafarianism. The traditional system in Jamaica's socio-cultural dynamics results in adherents being ridiculed, mocked for their appearance, or treated as criminals.

A look at the commentary section in the Jamaica *Gleaner* reveals similar derisive and sneering remarks directed at Rastafarians that undoubtedly affect how they see themselves and their participation in the community. Slighting comments about their appearance and practices are common: "A very large proportion of the bearded men of Jamaica are Rastafarians, and a large proportion of these are dirty, lazy, violent, ganja smoking, good-for-nothing rascals using religion as a cloak for villainy having no regard for law and other people's property, loud-mouthed and a general nuisance" (Parchment, 1959). These assumptions imply that Rastafarian men are predisposed to rowdy, irrational behaviour and typify what is called a '*cruff*' or otherwise good-for-nothing individual.

Without exception, the dreadlocks marijuana-smoking tropes marginalise and stereotype Rastafarians. When reiterated frequently enough, they incentivise

individuals to interpret Rastafari as a retrogressive and backward community with no real contributions to Jamaican society. Over the years, there has been less emphasis on the contentious subject of African repatriation. There is now an increased focus on social and cultural representation in Jamaica. The shift towards Jamaica allows Rastafarians to define their identity in terms of physical characteristics and in a "geographical space that has acquired meaning as a result of a person's interaction with that space" (Hauge, 2007: 3). The concept of place identity is characterised as a "pot-pourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas and related feelings about specific physical settings as well as types of settings" (Proshansky et al., 1983: 60). Thus:

> The message and visions of movements like the Rastafarians point the way to new patterns of society. Though often unheeded new movements generally have clear visions of where society should be going...The Rastafarians should be seen above all else as the champions of social change on the island (Barrett, 1988: 263).

Leonard Barrett's much more positive evaluation is a representative example of an ongoing turn in Jamaica's public opinion towards a more sympathetic outlook. This seminal work by the Jamaican-American professor of religion and anthropology appeared just at the (right) point when Rastafarian musician Bob Marley and Roots Reggae music achieved their international breakthrough. When Barrett's *The Rastafarians* came out first with Sangster's Book Stores in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1977, it was published (in association with the London publisher Heinemann) under the stereotypical subtitle *The Dreadlocks of Jamaica*, which was kept until its 4th edition in 1982, when Boston's Beacon Press took over. For its first US-American edition (brought out in 1977, too, by), Beacon Press, by contrast, had already chosen the much less cliché-ridden subtitle *Sounds of Cultural Dissonance*. Tellingly enough, this alternative subtitle for a book on an alternative worldview and lifestyle was kept for the 5th revised edition of 1988 and all others since. Barrett's study, which never went out of print, saw a 20th Anniversary Edition in 1997, followed up 20 years later, in 2018, with just another reissue.

As seen in chapter one, the early twentieth-century Jamaican writer's purist account of Jamaican culture dismisses Jamaican Creole as not representing Jamaica authentically but the crude language of illiterates. Further to this, the attitude of

Jamaicans toward Miss Lou and her portrayal of dialect-speaking characters is overwhelming. We, therefore, must admit that the nationalist agenda of oneness and solidarity is a fallacy, a false attribution and simply not valid. The current chapter solidifies the discrepancies between articulated nationalist sentiments and reality regarding Rastafarians.

Exploring Dread Talk as a Model for Linguistic Rebellion

To avoid being "submerged by a reality that they could not articulate," Rastafarians have created a coded language from its very inception (Baldwin, 1997). This unique speech represents an internal codification system to convey core principles and ethos to followers of the movement and is used in everyday communication. Dread Talk thus emerges as a powerful force of resistance to combat the proliferation of hegemony, a campaign against the illusion of independence and the ultimate contradiction to English.

Dread Talk is an extraordinary linguistic innovation and a uniquely authentic cultural expression used strategically by Rastafari to establish group identity. This relatively new phenomenon that has penetrated Jamaican culture is the inspiration behind Velma Pollard's exploration of the history of the Rastafari movement and the unique features of this new speech pattern. Pollard (1994) attempts to elaborate on the normative influence of Rastafari speech simultaneously on Jamaican Creole and Reggae. Giving due consideration to the social history of Dread Talk, she exhaustively positions it as a social protest: "Here patterns of speech really do reflect patterns of thought" (Pollard, 1994: xiii). A thought-provoking yet pugnacious group, Pollard's investigation has shown how the Rastafari process of adjusting and modifying English and Jamaican Creole constitutes a postcolonial new reality. Her research findings are serious enough to warrant our examination of the movement in light of anti-colonial perspectives and cast these oppositional and resistant discourses in terms consistent with postcolonial critique.

The use of Dread Talk by Rastafarian gives followers of the movement a sense of identity. However, like Jamaican Patois, Dread Talk is demonised as unintelligible mutterings because it does not conform to the standard. Aside from being criticised because of its many unfamiliar words and phrases and its distinct

pronunciation, the situation worsened with the rapid proliferation of the Rastafarian movement. While Rastafari serves as visual stimuli, Dread Talk draws awareness to issues of social injustice. It has become a major point of contestation in the struggle for cultural legitimacy in postcolonial Jamaica. This unique language is used to neutralise the public's initial derisive reception of the movement and has sustained Rastafari defiance in the face of adversity beyond normal expectations.

Dread Talk symbolises a language of resistance to confront the Rastafari black subject identity. The correct Rastafarian term is 'Iyaric,' a combination of the first-person pronoun "I" + "Amharic," or 'Livalect' "a combination of the words "live" and "dialect" (Barrett, 1988: 127). To the poor and working classes, education qualification or the ability to speak 'proper' English or sound 'uptown' (a member of the upper-class or elite) is a reliable means of escaping poverty even at the high risk of peer rejection or becoming alienated from their own community. Accordingly, Iyaric is a counter-offensive against Englishness, endemic to the prejudicial colonial mindset. It forms part of what Campbell calls "a determined effort to break with the sophistry of the English culture of Jamaica" and "to form a language which reflected…solidarity, self-reliance and African-ness" (Campbell, 1985: 189).

Revered as a 'holy tool' that appropriates religious influences, this language is hard to decipher, much like the subversive Jamaican Patois developed by the African slaves. Rastafarian speech exudes assertiveness and conveys a speech behaviour in defiance of the fixation on language correctness. Pollard concludes that it is "a conscious attempt to speak in a way that could accurately describe his [Rastafarian] socioeconomic position as the man looking up from under" (1994: 87). Rastafarians use this coded "soul language in which binary oppositions are overcome in the process of identity" to articulate a radical resistance to oppression even at the expense of drawing unwanted attention to the sufferers in their community (Barrett, 1988: 144).

Self-concept is a lifelong process that begins in the earlier stages of Rastafarian conversion and involves self-awareness and how one defines Rastafari. Rastas abandon the 'slave names' the coloniser bestows on them and adopt new ones to reflect their culture and identity. European appellations are replaced with names of African origin that represent a collective subconscious. Names and titles such as

Lion, Bushman or unique Rastafari constructs such as *Natty Dread*, *Bingi*, *Iyah*, and Bongo reflect symbols of power and serve to characterise their African origin.

A variation of Jamaican Creole, this new language variety is also described as 'Rasta Talk.' In Dread Talk, some noticeable modifications are apparent to the Jamaican Creole vocabulary and the successful transformation of word meaning in English. These modifications and amplifications to words and their sounds are deliberate creative strategies. For example, the 'Word Sound Power' phenomenon explicitly connected with the Rastafarian movement is almost exclusively framed by these language characteristics. As Barry Chevannes explains to Rastafarians, "the word is both sound and power. It is sound not only because its effect is aural but also because it is capable of quality, capable of being "sweet," of thrilling the hearer. It is power because it can inspire responses such as fear or anger or submission (1994: 227).

Dread Talk further produces new terms frequently referred to as 'up-full sounds.' They mainly represent sounds that invoke make-believe images in the hearer's minds and raise their level of consciousness towards a particular issue. Characteristically Rastafarian pronunciation enhances the sound of these words. Such adaptations contribute to Jamaican Creole's considerable transformation and expansion, which evolves into more evocative and dramatic ways of expressing Rastafari perspectives. Such drastic changes replicate the central concepts behind the Rastafarian movement, their religion, and their resistance to a repressive authoritarian system.

Words are fundamental to every discourse and, as a result, indispensable to providing a framework for any conversation. In principle, Dread Talk contains newly constructed or reconstructed words that refer to precise concepts though they are primarily modifications of terms found in Jamaican Creole. The introduction of these new words is remarkable because it distinguishes the people who use them from people who speak Standard English or Jamaican Creole. Such demarcation draws attention to the importance of the speaker's social background. Besides, this new speech pattern prompts curious questions about their origin and the social ills which bring them into existence.

The repeated use of new words in the Dread talk vocabulary also mirrors the common practice of subversion and appropriation in postcolonial cultures, where the oppressed acquire the oppressor's system and lay claim to it. Hence, the Rastafarians force the neo-colonial elite to acknowledge their presence and cause them to engage in serious dialogue about the group's needs. Ultimately, the power and prestige of the English language are diminished since colonial language has been a universal means of subordinating the masses.

Dread Talk and Youth Culture

Rastafari disregard for certain expressions in English and Jamaican Creole is endorsed by the disaffected youth culture emerging in the 1950s, whose radical deviation conflicts with the mainstream. The frustration of ghetto youths is populated by distrust and antagonism toward the more affluent upper-class. Notably, young people start using specific words from the Dread Talk lexicon in their everyday conversations, arousing the general population's wrath. Pollard (1994: 4) argues that the "panic-inspired notion that Dread Talk is replacing English as the language of the young people of Jamaica" is misleading. The influence of such fear is informed by the fallacy that "English was ever the language of Jamaican youth" (Pollard, 1994: 4). Furthermore, the proliferation of Dread Talk serves as an impetus to the poetic lyrics of the emerging Roots Reggae music espousing anti-establishment rhetoric.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Rastafari movement proves highly influential over impressionable young men, provoking social disruption. Rebellious 'Rude Boys' endorse the rhetoric and Rastafari spirit of resistance. Additionally, they incorporate red, gold and green, the unique colours of the movement, into their everyday wear; many even begin sporting dreadlocks hairstyle and adopt aspects of their radical, nonconformist lifestyle. What follows is that anyone who displays such an overt display of rebellion is automatically labelled a Rasta. Yet, the anti-social behaviour associated with urban ghetto youths makes it nearly impossible for them to commit to Rastafari's fundamental humility and passive resistance principles. In Kingston's impoverished inner-city communities, the youth, as stated by Gray, are prone to disruptive behaviour and struggle with criminal tendencies

partly linked to economic hardships (Gray, 2004). Unfortunately, the mere association of Kingston's 'Rude Boys' with Rastafarianism quickly attracts the attention of local authorities and those critics who denigrate the movement as a threat to traditional conservatism.

Once large numbers of young men adopt the perceivably undesirable Rastafarian way of life, the relationship between the Jamaican public and Rastafarians grows even more hostile. Still, even though youths are more receptive to Rastafarianism, many are not devout followers of the movement. This does little to prevent the mass media portrayals of violent and aggressive Rastas and of little help to diminish the dreadlocks wearing lunatic prototypes popular at the time. The hostile reception of Dread Talk is connected to the unfavourable opinion of Rastas in general and not merely its enormous influence on Jamaican youth culture through this relatively new phenomenon has real effects on the national level. The infiltration of the language into the broader community would help to legitimise the Rastafari resistance struggle. It is noteworthy that the idiosyncrasies of Dread Talk weaved into Jamaican Creole and its mysticism have captivated cultures outside the Rastafarian community and, by extension, beyond the physical borders of Jamaica.

The Rastafari movement has stimulated "resistance to the mental and spiritual entrapment of the "Black mind" in its search for peace and love" and contributed to the expansion of Jamaican Creole (Pollard, 1994: 81). The different perceptible new words in Dread Talk signify a rejection of established words and their normative pronunciation and have a much more precise definition than their comparison in the Jamaican lexis. The impact of the evolution of Dread Talk is evident in the fundamental changes in Jamaican Creole and the contextual usage that conveys thoughts and feelings towards societal issues.

The Rastafari anti-colonial response appears in the form of subversive language and protest music. As Pollard concludes, the movement is "inextricably ...bound up with protest and protest with language" (Pollard, 1994: 22). Perceived as a social pariah, the fundamental principles of Rastafari focus on reclamation and repossession of African identity and serve as a remonstrance of colonialist discourse. It is extraordinary that a group plagued by socio-economic disparity and

political vulnerability can construct a subversive language that is both different in structure and grammar from Jamaican Creole and Standard English.

Protest and Resistance in Reggae Music

The language of Rastafari cannot be divorced entirely from Roots Reggae, a genre of Jamaican popular music that exploded in the 1960s. Pollard posits that language is generally "the most obvious manifestation" of people's behaviour toward cultural identity and the struggle for the authenticity of "a very general and complex influence" (Pollard, 1994: 51). Hence, we can interpret Dread Talk as the imperious embodiment of Rastafari and Reggae music. Reggae protest songs cohere with the Rastafari countercultural themes that challenge British colonial subjugation and the nationalist discursive construction of multi-cultural Jamaican identity. Indeed, Reggae music heralds the Rastafarian cultural revolution and remains integral to the movement.

Having touched upon the Nyabinghi in chapter two, a Rastafari religious ceremony that shares similarities with African-derived folk traditions Kumina and *Burro*, we now move to discuss its contribution to the development of Reggae music. Religious ceremonials, essential transmitters of Rastafarian culture, operate primarily as large communal festivities for followers of the movement. Rastafari '*groundation*,' a combination of 'ground' and 'foundation' otherwise known as 'Nyabinghi,' help create musical conversations (Morrish, 1982: 83). Drumming, repeated chants accompany Nyabinghi, and the recitation of revival tunes, Christian hymns and Psalms the Rastafari have appropriated. The rhythmic pattern of these chants and recitations would later form the background to many Roots Reggae songs. An integral part of these large gatherings, the drumming tradition referred to as *burro*, which uses a 'call and response' technique, has remained stable and constant in Reggae. Rastafarian cultural aesthetics implies that "every invention of 'Africa' was a return to authenticity"; therefore, Reggae has emboldened the Rastafari movement (Adjaye and Andrews, 1997: 192).

Chevannes (1995: 17) identifies Nyabinghi as "a dance held on special occasions throughout the year," among them the birthdays of Haile Selassie I and Marcus Garvey and the emancipation of slavery in Jamaica. Similarly, reasonings

are gatherings involving the smoking of marijuana and discussion. They are "inherently spiritual rituals, concerned with inducing meditative, inspirational states of consciousness" (Prahlad, 2001: 27). Dread Talk is an essential component of reasoning sessions since "English is considered counterproductive to the goals of reasonings" (Prahlad, 2001: 25). Reasonings help to affirm Rastafari identity and attempt to influence participation in discussions and the vested interest followers have in the movement's success.

Nyabinghi and reasonings are conducted by the oldest subgroup of Rastafari, the Nyabinghi Order to promote oneness and strengthen commitment among followers of Rastafarianism. Hundreds of Rastas from across Jamaica converge and play drums, chant, and dance during these celebrations. Prahlad describes instruments used in Nyabinghi ritual procession: "The heartbeat rhythm of the bass drum, which sometimes sounds as if the foundations of Babylon are audibly crumbling; the tighter skin of the funde, just behind the beat of the bass, syncopating; and the higher voice of the repeater or kete, narrating stories" (2001: 27). Nyabinghi and reasonings are not only festive and stimulating but also seen as a fundamental aspect of the symbolic deconstruction and subversion of the "downpressive" system (Chevannes, 1995: 17).

Contrary to common misconceptions, despite undeniable roots in African tradition, there is much ambivalence toward African-derived syncretic religions and revivalism in the Rasta community. It is noted that:

> Despite the fact that they have the same general socio-economic status, Revivalists and Ras Tafarians are enemies. Revivalists often take an interest, outside their church meetings, in Cumina drumming and John Canoe music. Members of the Ras Tafari cult spurn both of these activities, as well as Revivalism and regard them all as "backward" (Eaton, 1975: 170).

Hence, any suggestion that Nyabinghi is a derivation of Kumina is disagreeable. Such disapproval is partly because Kumina deals with spirit possession and communication with the dead, both subject matters that Rastafari rejects. Kumina, an Afro-Jamaican religious tradition rooted in the traditions of the Bantu peoples in the African Congo, is mainly concentrated in the eastern parishes of Jamaica. Olive Lewin (2000: 16) concludes:

> It is probably music of the Kumina cult more than any other- that has opened our eyes to the necessity for a completely new attitude towards our culture and its significance…Kumina seems to be the bridge between esoteric and the exotic in our traditional music.

A blend of the Kumina practices and Burro drumming emerged in West Kingston in the 1950s. This influence is absorbed in Nyabinghi by Count Ossie, who, according to Bilby, is widely credited with the successful introduction of the sacred Rastafari drumming to secular music in the late 1960s:

> From these Burro-Kumina hybrids, urban Rastafarian musicians who had previously been without drums, took what they needed in order to create their new dance- drumming style which they christened Nyabinghi. The three-part drum ensemble of Buru- the bass, funde, and repeater (Dirlik) was retained in modified form in Nyabinghi, but the music played on it was neither Burro nor Kumina, combining as it did elements of both. It was this fusion that was later brough to the recording studios of Kingston by the Rastafarian master drummer, Count Ossie, and a large number of others who followed in his footsteps (1985: 146).

Count Ossie's contribution to developing popular Jamaican music begins with his trademark Rastafari drumming technique providing the background for the original recording of "Oh Carolina" by the Folkes Brothers in 1960. Rastafari nyabinghi music would later prove influential in the evolution of Jamaica's rich musical landscape, including Ska, Rocksteady, Reggae and Dancehall.

A Brief History of Jamaican Popular Music

It should be highlighted that the tendency to oversimplify Nyabinghi as a contemporary form of African religious practices neglects the degree of borrowing of styles, techniques, rhythm patterns, and instruments that influence each other. Perhaps it would be more accurate to speak about the related but distinct properties or fusion of indigenous musical traditions that accurately reflect organic Jamaican music. A brief introduction to the history of musical development and cultural influences in Jamaica is important to understand the different genres in their historical context and the aesthetics of popular music in general.

Mento, popular in Jamaica until the 1960s when more accessible gramophone records and Calypso emerged on the scene, is a style of Jamaican folk music that laid

the foundation for other popular Jamaican music genres. This music is characterised by a fusion of African rhythmic elements and incorporates archetypical folk music instruments banjo, and home-made flute, fife, saxophone, rumba box, clarinet typically made with local bamboo and other local materials. Besides acoustic instrumentation, the essential constituents of Mento sound are the nasal, high-pitched accented country sound and a unique dance style. Describing the technique and artistry of the Mento dance style H.G de Lisser also makes a note of its West African connection:

> Slow movements of the body…the dancer never allows the upper part of the body to move as she writhes and shuffles over the ground... you will find this dance wherever the African was taken as a slave, and you may see it danced in a West Indian drawing-room without the slightest suspicion that what you are hearing or even dancing is sublimated West African phallic dance (1910: 109).

Although forbidden mainly on the plantations due to their perceived lewd nature, it was not uncommon to find these expressive traditional dance styles served as entertainment for slave owners.

There is much speculation about the word Mento as its origin remains unknown. Because the lyrics tend to critique common issues affecting ordinary citizens, albeit light-heartedly, Baxter presumes that its origins go back to the Spanish verb *mentar*, "to mention, call out, name" (Baxter, 1970: 176). Jamaican Mento has often been confused with Calypso the world over, and at times both terms have also been used interchangeably in Jamaica. This is mainly due to the recording of both the "Banana Boat Song" and "Jamaica Farewell" by Harry Belafonte - one of the most famous American actors and singers with powerful cultural influence. Originally recorded by Louise Bennett, these two Mento songs became popular hit records when both were released (and rebranded) on Belafonte's best-selling 1956 album *Calypso* (Burgess, 1956b,a). A reason for promoting them as Calypso is that although Jamaican Mento and Trinidadian Calypso are structurally different, they may eventually sound very similar. Bennett also made a contribution to Mento music with *Hosanna* and the classic *Linstead Market.* See (Jekyll, 1907: 219) for further reading. Other masterful Mento performers include Count Lasher and Lord Flea.

Jamaican Ska is "the music that unleashes a hectic energetic beat spiked with boisterous horn riffs, started life in '60s Jamaica as a jazz-influenced popular music" (Walker, 2005: 105). 'My Boy Lollipop,' recorded by Millie Small in 1964, remains one of the most internationally renowned Ska recordings and has gained notoriety in North America and Europe. As Ska declined in popularity and the latest trends in American popular music began to catch the attention of producers in Jamaica, a new sound with "more relaxed rhythm, less bass and more vocals" emerged to usher in changes in performance style and musical storytelling. Modelled on the American doo-wop vocal style, duets like Blues Busters, Higgs and Wilson and The Clarendonians, and crooners Alton Ellis, Ken Boothe, and Derick Harriot became popular names in Rocksteady. By the 1970s Roots Reggae, deeply rooted in Rastafari credo and blended with African rhythms, began to emerge. It has transformed the sounds of musicians like Jimmy Cliff, Bob Marley and the Wailers, and 'Third World' from the slums of Kingston onto the international music stage and changed Jamaica's musical culture.

Commenting on a sub-genre of Roots Reggae emerging in the early 1980s, Niaah writes, "There is something very old, therefore, and simultaneously new and renewing about Jamaica's dancehall" (2010). Infectious beats such as the innovative 'Sleng Teng' rhythm, dynamic dance moves, hip-hugging and very revealing, 'ghetto fabulous' female fashion compliment lyrical content determined too sexually explicit and violent by conservatives. Even Rastafari-influenced artists such as Buju Banton, Capleton and Sizzla discussed in this chapter have embraced the dancehall aesthetic at some point in their careers, recording songs from the more conscious to gun lyrics.

Reggae, arguably "the Caribbean's only entirely new musical form in this century," plays a fundamental role as the main vehicle of artistic expression and conveys deep-seated issues relating to the struggles of Rastafarians in Jamaica (Roberts, 1972: 146). Social and cultural factors that affect the development of the Rastafari could also be applied to the origins of Roots Reggae music, considering their discursive positioning. Consequently, Reggae is always discussed in relation to its social, cultural, political and material foundations. Carolyn Cooper explores how the naming of Reggae exerts "complex ideological meanings" (1993: 236).

Tracing the derivation of the word 'Reggae,' Cooper shows why its designation is as impactful as the Rastafarian social movement. She argues that "The words "reggae" and "ragga" share a common ragged etymology that denotes their identical urban ghetto origins in the concrete jungle of Kingston" (Cooper, 1993: 236). In Cooper's analysis, Reggae refers to "old, ragged clothes" generally associated with extreme poverty and a state of depravity. Therefore, the overt inference implied in Reggae music employs the same rough and 'ragged' approach as its pioneers, who originate from Kingston ghettos. Reggae songs relate to the harsh reality of marginalised individuals and articulate their struggle to come to terms with their environment.

Roots Reggae remains a musical mouthpiece for articulating Rastafari consciousness. Considering its cultural and socio-political significance, Reggae thus becomes a musical space where writers articulate their disapproval of the continued perpetuation of colonial patterns of domination. Still, the music has evolved since the 1960s, gaining international appeal during the late 1970s and since the mid-1990s has experienced a rebirth led by a new generation of cultural bearers. Consequently, Reggae music has transformed into an authentic space for artistic creativity.

The long-term positive impact that Bob Marley maintains in contributing to the development of Reggae music cannot be stressed enough. In the early 1960s, Marley successfully launched a career with the Wailers, throughout which he would become Jamaica's foremost musical icon and Rastafarian cultural activist. He skillfully uses metaphors, symbolism, and biblical allusion to add emotional depth to his conscious lyrics and advance the Rastafari struggle against imperialism. The Rastafarian catchphrase of 'Babylon system' bears the same name as Marley's song. He openly ridicules the oppressive atmosphere engendered by "the vampire sucking the blood of the suffarahs" (Marley, 1979). Rastafarians designate 'Babylon' as a symbolisation of white oppression. For the same reason, 'suffarahs' struggling to survive are urged to "rebel" to bring an end to racial injustice (Marley, 1979).

Enshrined within Jamaican culture for its meditative lyrics, "Redemption Song" is considered one of Marley's most definitive. It is partly adapted from Marcus Garvey's speech: "We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery

because whilst others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind" (1921). A profoundly personal solo acoustic ballad written during his fight against cancer and released in 1980, a year before his untimely death on the album *Uprising* Marley urges listeners: "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery/ None, but ourselves can free our minds" (1980).

"Concrete Jungle," in effect a statement in itself, refers to the famous Trench Town, a lower-class community in Kingston where Marley and fellow bandmates Bunny Wailer and Peter Tosh spent their formative years. In this poignant musical biography, Marley finds himself captive in the desolate Kingston ghetto where according to him, "the living is hardest" (Marley, 1973). The contradictory line "No chains around my feet/ But I'm not free" is eerily similar to Louise Bennett's "rain a fall but de dutty tough" relating concerns about extreme poverty (Marley, 1973).

Marley's lyrics reflect his innermost thoughts, not only from his position as a cultural ambassador but more so his position as a man who has lived in the gritty shanty towns of Kingston, Jamaica. Following his death in 1981, his musical legacy helped stimulate interest in Reggae music internationally; however, it also marked the beginning of its decline locally. Nevertheless, as 'black consciousness' continues to spread among the local black population, the Rastafarian movement has evolved from an anti-colonial concept to a legitimate culture recognised globally. Locally, the political platform proves an ideal space for the proliferation of Rastafari ideology. A few years earlier, Michael Manley's dedication to promoting equality and social justice and improving the economic well-being of the Rastafari resulted in the gradual acceptance of the movement.

Reggae music helps to verbalise the complex emotions of Rastafari and examines the issues that constrain the relationship between disenfranchised citizens and the Jamaican government. It also raises awareness of Rastafari aesthetics, particularly the cultural separation from colonial rule. The protest lyrics serve as resistance poetry in the social transformation process and establish Dread Talk as a conduit for disseminating the discourse of Rastafari. Through this unique language, Rasta interrogates the inherent colonial concept of European superiority and the ideological construct of otherness.

Regarding social movements, Reggae functions as "a medium of transmission, which reveals the truth concerning history, determines who are the enemies, and creates continuity between past and present" (Ifeoma Kiddoe, 2017: 37). Reggae and Dread Talk collectively reawakened the sensibilities of the proletariat, intensified the movement's political awareness and aroused the ambitions of its supporters. Broader issues of economic disparity and other factors that adversely affect development in postcolonial states ensure that Rastafarian counter-discourse remains relevant.

The struggle to achieve psychological freedom from colonial domination forms the basis of many Reggae songs. Rastafarians believe in self-affirmation, shared African identity and a common purpose. Adherents of the movement are usually discontent with the repressive nature of colonialism and the discrimination suffered by Jamaica's ruling elite. Politically charged lyrics relate the anguish of the disenfranchised contending with centuries-old exploitive colonial practices and "the stifling social conditions which pervaded life in the ghetto" (King and Bays, 2002: 28). Consequently, the music provokes serious discussions about the condition of Jamaica's most socially and economically disadvantaged.

Reggae lyrics can be uncomfortable and disturbing, confronting the harsh realities of life in Kingston's ghettos, some of Jamaica's poorest and economically depressed communities. Songwriters employ the subversive Dread Talk to focus attention on endemic poverty and social injustice that remain permanent features of everyday life despite independence. Additionally, many songs highlight the Rastafarian's struggle for social change and their social exclusion and stigmatisation.

Musicians, many of whom describe impoverished upbringings, fend off feelings of desperation and "instead of becoming pawns in the political game, they have used the medium of the Rasta reggae to mobilize the people" (Campbell, 1985: 8). Besides that, the mass appeal of Reggae is not enough to convince some Rastafarians to support both the JLP and the PNP, determined to have absolute control over their own affairs. So, while the Rastafarian movement has gained tremendous recognition through Reggae and the media's depictions have generally improved, an underlying distrust of local authorities still exists.

Rastafarians have undergone perhaps the most radical alterations in achieving social position and enjoyment of privileges throughout the decades than other social groups. The combined influence of Reggae music and Dread Talk on youth culture help obscure the dissimilarities between themselves and other Jamaicans. However, Barrett distinguishes the more radical devotees and "Functional Rastafarians" as different sections of the society judiciously start accepting certain visible aspects of Rastafari (1988: 258).

Barrett states that the "uneducated, the unemployed, and the unemployable" represent the most 'functional' Rastas (1988: 258). This category includes individuals who prefer "the unencumbered life" and disenfranchised young men (Barrett, 1988: 258). Apparently, some followers are superficial and only see Rastafarianism as a convenient escape from criminality because of its religious orientation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, "clean-faced" highly educated converts have integrated into mainstream Jamaican society (Barrett, 1988: 258). Nevertheless, they prove very effective in articulating Rastafarian ideology to the masses because of their social position. Barrett believes that most followers are insensitive to the movement and that their understanding of Rastafari remains ignorant. On this account, Barrett argues that 'Functional Rastafarians' do not share the same unwavering commitment as devotees and attach themselves to the movement opportunistically.

The subversive effect of Dread Talk on social change and its contribution to Jamaica's cultural milieu is undeniable. Additionally, the debate over the legitimacy of Rastafari as a culture is helped immeasurably by the rise of Reggae as a popular art form. Pollard (1994: xv) uses the term 'transculturation' to signify "another aspect of the globalization of Rasta culture." For Pollard, the globalisation of Rastafari aided by the growing popularity of Roots Reggae also points to the global diffusion of Dread Talk and its indirect but real impact on English proficiency. The production of Rasta Patois dictionaries in various foreign languages and freely available on the internet are a few examples. Thus, we can conclude that international recognition helps propel the language into unprecedented and unanticipated domains.

Inspired by the intellectual and political movements, Garveyism and Pan-Africanism, Rastafarians seek to redefine the essence of black culture. Their celebration of an Africa-centred religion and objections to Eurocentrism makes them easy targets for cultural and religious purists. Much of the criticism by fellow Jamaicans in the early year tends to cast followers of the movement as lazy troublemakers and poor vagabonds from inner-city slums. Further, their lack of social integration and secret code inscribe them as an aggressive, menacing and judgmental group. Still, Rastas remain unrelenting, attacking Jamaica's colonial legacy, deconstructing otherness and giving that otherness a voice to speak.

It is true that since their first appearance in the 1930s, the position of Rastafarians has improved considerably especially in the late 1970s, a period marked by Michael Manley's socialist aspirations. Since 1978, marketing campaigns aggressively targeting international travellers promote Rastafarian images and Reggae music as Jamaica's cultural symbols, most notably the Jamaica Tourist Board. Even after Marley died in 1981, such strategies have proven most enduring until today. Many foreign visitors associate Jamaica primarily with the distinctly Rasta Reggae-inspired themes conspicuously featured in tourist advertisements. As a result, the radical counterculture position of the Rastafarian movement of the early 1970s, aided by the rebellious message in Reggae music, has gradually diminished due to commercialisation. Once banned by the Jamaican government, criticised and ostracised from conservative circles, Reggae music has transformed the tourism industry as the soundtrack for promotion campaigns in recent years.

In addition to the increased politicisation and commercialisation of the movement, and Bob Marley has done much to dispel the negative imagery of Rastafarians worldwide. Rastafarians no longer evoke fear or suspicions of lunacy, mainly due to the rise in popularity and global success of musician Bob Marley. As a result, "International approval silenced all middle-class criticism and opened the way for even greater identification" (Chevannes, 1990: 79). Undeniably, "The world-wide acceptance of Reggae provides evidence that the power of music to influence political and social change is not limited to Jamaican society but is something more fundamental and universal" (Kaufman, 1987: 9). Even daily newspapers, which had earlier reiterated the familiar stereotypes in the upper-class

discourse of ‘primitive’ and ‘uncultured’ music, now feature popular Reggae acts in daily publications. Yet, today discrimination and historical biases still exist, admittedly in more subtle forms and have not entirely disappeared from the public domains of Jamaican society.

We turn now to the next chapter to examine some of the overarching issues related to studying the Rastafarian movement for understanding the repositioning of Rastafari as part of the broader discourse around postcolonial culture through the analysis of performance texts by Roots Reggae songwriters.

Chapter 6: (Post)colonial Revisions: Dread Talk Counter-Poetics in Roots Reggae, 1994-2004

Reggae defies the worldview of 'Babylon' and has evolved to become progressively more revolutionary and political, condemning oppressive systems worldwide. Reggae, the Rastafarian protest music, seeks to validate the Rastafarian movement as a legitimate space and Dread Talk as an authentic cultural expression. It is another example of an oral art form that brings to life the evocation of the militant black power revolutionaries and embodies messages that communicate a new black consciousness. The songs contain anti-colonial messages, and their transgressive attitude is by no means anomalous in this regard. They can be interpreted as a gesture of solidarity to cultural transgression by Louise Bennett. I want to treat the poet-songwriters here under thematic consideration, especially those themes that have become familiar in postcolonial conversations. I found it necessary not to discuss them singularly but together because no one else has done the same in the same manner. When analysing the song lyrics in their theoretical context, sometimes themes seem to diverge, but that divergence might bring to light the cultural conditions that lead to them.

The songs are chosen for their protest against the depth and continuity of colonial domination in the postcolonial era more than any other single factor. As suggested throughout this dissertation, the question of the interplay between the oral and written tradition in Jamaican popular culture allows for postcolonial criticism beyond the original literary frame of reference as an alternative method of interpretation. My critical approach to Dread Talk assumes that its sociolinguistic dimensions are embedded in the contested terrain of Jamaican popular culture. The subversive Rasta expression embodied and enacted through Roots Reggae has evolved from an aberration to poetics of resistance. Rasta-inspired music tears down the façade of colonisation and has become "a powerful social and political mantle which by emphasising its own subversive rhythms and 'foreignness' becomes an aggressive and proud assertion of racial and class identities" (Wong, 1986: 119).

The poetic lyrics of contemporary Roots Reggae poet-songwriter Mark 'Buju Banton' Myrie, Clifton 'Capleton' Bailey lll and Miguel 'Sizzla Kolanji' Collins are critically examined in the current chapter. Presented within the framework of postcolonial theory, the analysis explores Rastafari's reconceptualisation of colonialism and extends the discussion of Dread Talk as a poignant discursive stance against oppression. Further, 'Dread Talk' points to the transgressive nature of Rastafari and helps foreground the fundamental principles that govern their way of life. This unique language reflects the Rastafari discursive practice of resisting assimilation and contributes much to the postcolonial debate around identity construction and knowledge formation.

Profoundly relaxing and pulsating rhythms are intrinsic to Reggae. However, the poetic lyrics deploring colonial rule stand in stark contrast to the rhythm, although the dialectic of culture joins both. Once the sound is isolated from the lyrics, the listener is taken aback by the dissimilarity between the relaxed Reggae rhythm and its revolutionary message. Many of the songs initiate a call to action against endemic discrimination and systematic oppression and their lasting impact on Jamaicans. Despite dealing with serious social issues similar to problems affecting other postcolonial nations, the Rastafari message encourages self-reflection and seeing oneself as a change agent and a voice of resistance.

The Control Room: Capleton, Buju Banton and Sizzla Kalonji's Reign of Fiyah

Clifton George Bailey lll, was born in 1967. Coming from Islington, a rural community in St. Mary, Jamaica, 'Capleton' is a nickname borrowed from a well-known local attorney because of his high verbal aptitude. The classic work of the Roots Reggae pioneers Bob Marley and the Wailers that defined his early years are among his favourites. At eighteen, Capleton relocated to Kingston to begin his musical career. "Bumbo Red," his first single released in the 1980s, was banned from airplay owing to its explicit and sexually suggestive lyrics despite becoming a massive hit.

By the early 1990s, Capleton's appearance is noticeably different. His beard grows ungroomed, and his hair naturally forms into dreadlocks as a means of rebellion against the dominant ideals about grooming practices. His conversion to Rastafari is more visible in his dressing, and the general principles of the movement shift from the periphery, becoming central to his music. In 1995, he enjoyed relative success by releasing his debut studio album *Prophecy*, striking crossover success with the Hip-Hop remix of "Tour" and "Wings of the Morning." Locally, his African-centred lyrics grew more poetic, more introspective, and consistent with the militant Rastafari messages of the early Reggae pioneers.

Capleton released his seventh studio album, *More Fire*, in 2000, a collection of his prolific output and contains his biggest hit singles to date. The album is considered a Reggae classic in its own right. The record combines Roots Reggae tracks laid over hardcore Dancehall rhythms and includes the anthems "Jah Jah City," "Bun Dung Dreddie" and "Who Dem?" Expanding on the success of *More Fire,* Capleton released *Still Blazin'* in 2002, cementing his reputation for originality and as one of the leading voices of a new generation of poet songwriters drawing attention to Roots Reggae.

The youngest of 15 children, Mark Anthony Myrie, best known as Buju Banton, was born in 1973 in the slums of Kingston, Jamaica. His father was a day labourer, and his mother plied her wares as a market vendor. 'Buju,' the nickname given to him by his mother, means breadfruit, an important staple food in the diet of many Caribbean people. Using the universal language of music to effectively tackle Rastafarian spiritual themes and give voice to the oppressed, Buju Banton has elevated himself to the status of an international recording artist and a bona fide Reggae musician.

He recorded his first single, "The Ruler," at age 14. By only age 19 he held the record for most number-one hits in Jamaica to date, an enviable position previously occupied by Reggae icon Bob Marley. Like Capleton, the substance of Buju's message evolves as his Rastafarian consciousness grows much deeper. He transitioned from the signature gritty, sexually explicit lyrical content and misogynistic references that characterise the Dancehall genre.

The title track from Buju's album of the same name *Til Shiloh* was released in 1995, has one of the most emotive opening lines in Reggae music and has become an anthem. The album captures the transformation of the local musical landscape of the time, which defines the 1990s and serves as a complete cultural shift heralding a new era. Rasta-inspired conscious lyrics of "Not an Easy Road," "Til I'm Laid to Rest," and "Untold Stories" mark Buju's sharp turn to Rastafarianism and help spread the imagery and message associated with the movement. The album marks a transitional phase connecting listeners with roots-oriented songs like "Hills and Valleys" and "Destiny." The Jamaican popular music scene changed fundamentally under Buju Banton's influence. His songs helped situate young Afro-Jamaican in the larger conversation of the postcolonial search for identity in the 1990s.

Sizzla Kalonji, or simply Sizzla, was born Miguel Orlando Collins in 1976, the second of six children to devout Rastafarian parents, in the August Town area of Kingston, Jamaica. The word 'Sizzla' means 'burning essence' in the figurative sense while 'Kalonji' means 'victorious.' In his formative years, he developed an interest in engineering. Though professional ambitions remain unfulfilled, they did help lay the foundations for a music career.

Sizzla emerged most forcefully in the mid-1990s after years of working as a sound system DJ and helped usher in the era of Rastafari's audible and visible influence on Reggae music. Raised by devout Rastafarian parents and himself, his upbringing allowed him to build an audience without the vulgarity so instrumental in establishing the careers of Capleton and Buju Banton. Since releasing his debut album *Burning Up* in 1995, Sizzla has secured a position at the forefront of conscious Reggae.

1997 marks a breakthrough with the release of the classics *Black Woman and Child* and *Praise Ye Jah,* which won anthemic status locally. *Freedom Cry* and *Good Ways,* released in 1998, score several more simultaneous hits for Sizzla, heralding an extremely productive period lasting more than five years. Nevertheless, despite a prolific output as a musician, he remains virtually unknown outside of Reggae music partly because of his reluctance to compromise his strict Rastafarian beliefs to achieve mainstream success.

Pollard (1994) frames 'Dread Talk' within the broader language and social movements context. Roots Reggae poets Sizzla Kolanji, Buju Banton, and Capleton employ the Rastafarian language evoking a strong emotional reaction in listeners and helping spread the Rastafari doctrine. Reggae and Dread Talk have heightened social awareness of the Rastafari movement and become a symbol of Jamaican popular culture. In the following textual analysis of Reggae song lyrics, we observe the evolution of Rastafarian speech and, most importantly, "the lexical items that have emerged as a result of the impact of the movement on the Jamaican speech situation" (Pollard, 1994: 3).

Pursuant to our previous discussion of Dread Talk in Roots Reggae, we explore its significance and function in disseminating the Rastafari anti-oppression message and how certain terms relate the relationship between the poet and his environment. Besides the unique speech register and its association with Rastafarianism, Reggae is characterised by its rhythm, verse-chorus form, and political message. The profound song lyrics awaken Rastafari's black consciousness and become a sort of movement for spiritual awakening. Black pride, unity, social justice, and African repatriation are major themes that permeate the poetic lyrics; therefore, colonialism constitutes a major point of reference.

Roots Uprooted

In the introduction to this chapter, we discover that Roots Reggae protest lyrics are heavily rooted in Rastafarian ideology. It should come as no surprise that the poetic themes deal with the continuities between British colonial atrocities and those perpetrated in post-independence Jamaica and, most importantly, an understanding of the Rastafari subjective identity and social transformation in general. Dawes (2002: 21) suggests:

> Rastafarianism drew upon a long history of Afrocentric belief systems that flourished in Jamaica and the rest of the diaspora for more than three hundred years before the advent of the religion...The song of the exile looking back to the homeland with nostalgia and desire was always part of the culture of slave societies throughout the New World.

Familiarity with the history of the Atlantic slave trade is vital for interpreting Reggae lyrics. For decades, scholars have confronted the history of slavery in the Americas as an object of inquiry, inspiring a large body of literature. About Paul Gilroy's concept of the 'Black Atlantic' Ashcroft writes: "This ocean has been a scene of the diaspora of black Africans resulting from the Atlantic slave-trade across the infamous Middle Passage and the so-called 'triangular trade,' which flowed from it between Africa, the Americas and Europe" (1998: 30). Here 'Black Atlantic' symbolises a history of dislocation and displacement. Hence, one of the fundamental concepts of Rastafarianism is the emphasis on a return to the African continent, the genesis of the slave trade.

Reparations revolve around the claim that "the continuity of suffering and the persistence of deprivation and anguish in the black world arising directly out of the legacies of slavery and colonialism" (Mazrui, 2002: 62). In this context, calls for African repatriation by Rastafarians are heightened by the events of 1948 when Emperor Haile Selassie I donated approximately 500 hectares of land in the small southern town of Shashemene to accommodate anyone of African descent who desired to live in Ethiopia. The African continent is frequently mentioned in Reggae songs using 'Mama' or 'Mama Africa' and symbolises the period before and after colonial domination. Furthermore, the often-mentioned Ethiopia is in reference to the entire African continent by employing synecdoche.

Emperor Haile Selassie's historic land donation and the general repatriation appeal are represented in Buju Banton's "Till I'm Laid to Rest" and "Destiny," two songs released in 1995 and 1997, respectively. The latter appears on his album *Inna Heights,* and its clear message is, in essence, an outright demand for Africa repatriation. Voicing his demands, Buju demonstrates his ongoing effort to return to the ancient land of his African ancestors and reconstitute Rastafari on sacred lands. The repeated refrain "Destiny, mama look from when you call me" produces a feeling of nostalgia or melancholic longing for something never experienced before (1997).

Destiny, mama look from when you call me
Destiny, mama look from when you calling
I wanna rule my destiny
Yeah, yeah oh help I please

Jah Jah mek mi rule my destiny

(Buju, 1997)

The promised land or Zion sketches the Rastafari utopian imagery of unity, justice, peace and a place of complete freedom. Here we can draw parallels between the Rastafari and Western Judeo-Christian narratives, where Zion represents for Rastas what Eden represents for Judeo-Christians and, by extension, the entire Western civilisation. Also, Buju's direct appeal to Jah for endurance and perseverance as he struggles for freedom in postcolonial Jamaica carries throughout the chorus.

Elsewhere, the call for repatriation is once again reiterated in the lines:

My destination is homeward bound

Though forces try to hold I down

Breaking chains has become the norm

I know I must get through no matter what a gwaan

(Buju, 1997)

Buju's evident desire to return to 'home' is blatantly expressed in the first line of the verse. The subliminal message in the second line makes vague reference to systematic oppression that stifles individual progress. However, the affirmative Rastafarian concept of black redemption promising freedom from oppression provides hope and inspiration in the third line. Buju shows determination by using of the Jamaican expression "no matter what a gwaan," which translates to "no matter what is going on." Buju remains steadfast in his resolve. Despite the struggles and hardships faced by Rastafarians and primarily black people, he remains persistently optimistic.

The song's title and the repeated cry of "Destiny," in addition to the rhetoric of repatriation, invoke the universal theme of a united African diaspora. Buju Banton's call for repatriation could also be seen as the gradual transformation of a colonial into a postcolonial state where equality and justice are promoted. It is worth mentioning that although the early Rastafari movement maintains a commitment to the restoration of the African diaspora to their ancestral homelands in Africa, today, the call for repatriation has taken on a much broader universal appeal. It has grown to include any community or group of people that suffer from injustice and oppression worldwide.

The album, *Til Shiloh*, marks the international breakthrough of Buju Banton (1995b). The song lyrics introduce a man deep in thought over the black race's physical and mental condition and follow his acceptance of the Rastafarian faith. Several songs from the album openly discuss themes of black superiority. Each shows his transformation from a raunchy and sexually charged hardcore Dancehall artiste to a more conscious Roots Reggae poet, conscious of how colonisation induces a distorted self-image.

The following excerpt is taken from "Til I'm Laid to Rest:"

Till I'm laid to rest, yes
Always be depressed
There's no life in the West
I know the East is the best
All the propaganda they spread
Tongues will have to confess
(Buju, 1995c)

Buju openly decries the prejudicial treatment experienced by blacks in Western societies. His denunciation is apparent: "There's no life in the West" (Buju, 1995c). Hence, the 'West' is identical to 'Babylon,' the direct opposite of Zion in Rastafarian tradition. The continual struggle exemplifies how the intertwining of colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism contribute to the formation of an inequitable society.

Buju closely follows Franz Fanon's argument, whose exploration of the trauma of colonisation broaches central issues of identity, difference, and belonging shaped by psychological bondage (1967). Fanon sees the struggles against the persistence of empire and breaking from external control and internal control as "an invitation to action and a basis for hope" (1967: 232). This is confirmed in the following lines:

Oh, I'm in bondage living is a mess
An' I've got to rise up, alleviate the stress
No longer will I expose my weakness
He who seeks knowledge begins with humbleness
(Buju, 1995c)

The verse also restates persistent features of the post-colony: economic stagnation, low wages and high rates of poverty. The growing challenges of Jamaican independence present even more significant challenges for Jamaica's poor black majority, who

remain at a disadvantage. The penultimate line is itself a show of compassion and solidarity: "Halla fi di needy an' shelterless" (Cry for the needy and shelterless) (Buju, 1995c). Immediately following is a sense of belonging, feeling wanted and being welcomed, with the positive reminder, "Ethiopia await, all prince an' princess" (Buju, 1995c). Here, Buju restates the message of Africa repatriation in line with the Rastafarian anti-colonial agenda.

Rastafarians insist that repatriation and restitution must be treated as a national priority when contending with the future. The third verse revives memories of the 1970s 'Back to Africa' movement, an initiative that gains the support of the then Michael Manley administration. This period is dominated by staunch criticism and negative public perception of the Rastafari movement. Buju asks, "Wah could suh bad about di East/ Everybody want a piece (What could be so bad about the east/ Everybody wants a piece) (1995c). Therefore, "Til I'm Laid to Rest" can be seen as maintaining the exact orientation of the Rastafarians decades ago.

The declarative 'Africa fi Africans,' a line borrowed from Marcus Garvey's speech to the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1921, expresses belonging. Buju wails:

> Africa fi Africans, Marcus Mosiah speak
> Unification outnumber defeat
> What a day when we walking down Redemption Street
> (Buju, 1995c).

Campaigning on the message of Black pride and economic self-sufficiency, Garvey affirms: "We of the Universal Negro Improvement Association are raising the cry of "Africa for the Africans," those at home and those abroad" (1967: 107). Part of the speech is about the woeful lament of the disunity among the different races and ethnicities and the discrimination against Black people. Too deeply rooted to overcome, Garvey exclaims:

> We have come to the conclusion that speedily there must be an emancipated Negro race everywhere; and on going back to our respective homes we go with our determination to lay down, if needs be, the last drop of our blood for the defense of Africa and for the emancipation of our race (cf. Garvey, 1983: 734).

The concept of unity in the line "Unification outnumbers defeat" and "Organise an centralise, come as one" call upon Rastas to work together in harmony, shake off the burden of the oppressive system and realise true redemption. The last line envisions a world with improved living conditions, absolute freedom, and unity among citizens. Buju Banton's humanistic appeal underscores the need to promote equality and justice. He effectively employs pathos to appeal to listeners' emotions and engage deeply with Rastafari's call for repatriation through his music. This demand is still bound up with an earlier phase of Rastafarianism.

While we are on the topic of repatriation, to understand it properly, we must come to understand 'Zion,' along with its precepts. Stephenson (1987: 197) states that "In identifying themselves with the ancient Jews, Zion, for the Rastafarians, becomes the African utopia the birthplace of all humanity and Christianity." The interplay between interference from British colonialists and the colonial experience of Rastas in Jamaica exposes the tensions between the political and the personal. In this culturally sensitive terrain, Rastafari's utopian vision of home lies in stark contrast with their experiences of home.

In Zion, Rastafarians enjoy freedom and equality compared to 'Babylon,' which exposes the legacies of colonialism in government, education, and religious institutions. Zion represents hope, the historically significant Ethiopia and perhaps, more importantly, the African continent, paradoxically, the centre of the transatlantic slave trade. Also, an individual's state of mind can be considered Zion, an approach adopted by Rastafari.

Feeling detached and insecure at home, the speaker in Buju Banton's "Til' I'm Laid to Rest" promotes the idea of repatriation. Today, the Rastafari philosophy differs significantly from its early beginnings, as there is less emphasis on repatriation. Despite the continued influence of the middle-class, compounded by the problems of independent Jamaica, Rastafarians nowadays have decided to seek freedom in Jamaica instead of fleeing to Africa.

Questions about repatriation and returning African cultural artefacts to ancestral burial grounds bring into full view the political discourses and how the issues are reported in the local media. A major obstacle to returning ancestral treasures is the requirement to prove that the cultural artefacts, relics and human remains that

found their way to the imperial centre from the colonies were transported unlawfully. Likewise, reparations for slavery are stymied by major procedural hurdles and undermined by government and museum officials, who avoid addressing the issue directly. Reparation and restitution are long-standing issues for blacks, and there are no clear indications for resolving the current impasse.

Procedural doctrines impose challenges to the decolonisation of European museums and the pursuit of restorative justice. Lars Eckstein explains that "the wide consensus among legal scholar, museum practitioners and curators of scientific collections in particular, that colonial regimes were in principle legitimate concerns of imperial acquisition" (2018: 10). Though expressing personal regret for Britain's role in slavery, officials are reluctant to mention the word 'genocide' in characterising the mistreatment of blacks during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. When asked to address the possibility of financial and material compensation for the descendants of formerly enslaved people during his first official visit to Jamaica in 2015, the former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, said it was time to 'move on.' Ironically, Cameron and his wife are notable political figures whose ancestors were beneficiaries of the British compensation scheme for slave owners.

Reimaging God

The Bible retains an important position as a key element in the development of slavery in the Atlantic world. Therefore for many Rastas, it serves as the ultimate propaganda tool. Speaking of colonial expansion and Christianity, Rasiah S. Sugirtharajah contends that the Bible:

> Clothed in the everyday imagery of Semitic and Hellenistic peoples, has now been assimilated by the English, reinscribed into their linguistic, poetic forms, and turned into a cultural artefact of the English people. From now on, it will be distributed throughout the world as an icon containing civilizing properties (1998: 204).

Considering how the rhetoric of Christianity has influenced enslaved Africans in the early British colonies, it is little wonder that the Christian view of God has penetrated and repressed the West African concepts of God.

Sizzla is very sensitive to the way the Bible was used as a tool to disconnect Africans from their original cultures. "True God" (1998b) relates his struggle with

the representation of God and the interrogation of white sovereignty as a question of religion. The issue of representation is central to this question as he rejects the existence and authority of a white God who he believes pays little attention to the plight of blacks: "I have no white God/Don't teach me anything wrong" (Sizzla, 1998b). He questions if a white Christ would extend his sympathy and deliver him from his oppressed condition: "Would a white God save me from white man oppression?" (Sizzla, 1998b). By contrast, the concept of the black God is treated differently, and his beliefs of a 'black messiah.'

Expressing an anti-white sentiment, Sizzla announces that he can do without the blessing of a white God. The lines show these feelings: "If a white God ah bless u/ Him nah bless Sizzla" (If a white God is blessing you/ He is not blessing Sizzla) (Sizzla, 1998b). Reconfiguring the construction of his colonial identity, Sizzla is demanding the 'truth' and maintains he will not stay silent on the issue. Besides, the youth will, with time, become aware of the deception and will become even more untrusting and sceptical without question.

I want what is rightfully mine	I want what is rightfully mine
So me nah stay mute	So I will not stay mute
Your system is designed	Your system is designed
To distract me from di truth	To distract me from the truth
But it will come to pass	But it will come to pass
And known unto di youth	And known unto the youth
In di process of time	In the process of time
We will know di truth	We will know the truth

It was challenging to communicate with the enslaved due to their diverse cultures and languages. Hence the missionaries were told: "To know the mind of God is the first requisite of the missionary, but next to that he must come to knowledge of the mind of the people over whom he shall be placed by the Holy Spirit" (cf. Rivera, 2007: 10).

Sizzla takes issue with colonial epistemologies that ascribe African cultures to inferiority and set out on a mission to Christianise and civilise non-Europeans. He views the Bible as one of the most powerful manipulative tools for disseminating

controlled narratives in the lines that follow. The lyrics spell out this relationship clearly:

U give we white God	You give us white God
To praise in slavery	To praise in slavery
Di doctrine follow on	The doctrine follow on
In di black community	In the black community
Di black messiah yuh try	The black messiah you try
To shield with fantasy	To shield with fantasy
But we nah go mek u destroy	But we are not going to let you destroy
Di love with luxury	The love with luxury

Although the 'white God' of religion is rejected by the Rastafarians, they have retained some aspects of black church culture: devotions, sermons, liturgical hymns, and spirituals.

Christian doctrine is vital to the Rastafarian conversion narrative and partly for the wide dissemination of Reggae. Therefore, let us look at the origins of the word 'Jah.' It is a shortened version of Jehovah, the Hebrew name for God. The name Jah most notably appears in Psalm 68:4: "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name, extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him" (no date-a: no pagination). Religious viewpoints often expressed in Reggae seem to substantiate the duality of Christian God and Rastafari Jah, promoting a universal message about spirituality. Consistent with the notion that Jah exists in every person or that, at the very least, each individual possesses some degree of Jah's goodness, religion is perhaps the most persistent and inherent trait of the Rastafari. It is logical to deduce then that Rastafari believes that all people are, in essence, the divine will of Jah.

Haile Selassie I wields significant influence in the Rastafarian belief system and features prominently as a divine image. In 1930, Prince Ras Tafari was crowned Emperor Haile Selassie I in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. To Rastafarians, this event symbolises the fulfilment of Marcus Garvey's alleged prophecy, which we have previously mentioned, that a Black king would emerge from the African continent. Rastafari philosophy is grounded in Old and New Testament scriptures, and its members believe in the divine sanction of Garvey's prophetic words. Although

Garvey's prophetic proclamations are treasured and well-regarded by Rastafari, they are not necessarily true.

The Rastafari rejection of Christianity is also the primary focus of Sizzla's "Praise Ye Jah." Read in its entirety, the song is Sizzla's ode to the Rastafarian deity Haile Selassie I.

> I did behold!
> Until the proud was casted down, yeah
> Have the ancient of days
> King Haile Selassie I Jah, yuh know
> With his garment as white as snow
> His hair as pure as wool

The intro spells out the physical qualities of a reimaged god: "garment as white as snow/ His hair as pure as wool" (Sizzla, 1997c). The latter is a direct quote taken from Daniel 7: 9, often used by Rastas to affirm the biblical significance of Haile Selassie I. Elsewhere, Sizzla boldly claims that "Jesus and his disciples, they are all black" (Sizzla, 1997c). Because Rastas reject a white god, they reject the anglicised form of 'Jesus' and adopt the pronunciation 'Jeh-sus.'

Embracing Marcus Garvey's words that a white God is a colonial distortion, Sizzla attempts to affirm the image of a black God. This is presented as a radical reimaging of God and reinterpreting of basic tenets of Christianity in the following lines:

Yuh talk 'bout Jezass	You talk about Jesus
Ah who dat?	Who is that?
I know him as the Nazerite	I know him as the Nazerite
The offspring of King David	The offspring of King David
No condemn Selassie I, idiot	Don't condemn Selassie I, idiot
Earth's rightful ruler	Earth's rightful ruler
He's from the same *lioneage*	He's from the same lineage

(Sizzla, 1997c)

Specific religious elements frequently appear in Roots Reggae songs. The lyrics repeatedly mention Jah or Selassie I, and relevant quotes are taken from the Bible. Additionally, a direct comparison is made between Emperor Selassie I and Jesus, 'the Nazarite', and their connection to King David's biblical character. In fact,

much of this information revealed in the song is taken from the Bible, as Sizzla confirms: "Yuh no see dem yah ting a from the Bible?" (Don't you see, these things are from the Bible?) (1997c).

Concerning religious instruction of slaves in Jamaica, Sizzla asks curiously: "Think I nuh know you're amongst those who instigate slavery against my people?" (1997c). On the slave plantations, religious instruction remains invaluable for introducing basic Christian morality. Ultimately indigenous spiritual practices and sacred symbols lose their significance and appeal. Wauthier (1978: 218f) observes that although colonisation is carried out through sheer brutality, English missionaries, under the guise of liberators, "came in time and laid explosives under colonialism." It follows that "the bible is now doing what we could not do with our spears" (Wauthier, 1978: 303).

The death of Reggae legend Bob Marley produces much controversy as Rastas believe his death resulted from a conspiracy. There is also the blatant condemnation of the church and the immoral practices of church leaders. Such criticisms are inferred from the lines in the first verse:

I see Bob Marley rise	I see Bob Marley rise
And unnoo kill di prophet	And you all kill the prophet
Why yuh don't kill those	Why don't you kill those
Standing on yuh pulpits? No	Standing on your pulpits? No
You use dem	You use them
To steer the minds of the youths	To steer the minds of the youths
And as they preach	And as they preach
The youths cease from	The youths cease from
Knowing the truth, but	Knowing the truth, but
This is the truth	This is the truth
About our circumstances	About our circumstances
I see how yuh	I see how you
Constantly building churches	Constantly building churches
But ah yuh church	But your church
Defend di slackness as usual	Defends the slackness as usual
(Sizzla, 1997c)	

The chorus reveals Sizzla's religious commitment and forms an integral part of his Rastafarian identity:

Praise ye Jah!	Praise ye Jah!
Hail di Emperor	Hail the Emperor!
King of Kings!	King of Kings!
To a fullness	To a fullness
Have to express	Have to express
Jah Jah that I hold within	Jah Jah that I hold within

(Sizzla, 1997c)

"Praise Ye Jah" is also a song of exaltation and explicitly references the continued guidance and all-encompassing protection of the Rastafari god.

Religious devotion and Jah-exaltation are evident in many of Capleton's songs. The possessive in the title "Jah Jah City" specifies the relationship between two entities, 'Jah' and the 'city.' Observe how the title would read as a singular possessive in English grammar 'Jah Jah's City' suggesting the city itself belongs to Jah. The song takes the form of a complaint by a new generation of Rastafarians who are passionate about seeing the city of Jah flourish. The songs are also linked together thematically by Sizzla's "Praise Ye Jah" regarding religion.

Capleton examines the circumstances surrounding the disintegration of Jamaican society and how moral decay is both the agent and origin of such destructive discord. Situated within the broader historical context of colonisation, this revelation is progressed throughout the song:

Jah Jah city, Jah Jah town	Jah Jah city, Jah Jah town
Dem waan fi tun it	They want to tun it
Inna cow bwoy town oy	Into a cowboy's town, oy
Unuh look yah now	Look here now
Jah Jah city, Jah Jah town	Jah Jah city, Jah Jah town
Dem waan fi tun it	They want to tun it
Inna dead man town oy	Into a dead man's town, oy
Unuh look yah now	Look here now
Missa Jankro draw coffin, John Brown	Mr Jankro draw coffin, John Brown
We nuh waan no more dead inna town	We want no more dead in town

Missa Happy-go-suh-lucky,	Mr. Happy-go-so-lucky
Trigger happy, yo	Trigger happy, yo
We nuh waan no more dead body	We want no more dead bodies
Well Missa Joe kill-quick	Well Mr. Joe kill-quick
We nuh waan no more hit	We want no more hits
We nuh waan no more grave	We want no more graves
We waan no more casket	We want no more caskets
Well life we promote	Well life we promote
Which is righteousness	Which is righteousness

(Capleton, 2000)

The desperate cry "Jah Jah City" responds to a community living in fear (Capleton, 2000). It is also a direct evocation because Rastafarians believe all lands belong to their god, Selassie I. The predicament: "Dem waan fi tun it inna cow bwoy town, oy" and "Dem wah fi tun it inna dead man town, oy" warns of civil war and is illustrative of a catastrophic situation (Capleton, 2000).

The expression 'cowboy town' points back to Western films that help elevate the notoriety of outlaws Billy the Kid, Jesse James, and Buffalo Bill, who all engage in a 'fast draw' gunfight in the American Old West. The Western genre became popular in Jamaica during the 1960s and 1970s and inspired gun-toting Jamaican criminals, some of whom romanticise the representation of American outlaws in movies. Western films introduce terms like 'posse,' a term later adopted in Jamaica to refer to gangs. The impact of Wild West films is borne out by the 1972 Jamaican film "The Harder They Come" (Henzell, 1972). Directed by noted Jamaican filmmaker Perry Henzell and renowned Reggae musician Jimmy Cliff stars as Ivanhoe 'Ivan' Martin, a fictional character encompassing the bestial outlaw folk hero tradition.

Gunst (1995: 202) comments on the poignant portrayal of the lead character in the film and the marked similarities between Jamaican outlaws and those seen in Hollywood Westerns: "Like hundreds of Jamaican gangsters before and after he lives and dies with gunslinger bravado acquired from the movies." In addition, she studies Roots Reggae's waning popularity during the 1980s, upstaged by "rapid-fire dancehall tunes with a lot of gun sounds on the tracks" (Gunst, 1995: 31). The influence of Westerns is apparent in the names of the musicians themselves who adopt fictional Old West characters, like Josey Wales and the Lone Ranger and even

real Wild West outlaws, like Johnny Ringo. Others have simply named themselves after legends of Western films like John Wayne. The persistence of the outlaw narrative and vigilante justice evolves into the 'Rude boy' culture in Jamaica and poses a challenge to social norms.

The anti-colonial undertone in Capleton's "Jah Jah City" is a glaring commentary on the shocking deficiencies of the Jamaican system designed to keep poor communities in desolation. Furthermore, the song advocates social justice and equality for all Jamaicans and takes a strong stance against the further destruction of human life. The fifth line seems to address the socially marginalised local youths, mainly due to weak family structures and the influence of gangsters. They inevitably become victims of a system where criminal activity becomes the accepted norm. The imagery of a violent and aggressive gun-toting gangster is illustrated in the line: "Mr Joe kill quick, we nuh waan no more hit/ We nuh waan no more grave, we waan no more casket" (Capleton, 2000). It is interesting to note that the lyrics have shown to be somewhat prophetic because very little has changed since the song's release two decades ago.

Though sometimes portrayed in violent and aggressive terms, Rastas promote peace and preserve life, which according to Rastafari doctrine, are symbols of true righteousness. The last line of the second verse in "Jah Jah City" underscores the very essence of Rastafari's philosophy- to promote life. They oppose injustice and have adopted a conciliatory approach promoting unconditional love, unity, and peace. Such codes of conduct prevail even though most followers originate from impoverished communities, where the very concepts of peace, love, and unity borders on the impossible.

If anyone can be credited with helping to reignite the longstanding musical connection between Reggae and Rastafarianism in the mid-1990s, it is Buju Banton. The Jamaican youth of the 1990s fixated on raucous Dancehall music, and its hardcore and explicit lyrics are introduced to the Rastafarian movement by Buju Banton, at the time, one of the leading Dancehall artists. The album, aptly titled "Til Shiloh," seems to reference (Genesis: no pagination): "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him

shall the gathering of the people be." He explains with VIBE that "Til Shiloh' means forever. Until judgment" (cf. Kenner, 1995).

In the following prelude, Buju affirms his commitment and dedication to Jah, the divine ruler of Rastafari:

> Strange this feeling I'm feeling
> But Jah love I will always believe in
> And though you may think my faith is vain
> Til Shiloh we'll chant Rastafari's name.
> (Buju, 1995b)

Considering postcolonialism, the album title "Til Shiloh" bears much significance; it connects with the deeply entrenched issues of oppression and the struggle for freedom. The dominant images of Africans in the Western imaginations create a serious dilemma and reflect the ambivalence at the heart of postcolonialism. The crucial question, then, is, "Was it possible for the black man to accept white definitions of the African character and to retain his integrity and self-identity?" (Magubane, 1987: ix). Embedded deep in the construction of the colonised black subject Magubane sums up "The combination of various factors- enslavement, denigration and contempt of Africa (and all it stood for), exploitation and white definitions of the black and his role in world history - created severe problems of identity (1987: ix). In the absence of a positive self-image, Buju's Rastafarian conversion follows a trajectory through music that belies the discursive construction of his colonial identity. He gradually separates himself from a society whose morality compels him to embrace the Rastafari principles of self-determination and self-sacrifice.

The Colonial Present

One of the more prominent themes in Roots Reggae relates to the socio-economic influences on the music. Frantz Fanon contemplates the spatial and social segregation using appellations to describe colonial relations as "a world comprised of 'compartments,' one divided into separate zones,' or 'quarters,' and a word 'cut in two" (cf. Gill and Mittelman, 1997: 174). Thus, chief among the issues Fanon juxtaposes the nature of the colonial world: "This world divided into compartments, this world cut in two is inhabited by two different species" (1963: 39). In this space, the

coloniser and the colonised occupy opposite sides of the socioeconomic spectrum that shape their existence. Such stark contrast inevitably results in pronounced differences in access to resources essential to human development.

A few of Buju Banton's songs dramatically depart from the traditional religious themes underpinning the Rastafari movement. "Not an Easy Road" is one such example. It refers more generally to nationalist sentiments touting the benefits of independence. Buju brings to life Jamaica's overt economic problems or, as Fanon rightly puts it, "pitfalls of national consciousness" (1963: 148). The lyrics connect colonial oppression with the reality of postcolonial life in Jamaica.

The chorus amplifies the voices of the poor in Jamaica:

It's not an easy road	It's not an easy road
An' many si di glamma an' di glitta	And many see te glamour and glitter
So dem tink a bed a rose	So they think it's a bed of roses
Mi seh	I say
Who feels it knows	Who feels it knows
Lord help wi sustain these blows	Lord, help us sustain these blows
From di minute of birth	From the minute of birth
Yuh enter dis worl'	You enter this world
Obstacles deh inna yuh way	Obstacles in your way
To overcome first	To overcome first
Throughout every day	Throughout every day
They seem to get worse	They seem to get worse
Oh my God cast away this curse	Oh my God cast away this curse

(Buju, 1995a)

Buju cautions, "From di minute of birth yuh enter dis worl'/Obstacles deh inna yuh way to overcome first," illustrating the underdevelopment of Jamaican society due to colonial rule (1995a). He alludes to an inherently oppressed society, where life is hard and opportunities are scarce. This statement is similar to Jean Jacques Rousseau's quote in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains" (1913: 3). Rousseau presents his thoughts on inequality and the nature of state domination and subsequent repression to maintain control. In his critique of modern society, he attempts to explain the origins of inequality:

> From the moment one man began to stand in need of the help of another; from the moment it appeared advantageous to any one man to have enough provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, work became indispensable, and vast forests became smiling fields, which man had to water with the sweat of his brow, and where slavery and misery were soon seen to germinate and grow up with the crops (Rousseau, 1913: 214).

Against this background we could argue that political institutions and public policy failure are main causes of underdevelopment in Jamaica. Such forces highlight the relationship between politics and economic development in emerging economies.

How we react to life's hardships and cope with adversities may vary from one individual to the next. Unavoidably, everyone becomes exposed to adversity and suffering at some stage in their life. Again, even though religion is not the song's central focus, the line "Oh my God cast away this curse" carries religious overtones (Buju, 1995a). Buju's agony and anguish are expressed in his lyrics, creating a sense of continuity between the past and present. Feelings of exhaustion and depression are also detected in his utterance: "Now I'm weary, tired and dreary" (Buju, 1995a).

"Not an Easy Road" is a song of inspiration that emphasises perseverance and uplifts the spirit to move beyond despair. Buju Banton counterbalances life's hardships with optimism as with the *Dinki Mini* tradition covered in chapter three, where sorrow is effectually counteracted with joy. Despite the insurmountable social and economic challenges, he endeavours to persevere in the Rastafari spirit of determination. The nest lines attest: "Nuh matter wha di worl wah seh outta street/ Muss haffi survive, won't accept defeat" (Buju, 1995a). He highlights unavoidable obstacles that everyone must overcome. The overtones of resilience in "You better know that" strengthens his resolve to ward off despondency and overcome adversity (Buju, 1995a).

Buju affirms his determinism in the following:

I've been travelling all morning	I've been travelling all morning
With such an heavy load	With such an heavy load
Now it's noon and I cannot afford	Now it's noon and I cannot afford
To put down my burden	To put down my burden
Longside the road	Alongside the road
Oh, I've got to hold it	Oh, I've got to hold it

Yea, I got to humble myself	Yea, I got to humble myself
Like a child	Like a child
Upon mi face	Upon mi face
I've got to put up a smile	I've got to put up a smile
An mek up mi mind	And make up my mind
Just to walk more mile	Just to walk more miles
Oh God, I've got to, I've got to	Oh God, I've got to, I've got to
Because I know that	Because I know that
(Buju, 1995a)	

The determinants of inequality in Jamaica can be examined in socio-economic dynamics. This is shown by the widespread presence of families of British origins and the descendants of indentured labourers of mainly Indian, Chinese, Lebanese and Syrian origins occupying positions of influence and leadership. Those who fall along the colour continuum align themselves with the ruling minority, while the Black majority tends to carry out menial and low-paying jobs. Ivy Baxter demystifies hierarchical power structures that negatively impact people in the lower classes. Baxter's statement confirms just how problematic such imbalances can be for those in subordinate positions:

> Both...were in the process of change and both seemed to have one factor in common - an understanding of the value of personal power and of the effects of group power. This power was limited for one part of the population, so they grew to know the lack of it. It was unrestrained among another section of the population, who wished to maintain it at that level at all costs (1970: 9).

Colonial power structures preserved by the ruling minority guarantee that the black majority remains perpetually disenfranchised, where economic progress and prosperity remain elusive. Turning to Fanon's critique of colonial power dynamics, Ato Sekyi-Otu states that: "Beneath the coercive social relations of the colonial world, Fanon uncovers not the tragic history of human practical activity, but a primordial reification of roles, a structure of power relations based upon the bastard power of race" (1975: 145)

The Rastafarian principle of 'Word Sound Power' from which Dread Talk is constructed encapsulates the reverberations of Reggae music. In particular, the trifecta effect affirms the Rastafari subconscious use of words wherein the spoken

word combines the phonetic sound and speech vibrations to give meaning. Linguists stress the arbitrary nature of the relationship between words and their meanings. This refers more generally to the 'sound symbolism effect' theory where "phonemes, features, syllables, or tones can be meaningful or sound-symbolic" (Nuckolls, 1999: 225). It is a concept we shall repeatedly see throughout our analysis.

The word 'trod' is the past tense and past participle of the verb 'tread.' A well-known Rasta expression, 'trod upon' or 'trod' means to beat down, bear down or take a walk. The practice of replacing the letter sounding for 'o' with the sounding for 'a' is ingrained in Jamaican Creole. Consequently, 'trod' is pronounced 'trad.' It should be noted that the present tense of 'tread' does not exist in Dread Talk but instead takes the new form 'trad.' Furthermore, the semantic change weakens its original form while simultaneously adding new meaning to make it more forceful and profound when repeated. This lexical change is an example of how Rastafarians successfully transformed certain English and Jamaican Creole words to their advantage.

Capleton's repeated use of 'traddin' (a variation of 'trad') in the song "Raggy Road" allows the listener to make inferences from lyrics about the difficulties faced throughout the years, both personal and professional (1997). Other words like 'tough' and 'rough' enhance this effect: "It's a raggy road, the road is so rough/ A Raggy road, the road is so tough" (Capleton, 1997). Another autobiographical clue that can be drawn from this song is that Capleton boasts about his steady perseverance as he keeps 'traddin dis road.' While attempts to 'soil' or taint his music career, the envy of many other local musicians are mentioned. Yet, still Capleton does not try to sabotage other musicians "And mi career nuff a dem wah fi soil, aye aye/An' never yet try pop off all anodda man coil" (1997). He also lays claim to the success of his own music label 'David House,' distributing part of his earnings and never falling behind: "A long time, David house, an dem no stop till the soil/ And give away, more than one tenth of the spoil/ An still my lamp neva run outta oil" (Capleton, 1997).

Capleton informs that success is not the result of a compromise, and unlike those who shun hard work, his is a story of perseverance and determination. Thus, while he endeavours to succeed, others would prefer to become common criminals.

Dis yah one yah a fi real	This one is for real
Go tell dem anuh bargain	Go tell them it's not a bargain
Tell dem anuh deal	Tell them it's not a deal
Nuff of dem no want	A lot of them don't want
Put dem shoulder to the wheel	Put their shoulders to the wheel
So dem go rape, dem go rob	So they rape, they rob
An dem go kill, and steal	And they kill and steal

(Capleton, 1997)

An irregular number of syllables and stresses are found in the song. Written in free verse, "Raggy Road" follows no formal structure. We are also presented verse paragraphs held together by alternating one rhyme only: abcbdbebfb. In verse two, Capleton talks about overthrowing the corrupt system, his preference for the Rastafari 'turban' and 'robe' and his disavowal of all who are intent on doing evil. Captain Henry Morgan, the British pirate who made a name for himself, rose to the governor of the island colony. The ambivalence in the song - which allows for a reading in which Morgan was thrown overboard - is discounted by the fact that Morgan received a state funeral in 1688. The lines continue:

Well, nuff a dem	A lot of them
Go get throw overboard	Will get thrown overboard
Like Henry Morgan	Like Henry Morgan
Wid di pirate code	With the Pirate code
Nuff a dem a trad	A lot of them a treading
Upon corruption road	Upon corruption road
Nuff a dem a trad	A lot of them a treading
With Satan heavy load	With Satan's heavy load
Tru dem promote death	Because they promote death
Dem dead fi wreath and rose	They die for wreath and rose
Di Binghi man nuh maggle	The Binghi man doesn't model
Binghi man nuh pose	Binghi man doesn't pose
Binghi man nah wear up	Binghi man will not wear
Dem Babylon clothes	Their Babylon clothes
Inna mi turban and mi ancient robe!	In my turban and my ancient robe!

(Capleton, 1997)

Compared with some of his other songs, "Raggy Road" could be considered an ongoing personal struggle, most evident in the repetition of the phrase "Traddin' this road for the longest while" (Capleton, 1997). Nonetheless, his lyrics run parallel to the determination shared by Buju Banton in "Not an Easy Road," a key Rastafari trait.

The derogatory connotations associated with 'Babylon' in Rastafari speech are intended to offend authority figures. Babylon, an important city in ancient Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq, also serves as an important reference point for Rastafarians. In the bible, the city of Babylon is a site of oppression, captivity, and corruption, and these manifestations continue in modern societies. Additionally, for Rastas 'Babylon system,' means both a state or states. The aggressiveness in the pronunciation and even the vivid imagery of the word designates prevailing power structures and all forms of domination that affect the oppressed. We can observe that the pronunciation of the original word is altered in 'babilan' so that a sound change occurs, which undermines the original form.

Babylon is also a metaphor for the historical Roman Empire, and the rejection of 'Rome' typifies Rastafari's wholesale rejection of the Pope. His name literally and figuratively denotes the Roman Catholic Church. Rome symbolises oppression and is associated with power and spiritual corruption. "In the word 'BABYLON', Rastas have captured a world of geography, theology, politics, and culture, but all via negativa" (Cusack and Norman, 2012: 512). In principle, the Rastafarian movement struggles against policies and practices that privilege a colonial way of life.

Babylon is also applied to the security forces, considering that Rastafarians view them suspiciously since they are known to be involved in dishonest practices. Consequently, there remains a disconnect between mainstream society and Rastas, whose more radical stance is considered contentious and pervasive. King (2002: 56) explains, "In the early reggae period, the various enemies identified vaguely by rocksteady musicians - the police, the legal system - became fused into the distinctly Rastafarian enemy, Babylon.'

Sizzla Kalonji's forewarning "Babylon A Listen" employs the recognisable theme of Babylon. It is a call to action for the oppressed and typifies the Rastafari

anti-authority position. The lines illustrate how Western ideologies, presented and promoted as liberalism, serve to brainwash ordinary Jamaicans. Sizzla warns:

Babylon ah listen from near an' far	Babylon listens from near and far
Don't even go ask dem	Don't even ask them
What dem peepin for	What they are peeping for
Tell dem dem cyah hold di youths	Tell them they can't hold the youths
Wid with no more house and cyar	With no more house and car
Gi wi Ethiopia or ah dis ah war	Give us Ethiopia or this is war
Babylon ah listen	Babylon is listening
A devise new plan	And devising new plan
Dangerous sitten	Dangerous thing
Wi de yasso too long	We have been here too long
Blackness risen	Blackness risen
So arise black man	So arise black man

(Sizzla, 1997a)

Some aspects of the song "Babylon A Listen" strengthen the depiction of 'Babylon' and condemn this oppressive system. Sizzla argues that the current issues in post-colonial Jamaica result from a colonial system seeking to retain its control over Black people through psychological manipulation. Babylon is not just institutional oppression. It also exerts some form of mental control, bearing on the self-perception of the oppressed, influencing their behaviour and the emotional attachments formed with their oppressor.

The casual reference to repatriation in the line "Gi wi Ethiopia or ah dis ah war" relates to Rasta's frustration and rebellious nature (Sizzla, 1997a). While with the final line, Sizzla affirms, "Blackness risen so arise black man" (1997a). It is an allusion to Garvey's speech "Look Up, You Mighty Race," his plea to people of African descent (Garvey, 1936: 3-4). Sizzla's protest resonates with the Rastafarian injunction against colonial domination.

The word 'judgment', which refers to a final reckoning or a divine punishment, is another addition to the Dread Talk lexicon and frequently appears in Reggae lyrics. 'Judgment' denotation matches the meaning of the word 'fiyah/fire.' Both terms are employed in Reggae protest songs to negate accepted standards that

Rastafarians deem immoral and oppressive. Buju Banton's song "Murderer" gives an apt description of the use of the word 'judgment:'

Muderah! Blood deh pon yuh shoulda!	Muderer! Blood is on your shoulder!
Kill I today	Kill me today
Yuh cannot kill I tomorrow	You cannot kill me tomorrow
Murdah! Yuh inside mussi hallow	Murder! Your inside must be hollow
How does it feel	How does it feel
fi take di life of anodda?	To take the life of another

(Buju, 1993)

"Murderer," a tribute to Dancehall artiste Anthony Johnson known as 'Panhead,' who was killed in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1993, awakens the Jamaican audience from the cultural acceptance of violence. Another promising DJ, Dirtsman born Patrick Thompson, was also killed. Remembering the inspiration, Buju Banton recalls: "When I wrote that song I was in Japan—just finish a concert and call Jamaica to get an international linkage and I heard that Panhead was dead…The message and the whole content, that song was relevant at that time. Jah used us as His vessel" (Sporty, 2018). In this context of violence, murder, and elegies on fellow artists, the poems also commemorate Michael 'Mikey' Smith.

Buju condemns senseless killings that have gradually seeped into the nation's consciousness. From the line, "Allow yourself to be conquered by the serpent/Yuh coulda neva expect dis yah judgment!" one could infer that Buju calls out those who succumb to negative influences and turn to crime. His compatriot, Capleton, also recorded his response to the murder of his close friend Panhead in "Cold Blooded Murderer" and "Tour," advancing the message of non-violence (1993, 1995c).

Judgement is also the central theme seen in many songs by Capleton. "Big Time" deals with corruption and corrupt practices among Jamaicans. This is another example of how Rastafarians heighten the threat of judgment. In the chorus, Capleton expresses his loyalty unequivocally (1995b):

I say I n I could never be a traitor	I say I and I could never be a traitor
Dem a sell-out I n I heritage	They sell-out I and I heritage
I n I culture	I n I culture
Judgement inna di earth	Judgement in the earth

Judgement!	Judgement!
Judgement mi sing	Judgement I sing
Big time sell out a gwaan	Big time sell-out going on
Be careful	Be careful
Who yuh let in pon the farm	Who you let in on the farm
Mi a warn	I am warning
Big time sell out a gwaan	Big time sell-out going on
A anuh joke mi a mek	I am not making a joke
A serious ting a gwaan	A serious thing going on

'Sell out' is an act of betrayal and disloyalty. Using terms like "big time" and "serious ting" tells the listener the severity of the situation. Capleton's conversion to Rastafarianism occurred during the period when Pope John Paul II visited Jamaica in 1993. Despite releasing the song two years later, the visit by the head of the Catholic church at that time remains the subject of contention in many of Capleton's songs years after. Capleton employs the Pope and the Catholic church as symbols of oppression, an approach reminiscent of Rasta's criticisms of Babylon that has now become familiar.

In "Babylon Judgement", a most appropriate title, the scripture Matthew 24: 36 is carried in the line, "They knoweth not the minute nor the hour." The second line repeats the thoughts of inevitable destruction: "Babylon will haffi get devour."

Babylon, yuh kingdom is falling	Babylon, yuh kingdom is falling
Judgement!	Judgement!
Madda of Harlot	Mother of Harlot
Yuh queendom is falling	Your queendom is falling
So weh mi sing, again	So I sing, again
Lucifer, yuh kingdom is falling	Lucifer, your kingdom is falling

(Capleton, 1995a)

Words like "Babylon," "Harlot," and "Lucifer" combined with "falling" precipitate the systematic dismantling of the British empire and its legacies. Emphasis on "Babylon" amplifies impending calamity and doom in "Yuh kingdom is falling" (1995a). His forceful enunciation of judgment carries a sense of terror, casting retribution on

what he sees as a failed postcolonial state. The mention of the word 'judgement' intensifies these feelings.

Capleton speaks to the inescapable judgment that will befall wrongdoers regardless of when it will happen. As he forewarns in the following lines (Capleton, 1995a):

Babylon judgement a come	Babylon judgement is coming
Under the moon an the star	Under the moon and the star
An the sun	And the sun
Dem a go dung	They are going down
Babylon judgement	Babylon judgement
Dem cannot escape dem judgement	They cannot escape their judgement
Care when it come	No matter when it comes

During his musical reasoning session, Capleton smokes a chalice pipe while sharing his opinion on his homeland's current situation. This is a similar manner to the Nyabinghi rituals covered in chapter five.

Well man a hol a meditation	Well man holding a meditation
An a watch tings a run	And watch how things are running
A smoke mi chalice pipe	Smoking my chalice pipe
An all a beat congo drum	And even beating congo drum

(Capleton, 1995a)

The text also notes that blacks are moulded by a system that devalues and oppresses them as inferior and inadequate. Gordon asserts that colonisation was an act of barbarity and, consequently, "institutional dehumanisation" (1996: 81). In many ways, colonial oppression remains perversive today and psychologically and emotionally impacts black society.

A long time dem have	Long time they have
Black people dung inna di slum	Black people down in the slum
Church and state and religion	Church and state and religion
Dem use fi hol wi dung	They use to hold us down
Dem politics, conflicts	Dem politics, conflicts
Dem use fi hol wi dung	They use to hold us down
But Babylon	But Babylon
Yuh kingdom a bruck dung	Your kingdom is breaking down

(Capleton, 1995a)

In another song, "Babylon Judgement," Capleton issues an urgent plea to members of the three distinct orders "Binghi" (Nyabinghi Order), "Israel" (Twelve Tribes of Israel), and "Bobo," Bobo Shanti of Rastafarianism who feels mistreated by the oppressive system.

Tell dem seh leave Babylon	Tell them to leave Babylon
Binghi man mi seh fi leave Babylon	Binghi man I said to leave Babylon
Israel mi seh fi leave Babylon an come	Israel I said to leave Babylon and come
A Bobo man a tell dem seh	A Bobo man is telling them
Mi seh fi leave Babylon	I said to leave Babylon
Rastaman se fi leave Babylon	Rastaman I said to leave Babylon
All dreadlocks mi seh fi leave	All dreadlocks I said to leave
Leave outta Babylon fas' an come	Leave out of Babylon fast and come

(Capleton, 1995a)

His conversion to Rastafari has long been decided, and now he is ready to perform his duties. Hence the announcement of being a long-time recruit:

A long-time mi recruit	Long-time I recruit
An now mi kick off mi boot	And now I kick off my boot
Cah mi ready	Because I am ready
Ready fi go start execute	Ready to go start execute

(Capleton, 1995a)

The enthusiasm in Capleton's voice when he announces, "An if a bomb mi haffi fling/ If a shoot mi haffi shoot" is ascribed to the influence of militant Rastafari movement (Capleton, 1995a). He campaigned against the practices during British colonial expansion when enslaved Black people were treated like animals and deprived of basic human rights. The lament continues: "Dem treat all mi ol' ancestors like brute/ A still a gwaan like dem wah enslave di yout" (Capleton, 1995a). These techniques, he argues, perpetuate the colonial system's continuity.

'Fiyah/fire,' is associated with judgment and often appears alongside the word 'bun' to produce 'fiyah bun' in Dread Talk. It is a derivative of the English word 'burn,' suggesting destruction by fire. It is worth mentioning that the word 'fire' also describes Marijuana, revered for its calming effect. Rastafari endows this medicinal herb with

religious significance, a topic we will explore later. The wide application of the term in many Reggae songs in the early 2000s causes much controversy.

Much of the criticism was aimed at Capleton, the designated 'Fiyah Man' due to his tendency to invoke 'fiyah.' He regularly uses the catchphrase 'More fiyah,' and 'fiyah keep burning cyaah cool' as opening lines to his studio recordings and live performances. Capleton explains that it is the disapproval of corrupted behaviour and "not a physical fire. Is really a spiritual fire, and a *wordical* fire and a musical fire…That way a man know say him doing something wrong" (cf. Kenner). One of his more popular songs laid over dancehall rhythms goes, "Cooyah cooyah cooyah cooyah/ When dem si mi wid di fiyah" (Capleton, 2002). In this sense, 'fiyah' symbolises his radical, militant anti-Western position. Further, Sizzla adds, "The fire is the essence to persist, that vigour, and that conscious thought and inspiration," in a profile on the Reggae Sumfest website (2001). Capleton's anti-establishment sentiments are therefore not unique.

The line "That day will come, when I shall stand and see all those wicked men in the fiyah gettin bun," is used to inflict retribution on 'wicked men,' or perceived wrongdoers (Capleton, 2004). The universal meaning of 'fire' symbolises destruction, terror, resentment, and punishment. The urgency in Capleton's husky voice forces out "BLAZE fire blaze!, BLAZE fire blaze!" igniting the coming conflagration in the subsequent line: "Bun dem corruption and bun out dem dutty ways" (Capleton, 2004). Sizzla takes a similar stance in "Yuh see the dutty lifestyle, the Rastaman ah bun it," signalling a rejection of Western traditions (Sizzla, 1998a).
The rhetorical effect of "That Day Will Come" arises from anaphora. The verbal repetition or rhythmic patterns at the beginning of each line make the song extraordinarily melodic and memorable. The repetitiveness reaches a new level of intensity with each line in the chorus as Capleton releases his feelings of discontent. However, the general tone of hope in the song brings a sense of optimism to listeners.

Verbal evocation of trepidation using words such as 'judgment,' 'fiyah,' and 'bun' communicate visual impressions in Dread Talk discourse. Such expressions frequently appear in Roots Reggae and describe different ways of deconstructing colonial codes rendering their very configuration oppressive. The songs feature

Rastafarian expressions that permeate everyday life. More explicitly, the corrupt practices in Jamaica are of increasing concern among Rastas, and their perception of authority figures remains negative.

Reasserting Blackness

The expression 'dread' carries both good and bad designation. However, in Dread Talk, it usually carries a negative connotation and indicates intense suffering instead of the standard definition that relates to experiencing utter horror and fear. The word 'dread' functions as both a noun and an adjective. For example, 'dread' is a generic reference to someone wearing dreadlocks, a hairstyle that was once exclusive to the Rastafarian culture. In Rastafari's discourse, dread also pertains to a dangerous person or finding oneself in a quagmire.

We have already been familiarised with the Dreadlocks, a natural Afro-textured hairstyle more socially desirable and acceptable in Rastafari culture than the prevalent notion of mainstream aesthetic standards. Rastas denounce Euro-centric beauty standards and the internalised racial and cultural inferiority attitude. Still wearing dreadlocks is generally frowned upon and believed to be dirty, unkempt, and dreadful in appearance (Parchment, 1959). Rebelling against the overwhelming system of oppression, dreadlocks drive fear in those opposed to the Rastafarian movement.

Despite losing its denotive, wearing dreadlocks remains an immutable characteristic of Roots Reggae musicians. This fact remains evident from the words of Buju Banton's song "Mighty Dread" (2000). It should be noted that this song title is not an allusion to the 1968 pop song "Mighty Quinn" by Manfred Mann. The verbal repetition of the phrase "Oh what a mighty dread" adds emphasis and follows the 'call and response' pattern, a West African drumming tradition.

The song lines depict several meanings of the word 'dread.' The remark "dreadlocks man you have been around so long" relates to perseverance and longevity (Buju, 2000). Also, "They put him to the test" evidently means hardship while "yes he did answer every question" depicts the perseverance of people living under subservience (Buju, 2000). The reference replaces the individual's continual oppression with defiance. The explicit lyrics influence people's emotions, and the

language points to another enthralling aspect; the interpretation of the lived experience of Rastas.

The personal pronoun 'I' represents self-identification and self-affirmation. In Dread Talk, Rastafarians replace every English personal pronoun, in both their singular and plural form, with 'I.' The removal of personal pronouns further serves to erase the distance created between the coloniser and the colonised, the oppressor and the oppressed. The Rastafarian vision of unity is realised by removing all separation barriers. Instead, they promote the notion of solidarity, equality, and parity through the expression 'I and I' since it carries the implicit message that everyone is equal. 'I and I' means to speak in unison.

As mentioned by (Pollard, 1980):

> The pronoun "I" of SJE [Standard Jamaican English] gives place to /mi/ in JC [Jamaican Creole] and is glossed as I, my, mine, me, according to the context. It is the "I" of SJE that has become the predominant sound in Rastafarian language though its implications are far more extensive than the simple JSE "I" could ever bear.

Owens (1982: 65) convincingly argues that Rastafarians "perceive the English pronoun 'me' as expressive of subservience, as representative of the self-degradation expected of the slaves by their masters. It makes persons into objects, not subjects." To this end, the exclusive use of the word 'I' in Dread Talk and the rejection of the Standard English word 'me,' 'my' or 'mine' and the Jamaican Creole version 'mi' is self-authenticating.

In the context of religion, Chevannes directs our attention to the repetition of the personal pronoun 'I.' For example, the common expression of Rastas 'Jah Rastafari, n I n I' reflects unity with Jah. Accordingly, if we accept the assumption that "God is a visible living man," then we have inferential grounds for accepting the claim that "the Rastafari is another Selassie, another "I" (Chevannes, 1994). The approach attempts to authorise a site where selfhood is delineated and the Rastafari discourse is authenticated. Edmonds (1998) makes the point that "Since 'I' in Rastafari thought signifies the divine principle that is in all humanity, 'I and I' is an expression of the oneness between two (or more) persons and between the speaker and God." Ball (2003: 62) writes persuasively that the personal pronoun 'I' alludes to the human "eye," or the "window to the soul, which represents the most important

of the senses: sight." Indeed, the suggestive imagery of the personal pronoun 'I' has symbolic meaning to the concept of Rastafari self- identity. It signifies the authentication process and the idea of selfhood, unity and solidarity.

In Dread Talk, 'I' often appears at the beginning of certain words changing both the spelling and the pronunciation. Indeed, Standard English terms such as ancient, vital and Ethiopian become *I-cient, I-tal* and *I-thiopian*. Verbal repetition and emphasis on the personal pronoun 'I' or the phrase 'I and I' should not be interpreted as a self-centred language but rather as an expression of oneness with Haile Selassie 1 and the assertion of self-determination.

In the opening line to the song "One Way," Sizzla Kolanji declares verbally: "Rastafari an' I an' I" (1997b). Sizzla's declaration illustrates the plurality of 'I and I' relating the oneness of self and Haile Selassie I. Rastafari avoids the dualism of their god, Haile Selassie 1 and the individual. Sizzla's verbal declaration indicates combining both elements to realise a sense of unity. By comparison, the line "I and I, I wanna rule my destiny" from Buju Banton's song "Destiny" seems to refer to the singular (1997). The refrain 'I and I' explicitly references Buju's individuality. Here also, Capleton repeatedly uses "I n I" in a similar manner as Buju Banton to assert oneness with his black identity: "Dem a sell-out I n I heritage/ I n I culture" (1995b).

Words, Sound, and –Change

Dread Talk exhibits perhaps some of the best examples of linguistic innovation. Wholly new and subtle modifications help maintain the socio-cultural significance of the Rastafari movement and function as one of the most distinctive markers of culture in Jamaica. Further, we now move to an examination of 'Word Sound Power,' a concept further enriched by Reggae songs. We look at its application to politicians, which relates to elected public officials. By changing politicians to 'politricksters,' essentially affecting the original spelling and sound of the word, Rastafarians appropriate English "as a tool and utilised to express widely differing cultural experiences" (Ashcroft et al., 1989: 38f). Also, the original English definition is weakened, and the new version is intended as an insult to belittle politicians and disparage the political process. It is a way of unveiling the repressive practices

and exploitative motives lurking underneath political conversations about crime and social policy.

The new words 'politricks' and 'politricksters,' are pointedly offensive and derisive. They re-establish the centrality of anti-establishment in conceptualising the Rastafarian movement. The relationship between Rastafarians and political leaders is characterised by suspicion and distrust. Politricks, thus, describes the Rastafari criticism of government policy as a hidden agenda directed towards Jamaica's poor. Hence, the pervasiveness of negative images of politicians exposes a fundamental authority problem. These issues also contribute to the alienation of the Rastafarian community.

Buju Banton highlights the issues and concerns of Rastas in contemporary Jamaica, where the corrupt practices of self-serving political candidates prevail. The suspicious tendency of Rastas carries on in the song "Politics Time Again," released in 1996 in the lead-up to the impending 1997 general elections (Buju, 1996). This apprehension carries over into the entire song when a distrustful Buju announces and simultaneously asks: "It's politics time again/ Are you gonna vote now?" Buju hollers in a rising, high-pitched wail, "BLOODSH-H-H-E-D!" before dragging out "From Rema-ha-ha-ha." His pitch rises again, emphasising "CraigTOWN has become a gunman compoun'/No place for people with citizenship" (1996).

The 1938 labour riots Buju Banton refers to some of Kingston's notoriously violent inner-city communities, Rema, Tivoli Gardens, and Craig Town. Here, ruthless gangsters act in quasi-governmental roles and enjoy genuine support and respect from most residents living in the local area. In West Kingston, generally considered a "trendsetter" in overvoting, party enforcers use brute force to mobilise voters and increase voter turnout on election day (Stone, 1989: 34). Accusations against both the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP) for supplying gangs with illegal guns to secure votes and party loyalty are well-documented.

Carl Stone provides a comprehensive overview of patronage politics in Jamaica:

> The very idea of politics is for most members of the mass public synonymous with party politics. Power is seen as "party determined." Access to material benefits and

> opportunities by the masses (denied by the unequal and rigid social structures) are seen as opened up through party connections and party patronage (1980: 81).

Stone builds on the notion of 'clientelism' in which unequal power relations determine "who gets what, when, how," taken from the wording of the book title as argued by (Lasswell, 1936).

In his early research, Stone focused on the forms of political control that enable voting behaviour in "garrison communities" in West Kingston. For him, allegiance to a political candidate, overzealous enforcers and electoral malpractice characterise garrisons. An emerging political culture, he attributes the 'garrison' to collusion between politicians and well-organised gangs: "There are strong local-level agencies of political socialisation which function to maintain stability in the level of party voting. These include community and neighbourhood pressures and community influentials" (Stone, 1980: 139). These 'influentials' are the architects of inner-city sustainability and are revered by residents, providing security and protection where the state has failed. Their close affiliation has implicated many party candidates and influenced the outcomes of the general elections, most notably during the 1970s and 1980s. While Stone does not ascribe blame to political leaders, he notes that nothing has been done to eradicate unethical voting practices - bribery, voter fraud, and vote-rigging, among other illicit activities.

The 1938 labour riots and union-related activities are a driving force behind partisan violence in Jamaica. Since the 1940s, violence has been institutionalised in Jamaican politics. As the public rivalry grew between the JLP and the PNP, the major political parties that evolved out of the trade union movement, violence became commonplace, creating an unstable political environment. Political violence at times threatened to bring the country to the brink of civil war.

Although released in 1997 when violence was relatively low, the lines "Dem crying relentlessly/ People moving every minute every i-wah/ Gunshot fall like hell shower" perfectly sum up the situation over the last two decades (Buju, 1996). More than one hundred people lost their lives in the lead-up to the 1976 general election. The carnage on Orange Lane, Kingston, where PNP supporters held a meeting on May 19, 1976, is one of the more famous murders committed that year. A reaction to the tragedy performance poet Mikey Smith in "Mi Cyaan Believe It"

registers his horror and cries out in despair "Orange Street fire deh bun mi 'ead an' me cyaan believe it" see (1982). Two years later, in another wave of violence, five JLP supporters were killed by Jamaica Defence Force soldiers in the now-infamous Green Bay Massacre. Finally, the spectre of violence continued to haunt the 1980 elections that claimed the lives of some eight hundred and forty-four civilians and wreaked havoc on Jamaican society. Ironically, Mikey Smith was killed at a political rally in 1983.

The year 1978 represents a significant milestone for Rastafari. The historic 'One Love Peace Concert' featured some of the biggest names in Reggae who embody Rastafari: Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Jacob Miller, Big Youth, The Mighty Diamonds, Culture, and Dennis Brown. Regarding Marley's lifetime in the 1970s, this is part of the plot of Marlon James' novel (2014). Credited for its role in conflict transformation, Reggae music was used to lure international visitors to the annual Reggae Sunsplash, a summer festival conceptualised in 1978.

The modern political history of Jamaica is plagued by economic disarray, violence, political instability accentuated by external interference, and political intrigue. These scenarios align with the explication of the inevitable dynamics of decolonisation by anti-colonial visionaries (Césaire, 1972; Fanon, 1963). Almost every economic and social problem prevalent in postcolonial Jamaica succeeds for the most part due to political corruption that undermines the future development of the country. Jamaican Prime Ministers since independence have come under critical scrutiny from scholars assessing their roles in the labour movement, the formation of the JLP and PNP, decolonisation and independence, nation-building and ideological positioning (Eaton, 1975; Manley, 1971; Panton, 1993; Sherlock, 1980).

Following the same 'Word Sound Power' method, 'understand /understanding' is transformed to 'overstand/overstanding.' The prefix 'under' depicts an undignified position; beneath, pressed down, and inferior. To 'overstand' or having an 'overstanding' implies gradual self-discovery, the process of self-acceptance with a more affirmative and positive overtone. Capleton's "Tour" introduces a rhyme- scheme that continues throughout the song that complements and adds further meaning to each supporting line. For example, in the chorus, the regular alternation of rhymed and unrhymed lines is supported by the eventual use of 'sure' as

an identical rhyme. Researchers may frequently find line count keyed to the complete poem is missing but would be helpful.

Afta mi lef from Jamaica	After I left from Jamaica
Go a farrin pon tour	Go a foreign on tour
Preachin, teachin di people fi sure	Preaching, teaching the people for sure
Ansa to Jah when	Answer to Jah, when
Him a knock pon mi door	He is knocking at my door
If yuh ignore	If you ignore
Yuh gwine perish fi sure	You are going to perish for sure

(Capleton, 1995c)

The message is similar to "Babylon Judgement," which calls into question how Jamaican society has become corrupted gradually by outside influences. Capleton condemns Jamaican men for their seemingly effeminate dress and unusual appearance in what could be described as a list of charges.

Afta mi come back a Jamaica	After I came back to Jamaica
Nuff things gone wrong	Lots of things have gone wrong
Cyah know di ooman dem	Cannot know the women
Different fram di man	Different from the men
Hol' a dem a dress	All of them dressing
Inna di same pollution	In the same pollution
Dawn an John	Dawn and John
a run competition	Are running competition

(Capleton, 1995c)

He explicitly mentions that both men and women tend to choose the same 'pollution' or adulterated clothing that Rastas have condemned. For this reason, Capleton looks to both sexes as fierce competitors because something must be attractive for them to dress similarly.

In addition to those accusations, there are also claims of practising 'Obeah', which could be attributed to social and spiritual insecurity problems. It goes: "Man a tek dem money an a go Obeah man" (Capleton, 1995c). The development of religion in Jamaica includes traces of African-derived religious practices and their subsequent evolution today through their social, historical, and political contexts. Traditional religions and sacred rituals have long been associated with West Africa,

and many of these beliefs and customs were transplanted to the slave plantations in Jamaica. As the assimilation process continues and the search for identity begins, the blending of certain European and African practices, rites and rituals occurs.

In its historical context, Rastafarianism is deeply embedded in Jamaican folklore and recalls features of both African and European religions, especially the emphasis on ancestor worship.

Dis is one ting me get fi overstan'	This is one thing get to understand
Most of the youth	Most of the youth
Dem stop diss Rastaman	They stop dissing Rastas
Dem get fi know seh Rasta	They get to know that Rasta
A di right tradition	Is the right tradition
An respect Selassie as	And respect Selassie as
Di Almighty one	The Almighty one
If slackness a di fault	If slackness is the fault
Culture a di solution	Culture is the solution

(Capleton, 1995c)

Nevertheless, despite his criticism of Jamaican society, Capleton does acknowledge some important positive developments. He 'overstands' that Rastafarians are no longer treated with contempt and the acquiescence of political figures helped the movement gain greater credibility.

Another expression, 'downpress' combines feelings of hopelessness and being persistently weighed down. To 'downpress' or be 'downpressed' is the opposite of the meaning of the original words oppress and oppressed. This reversed meaning is intended to reflect realistic and gritty images of poverty-related stress experienced by many Jamaicans. Rastafarians reverse the pronunciation of the positive-sounding prefix 'op' to evoke a feeling of being 'down' and produce a negative effect. The Rastafari language of equality seeks to counteract dominant narratives, create a dialogue of inclusivity beyond self-interest, and allow for equal access and opportunities for everyone. Therefore, the variations and sound changes in Dread Talk are not merely a linguistic protest that calls into question the dominant influence of the English language but also functions as a social and political protest to disrupt systemic oppression.

Sizzla Kalonji's "Did You Ever?" (1996) could be seen as passive-aggressive activism. The lyrics highlight the extent to which endemic poverty is exacerbated by exploitation for profit by the wealthy elite. He joins the ranks of Reggae pioneer Bob Marley through an unparalleled passion for protest lyrics that resonate with anyone who has experienced suffering or shares a deep commitment to strengthening the vision of freedom from the perspective of Rastafari.

Sounds of weeping competing with the hopeless cries of "Woi woi woi, woi woi woi woi" hit the eardrum incessantly (Sizzla, 1996). His use of half-rhyme is never systematic, and end-words 'before/secure, recognise/survive' are within the same consonant pattern. The use of half-rhyme/pararhyme consisting of "repeating whole syllables while altering the vowel" is a distinct feature of war poet Wilfred Owen's work (Corcoran, 2007: 27). W.B. Yeats who decried Owen as "unworthy of the poets' corner of a country newspaper" also deploys this rhyming pattern but does so less liberally (1940: 113).

In an interrogative form Sizzla inquires:

Tell mi if yuh ever walk	Tell me if you ever walk
Di streets of the ghetto dem before	The streets of the ghettos before
Fi see who is unsafe from secure	To see who is unsafe from secure
The lifestyle of my people	The lifestyle of my people
They fail to recognise	They fail to recognise
Do you know what it takes	Do you know what it takes
For ghetto people to survive	For ghetto people to survive
(1996)	

In a desperate plea, Sizzla implores, "Mr Rich, come offa di poor man's feet/ How is it the strong want to downpress the weak?" (1996). Faced with discrimination while growing up, Sizzla understands the unequal treatment of his fellow Rastafarian brethren and Black people in general. Confronting his abjection, abysmal living conditions, and meagre resources, he points out that the victimisation, unfortunately, results in bigotry. The complaint continues:

Then yuh commenting all the while	Then you comment all the while
About the places we live	About the places we live
Degrade wi lifestyle	Degrade our lifestyle
When yuh make it what it is	When you make it what it is

Have wi reaping violence in di cities	Have us reaping violence in di cities

(Sizzla, 1996)

The inflation, Sizzla points out, results in the recent alarming price increases everywhere. The song points to Jamaica's financial crisis during 1996-to 1997, which put the country's poorest citizens in an impossible quandary. The lines read:

Who you?	Who you?
Promise fi sink inflation below	Promise to sink inflation below
Yet it increase	Yet it increase
Everywhere dat yuh go	Everywhere that you go
Is this the way that yuh love a show?	Is this the way that your love shows?
Hurting others and yuh hold on so	Hurting others and yuh hold on so?

(Sizzla, 1996)

Sizzla takes issue with elected officials and people of influence who seek to benefit from the suffering of others under the guise of offering assistance. Writing about the marginalised, Sizzla is marginalised himself, a position closely linked to the history of the Rastafarian movement. Thus, his feelings of exploitation and exclusion are well founded. We could conclude that the Jamaican political reality exists on self-interest, opportunism and the continuing influence of imperialism that lays the foundations for the pervasive issues today.

Other words like 'Idren' replace the English word brother. The name attempts to establish familiarity and a sense of comradery and evoke the concept of oneness. Likewise, 'Sistren' has been used for identifying a female or sister in Dread Talk vocabulary as in the Sistren Women's Theatre Collective. In "Good Ways," Sizzla highlights the hypocrisy and moral double standards in Jamaican society: "They criticise their own Idren" (1998a). He tries to defend himself against society's idealistic criticism by relying on the English idiom, 'A drowning man will clutch at a straw.' A picture of desperation in this sentence adds to the meaning of the line: "Yet they would catch at a straw if they were to drown, aye" (Sizzla, 1998a).

Sizzla's statement, "They not different from those/ Scribes and Pharisees who come around, aye!" is based on the book of Matthew 23:1-4, quoting Jesus Christ as he condemns those who corrupt the minds of their followers (1998a). An

ever-present threat is making mischief: "They lurks in the corners/ Skylarks in the streets, flirt in the towns" (Sizzla, 1998a). He paints deception as a strategy adopted by the 'system' and how it is used to demoralise and create conflict in Jamaica. To critics and their divisive behaviour, Sizzla has some parting words: "Galang go get good ways, good grace/ Haffi purge fi pass zion gates" (1998a). The emphatic word 'good' is repeated to indicate the connection between being a good citizen and Rastafari.

When modified in Dread Talk, another English word, 'everlasting,' becomes 'everliving.' The suffix 'last' denotes extinction, a finale or an ending, though it can mean survival, making it positive. Rastafarians avoid English words with opposing or negative undertones. Hence, the concept of 'living' reinforces their belief in eternal life. The use of the prefix 'ever' appears in several words in the following line to the song "Bless Up": "Ever-living, Ever-faithful, Ever-sure, praise Ras Tafari, more an' more" (Sizzla, 2002a).

New words like herb, weed, ganja, and 'spliff' that first appeared in Rasta talk in the 1930s have expanded their original meaning over time as speakers enter new situations, new environments and acquire new mannerisms. For example, Buju Banton uses the new word 'spliff' in the following lines: "Yuh can, drink a beer but don't yuh dare bun a spliff/ Di scent a di marijuana mek yuh life uplift" (2006). Marijuana, characterised by the Rastafarian community as the 'tree of life,' is intrinsically linked with identity reconstruction and is repeatedly mentioned in Reggae songs. Bob Marley tells us: "When you smoke the herb, it reveals you to yourself to you" (Anonymous, 1976).

Smoking marijuana is part of accepting Rastafarianism. It is a conscious awakening or, to use Senghor's explanation of negritude, a process of "self-confirmation: confirmation of one's being" (1974: 27). As a result, Rastas use marijuana as an instrument of protest. It relates to several scriptures in the bible, specifically where the word 'herb' appears in the following verse: "He causeth the grass for the cattle and herb for the service of man" (Psalm: no pagination). Indeed, Rastas use marijuana in rituals and religious ceremonies to extol the movement's principles and deep devotion to Haile Selassie 1. It is used traditionally by Chinese, Hindus and ancient Greeks for "medicinal, religious and other practical purposes" (Jacob,

2009). Rastafari nyabinghi rituals and rites of passage also use marijuana symbolically.

Rastafarians rely on the belief that the healing potential of the medicinal marijuana plant raises their level of awareness and takes them on a spiritual journey to redeem their corrupted minds. In 2015, over a century since it was made illegal in 1913, Jamaica passed "the Dangerous Drugs Amendment Act designed to decriminalise recreational use of marijuana for certain purposes including medicinal and therapeutic" (Morris-Francis et al., 2018: 105). As expected, Rastafarians followed with great interest, as reported in the Jamaica *Gleaner*: "A small group from the Rastafarian community watched with keen interest and waited patiently yesterday" (Campbell, 2015).

The effects of marijuana are classically described as being linked to aggressive or criminal behaviour:

> Over the years public concern about the widespread use of marijuana and its connection to crime has generated countless articles in the newspaper and other media. In fact, during the 1930s, there were concerns about marijuana and its presumed relationship to violence, "pervert crime, and moral decay (Larson, 1984: 58).

However, there is no persuasive evidence that the use of marijuana causes or precipitates criminal activity. Marijuana is probably wholly unrelated to criminal and aggressive behaviour, and smokers who consume marijuana primarily are perhaps less of a problem than users of other drugs. Nonetheless, its widespread use among Rastafarians in the early days is primarily the reason for the cruel treatment received from the Jamaican police. In their defence, Rastafarians insist that smoking marijuana merely protects their right to exercise their religious freedom. They believe that smoking marijuana is one of the most therapeutic ways to withstand all attempts to suppress them and withstand absolute subjection.

Dread Talk constitutes a site of innovative linguistic practice, where acts of resistance are used creatively and subversively. The Rastafari expression is similar to Patois, wherein phonological change and semantic shift transform English grammar. We could take, for example, the Rasta word 'deaders', which describes a rotten carcass. 'Deaders' combines the English word 'dead' and the plural form of the

suffix ‘ers.’ Other innovations include ‘tel-lie-vision’ for television and ‘shitsem’ for the system, to name a few.

Modifying English words to produce new ones, entirely changing or altering their meaning and sound attempts, according to Nettleford, “effect the final deculturation” (1978: 13). Nettleford comments, “The Rastafarians are inventing a language, using existing elements to be sure, but creating a means of communication that would faithfully reflect the specificities of their experience and perception of self, life and the world” (cf. Owens, 1982). We could thus describe Dread Talk as a form of linguistic rebellion, and the proliferation of lexical innovations reflects the strong influence on Jamaican culture. In the tradition of Roots Reggae, the use of Dread Talk has influenced how Dancehall acts deal with Jamaican Patois and the poetic and subversive play on language in their songs.

In the preceding textual analysis to address questions about forms of protest expression in Root’s Reggae, I explore discursive strategies employed by Rastafarians which constitute a poetics of resistance. Each protest song is placed in its relevant context, and its lyrics are treated as manifestos contesting pervasive colonial dichotomies and assumptions. We concluded in chapter five Dread Talk has had a lasting impact on social change and contributes tremendously to Jamaica’s cultural milieu. This new phenomenon offers a new perspective on how the movement provides a radical framework for reconstructing dominant paradigms of colonialism and transforming its lumpen elements from lunatics and pariahs to social engineers and culture bearers. By extension, the analysis of the present Roots Reggae performance texts illustrates Dread Talk's creative, transformative and destabilising potential.

Some of the most well-known studies on Reggae music limit their analysis to song lyrics. However, new critical perspectives allow for in-depth exploration of Jamaica’s popular music and help shed new light on different themes and issues of significance. Postcolonial criticism challenges hegemonic discourses and, is therefore pertinent to overcoming academic disciplinary lines. It provides a framework for understanding postcolonial theory’s central concepts, especially as it relates to oral/scribal dynamics, Standard English/ dialect, and performance /print. Therefore, we better understand how and why Dread Talk, as a liminal

phenomenon, evokes an aesthetic experience that subverts accepted notions of colonisation and produce a new cultural paradigm. Employing a postcolonial inquiry, we examine Rasta's impetus towards developing a distinctive poetic voice for the subversive representation of colonisation to enable the expression of the tensions involved in developing a Rastafari cultural identity. The similarities drawn between Louise Bennett's dramatic monologues and Roots Reggae songs show that both challenge the dominance of European culture by employing a transgressive language and thus regard their 'barefooted' condition as a struggle that must be overcome.

Conclusion

The present study aims to draw upon performance poets Louise Bennett, Sizzla Kalonji, Capleton and Buju Banton to explore the use of vernacular language in Jamaican popular culture. For that reason, I carry out a postcolonial reading of these 'texts' written for performance to understand the complex interaction between textual and oral traditional forms. This is accompanied by an examination of the historical and cultural processes by which the performance poets contest historically grounded assumptions of the vernacular language.

At the onset of this study, this researcher set out to determine how the colonial legacy continues to influence language attitudes in Jamaica. The central theme that emerged from the study is the pervasive influence of colonial legacies which negatively impact how Jamaican Creole is viewed and how it is used. This researcher finds that very few early twentieth-century Jamaican writers used Patois as the literary medium and it was generally viewed negatively. Still, although English is the language used in official communication; Jamaican Creole has become a symbolic representation of Jamaican identity. Much has changed since the early years of Louise Bennett's career. Patois is now widely used in media, advertising campaigns and even in the houses of parliament.

Carolyn Cooper affirms "the progressive respectability of Creole" (1993: 322). Integral to this new development, the popularity of Reggae music and the Rastafari movement. The proliferation of new words through these important cultural elements have expanded and transformed Patois into the unofficial language of Jamaica. The continued language change debunks Klaus De Albuquerque's assumption nearly fifty years earlier that the movement has had little impact on the Jamaican proletariat since its inception (1976). In fact, the influence of Rastafari abounds in Jamaican culture, and there is ample proof that ordinary Jamaicans have been most receptive to such influence.

This study also sought to explore how the performance poets of the postcolonial era confront colonial ideologies. Collectively, they employed the subversive potential of Jamaican Creole to express how they feel about Jamaica's postcolonial predicament. Slavery and Jamaican independence serve as the main

points of focus. The subversive nature of Miss Lou's dialect poems asserts the language of the folk to tackle early problems of Jamaica's postcolonial identity. As such the Roots Reggae poets are also aware of a cultural continuity within Jamaican culture. Similar to Miss Lou, they use the transgressive Dread talk, a variation of Jamaican Creole, creating modifications and new words to articulate their counter-culture position and the contradictions of postcolonial society.

It is important to realise the artists are indebted to Louise Bennett no matter how they may look to Bob Marley. Inspired by the traditional African style of storytelling, Bennett employed common folk dialect and influenced the poetic chant-like verse of the artists. Bennett's poems asserted the language of the folk as available for oral and literary expression and tackled early problems of representation, not simply social commentary. The formative period following Jamaican independence serves as a historical reference for the artists' poetic rhetoric, just as their predecessor Miss Lou paid particular attention to her colonised forebears. Therefore, the awareness of a cultural continuity within Jamaican culture extends further back. They see what centuries-old traditions Miss Lou drew on and have since taken up the task of deploying the subversive potential of folk vernacular to disseminate a sort of intangible knowledge through their oral performances.

Finally, this researcher was interested in understanding how the assertion of Afro-Jamaican poetics effectually regenerates interest in Jamaican performance poetry, ultimately contributing to the restoration of the mother tongue and revival of West African folklore. The Jamaican folk speech has been diffused through Jamaican popular culture to an audience that probably would not have understood it otherwise. This also furthers our understanding of the ways in which oral histories can convey cultural nuances, or features that reflect ancestral origins and become a vital link between past and present. But while Jamaica's oral culture is a major influence on the performance poets in this study, their work is still underrepresented because of the language of composition. And because Jamaican Creole does not meet the perceived standard of a literary language, Jamaican popular culture is often ignored and not taken seriously in academic scholarship.

In literary criticism, substantial differences exist between literature written in English on the one hand and non-standard variations on the other. While the oral

tradition and folklore are significant influences on the performance poets included in this study, vernacular literature remains peripheral commensurate with its lowly position and not considered a work of literary merit. Indeed, the Jamaican story penetrates the criticism of North American literature but rarely beyond it, primarily through the recollections of authors or critics of Caribbean origin. However it is seldom received on its own merit regardless of the writer's name or social position.

A word on British colonisation and its impact on development in the Anglophone Caribbean. Derek Walcott's incisive critique of colonial legacies that pervade postcolonial Trinidad in 1981 is timely and applicable to the present circumstances in postcolonial Jamaica: "Tell Desperadoes when you reach that hill/I decompose, but I composing still" (1981: 432-438). Like Spoiler, the resurrected Calypsonian who comes back to 'sing' the truth, I have found that little has changed in Jamaica since August 6, 1962. This observation is consistent with the premise of colonial re-entrapment in the lines: "Is the same voices, that in the slave ship" and "is the same old khaki socks" (Walcott, 1981). In conclusion, Jamaica's neo-colonial inspired administration remains stewards of the old mother country. A new breed of corrupt, greedy, and self-serving elected officials have compromised national development and betrayed the Jamaican people's widespread expectations and aspirations.

As previously noted in the introduction, this innovative research complements Carolyn Cooper's experimental approach to performance texts. It broadly aligns with researchers such as Edward Brathwaite, Gordon Rohlehr and Christian Habekost. It is also complementary to the current debate among critics and scholars in Jamaica and elsewhere engaged in ongoing discourse concerning the linguistic and social implications of Jamaican English as an official language of Jamaica and language of educational instruction.

To return to the broad generalisation about the language issue that characterises postcolonial literature put forward earlier in this study, it is evident that language stereotyping restrains dialect literature in Jamaica. Understanding Jamaica's colonial history is compulsory for deconstructing the binary hierarchical relationship, contributing to language, social norms, and identity questions. Some of the

key works of anti-colonial literature and critique of colonial discourse produced during the post-war period examine the power relations between the coloniser and the colonised.

Radical thinkers like Aimé Cesaire, Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi sought to define colonialism and its effect on the psychology of the colonised. Memmi (1991) examines the 'objectified status' of colonised, while Fanon takes issue with their 'inferiority complex' (1967). They both argue that colonialism imperils the colonised's identity and self-concept, leading to internalised racial and cultural inferiority. Elsewhere Cesaire argues that the invention of the colonised amounts to *thingification* (1972). Hence, the study presents the Rastafarian revolutionary impetus as a 'counter-discursive' strategy interrogating colonial discourse supplanting '*thingification'* and the concept of the 'other' with the affirmative call to become '*smaddy*/somebody.'

In her dramatic monologues, Louise Bennett's challenge to the cultured/uncultured binary purely written in the Jamaican dialect unmasks society's hypocrisy and antagonism towards the unconventional, creative intellect like herself. Her subversive poems expose the personal struggle to revalorise Jamaica's mother tongue and oral tradition. Still struggling against the vestiges of colonial power, together, these performance poets reclaim subaltern voices, eke out a sense of self and contribute to the growing body of literature dedicated to the de-colonisation of Jamaica. Brathwaite's theses on 'nation language' and oral/scribal intertextuality in Caribbean poetry become matters of contention and trigger an impressive array of publications from leading scholars whose writings engage directly with aesthetics in Caribbean literature.

In the Jamaican situation, this study has shown that the promotion of Patois as a literary medium is equally disconcerting to critics worried that the gradual erosion of English influence could attenuate their connection to the 'mother country.' I have shown that language choice remains problematic for the writers under study, including indigenous language registers and the standardisation process. Thus, I argue that the general attitude towards speakers of Patois or the Rastafarian speech reflects society's negative perception that such expressions are inferior to Standard English and associated with the lower social classes. This further

helps to strengthen class-based prejudice and reinforce the idea of inferiority, oddity, and otherness.

Colonial knowledge production strongly influences the belief that the colonised had no history before exploitation. As Basil Reid concludes, the writing of Caribbean history quite consciously began after the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 (2009). The colonised are not considered suitably qualified to speak for themselves and are widely depicted unfavourably in colonial texts. Situated within the broader framework of Caribbean literature, Jamaican performance poets attempt to restore the passive and voiceless colonised through language by decolonising English culture's alleged moral and cultural superiority. Louise Bennett uses Patois to communicate a sense of 'Jamaicanness' to her audience and, through her dramatic monologues, mediate assumptions that cast off the colonised 'Other.' In the same way, Reggae poet-songwriters depict the lingering effects of colonial contact on Rastafarians and Jamaica's Black majority as they continue to languish on the periphery of society.

To reiterate, the primary purpose of this research is to demonstrate how the use of English as an effective tool in disseminating British values exposes patterns of cultural inequalities and fractured identities in Jamaica. A postcolonial critique of performance texts from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is carried out to deconstruct colonial modes of subjectivity. The recurrent folklore and oral lore themes serve as the foundation for a new postcolonial literary culture. They provide a basis for understanding Bennett's use of subversive strategies to critique master narratives and the Rastafarians' linguistic struggle against what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls "the danger of a single story" or what Edouard Glissant describes as the "struggle against a single history" (2009; 1997: 93). That writers dare to interrogate dominant hegemonic narratives and re-evaluate entrenched colonial norms inherited from the imperial centre, thus mirroring experiences of other Caribbean and postcolonial writers, is discernible. The selection of performance texts in this dissertation achieves what Édouard Glissant calls "the cross-fertilisation of histories" (1997: 93) and focuses on the 'voice-consciousness' of the Jamaican writer.

Chapter one focuses on how institutionalised historical patterns of colonial knowledge production contribute to the imagery of local inhabitants as inferior objects

to justify undertaking colonisation. Such reductiveness informs, constructs, and maintains the coloniser's imagination and expectation of the colonised. Here, the central question is how the colonised interpret these racialised images. Western stereotypes, particularly relevant to the 'cultured/ uncultured' dichotomy, are examined, looking backwards at the historiography of British colonisation of Jamaica for understanding the Afro-Jamaican aesthetic discourse.

Whereas linguistic ideologies foreground Western conceptions in which identity is mediated through language, postcolonial theory of non-Western languages problematises the primary function of English. We examine standard (British) English, the medium of instruction in the colonial and postcolonial classroom, as perhaps the most visible (and audible) symbol of cultural imperialism. Using Ngugi's argument that language is 'spiritual subjugation' together with Fanon and Memmi's explication of the psychology of oppression, I tackle literary and theoretical issues raised by critics contesting the objectification of colonised peoples. Finally, this chapter demonstrates that black folks continually renegotiate their servile status due to their perceived inferiority.

An exploration of the treatment of Patois in early twentieth-century Jamaican literature in chapter two reveals how English, as an inscription of hegemony, functions as a symbolic cultural manifestation of British culture. For that reason, Patois is disdained as a literary medium by local writers and disregarded as the official language of Jamaica. This suggests that the influences at work on postcolonial societies present challenges for displacing the imposed language as a medium for national literature. The concept of binary opposition between civilised/primitive and cultured/uncultured to justify domination results in Standard English and Creole languages designated with intelligence/ ignorance. To reinforce the notion of abandoning such a standard thus seems both a legitimate attempt to untie a complicated knot and an almost impossible feat.

Further in chapter two, we also shed light on leading Anglophone Caribbean personalities of the 1960s and 1970s who contend that the history of British colonisation provides unique challenges and opportunities for establishing a sense of place and an identity in the region. Concerned with redefining Caribbean literary history, the discussion concentrates on reconstituting discursive practices to 'write

back' to Britain. Edward Brathwaite makes a case for a 'nation language,' extending the argument to the possibilities for an alternative literary analysis of performance texts. This subject is presented in the context of a 'quarrel' among West Indian scholars and cultural critics during the 1960s, a decade marked by the articulations of anti-colonial sentiments across geographical borders. Here we see an important development in the aesthetic ambition of Caribbean writers.

This brings us to the primary focus of this chapter: the oral tradition in performance text. In the discussion, the oral/scribal tradition and the 'folk' help elucidate the intrinsic values of Jamaican popular culture. These arguments are extended throughout the rest of the paper, promoting the Jamaican vernacular as literary transgression and foregrounding the Rastafari poetic language of resistance. Moreover, this discussion is pertinent to establishing continuities between the colonial and the postcolonial.

If chapter two introduces the problem of privileging the voices from the margin, then chapter three poses a direct challenge to linguistic imperialism and accepted orthodoxies of literary criticism. This chapter essentially defines the language problem as Louise Bennett understands it. Interrogating the nature and pervasiveness of English, questions are raised about linguistic ideology, who ascribes status and by what authority. Bennett's subordinated position is two-fold: she is a colonised subject living in a traditionally patriarchal society.

The Du Boisian concept of 'double consciousness' describes the specificity of the black experience, the concerns of which appear in Bennett's work. It entails: "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois, 1903: 38). As such, 'double consciousness' equates to Gayatri Spivak's notion of a 'double colonisation of women' expounded in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (Spivak, 1988). Relative to the previous chapters, Bennett explores the potential of narrating subalternity and the plurality of the margin as a means of resignifying West African cultural values and techniques.

In a reconstitution of the muted marginal voice, chapter four delves into Louise Bennett's subversive poems focusing on her ridicule of colonisation. Even her self-deprecating humour mocks negative stereotypes of her community. We

observe how Bennett repossesses Afro-Jamaican folklore, its sounds and nuances to move away from the traditional emphasis on Standard English. Jamaican Patois represents history and space - the expression of enslaved Africans on Jamaican plantations. It represents Bennett's colonial identity, which markedly influences her approach to authorial voice. However, as it relates to popular culture, the use of Patois brings out the plurality of Jamaican society.

Louise Bennett's poems on independence "Nayga Yard" (1982d), "Jamaica Elevate" (1966e), "Independance" (1966c) and "Independence Dignity" (1966d) signal the reversal of the 'grand narratives' of colonialism and the irony of decolonisation. "Nayga Yard," repeated references to black excellence and the self-determination of Jamaicans reverberate throughout the lines: "Nayga dah reign predominant! / De place belongs to we!" (Bennett, 1982d). Similarly, "Independance" sarcastically welcomes Jamaica's newfound autonomy with the opening line: "Independance wid a vengeance!" (Bennett, 1966c). Miss Matty, Bennett's naive female character, also harbours unrealistic expectations, hoping that somehow adjustments to Jamaica's size and location will accompany independence.

The expectations of Jamaica becoming a sovereign state are explicitly laid out in "Jamaica Elevate." With an aura of entitlement, Miss Lou is confident and self-assured that Jamaica has propelled onto the same international stage (The United Nations) as Russia, the United Kingdom and the USA. In "Independence Dignity," a jubilant Miss Lou makes much of the Jamaican spirit of independence to Cousin Min portraying a festive atmosphere. The first two lines sensationalise the events: "Dear Cousin Min, yu/ miss sinting" (Bennett, 1966d).

"Bans a Killin," "Dry-Foot Bwoy," and "Noh Lickle Twang" expose the binary opposites that pervade the relationship between Standard English and the Jamaican dialect (Bennett, 1982a,e,c). These poems show how colonial values function in language and govern the social construct of class identity. Bennett's social commentary challenges Western constructs that sustain the unfavourable positionality of Jamaican Creole, the typical speech of Jamaicans. In "Bans a Killin," Bennett stoutly defends the Jamaican dialect and informs the dialect loathing Mas' Charlie: "Dah language weh yuh proud a… Dat it spring from dialect!" (1982a). Again, she exposes the desire for social status and position ascribed to speakers of

Standard English in “Noh Lickle Twang!” The poem tells of a mother’s “shame” and judgmental attitude toward her son, who returns from America without acquiring the envied foreign accent (Bennett, 1982e). On the contrary, “Dry-Foot Boy” (1966) ridicules the mentioned male character Cudjoe, widely known throughout the community but returns to Jamaica, speaking with a pompous foreign twang.

“Colonisation in Reverse” chronicles the steady flow of Jamaican immigrants to England during the 1960s: “Man an woman, old an youn jusa pack dem bag and baggage An tun history upside dung!” (Bennett, 1982b). Other poems like “Dutty Tough” frame economic hardship and poverty while the interrogative “Back to Africa” reacts to demands for African repatriation espoused by Marcus Garvey and the Rastafarians in Jamaica 1970s (Bennett, 1966b,a).

While Rastafarians and other Afro-Jamaicans form a similar position and are perceived as mutually exclusive, Rasta’s identity in the Jamaican citizenship discourse is marked by controversy. Chapter five explores how the Rastafarians developed their unique speech pattern, Dread Talk, and influenced the revolutionary rhetoric of resistance in Reggae music. The literature reveals that when Rastafarians first initiated Dread Talk in Jamaican popular culture, they were cast as lunatics, unhinged, and repudiated by almost everyone. Therefore the subversive speech form designates a powerful tool to dismantle hegemonic power structures. The issues discussed therein reveal how the emergence of this countercultural movement during the 1930s is deemed transgressive by the wider Jamaican society. The centrality of black subjectivity and the anti-colonial impulse of Rastafarians are interwoven with the interpretation of relevant song lyrics without losing their contexts and referential significance in the final chapter.

Examining Roots Reggae with reference to Dread Talk, chapter six brings to the fore Rastafari counter-poetics in relevant songs. A postcolonial reading of song lyrics elucidates more fully the Rastafarian social protest. We show how the evocative lyrics and aesthetic expressions of Roots Reggae connect meaning by analysing them within the purview of postcolonial literature and giving them academic credence. Key themes of this chapter include displacement and repression, colonial continuities and asserting the black identity. These common themes intertwine

with Louise Bennett's articulations of Afro-Jamaican subject formation and neo-colonialism in chapter four.

Treated as performance texts, we explore how poet-songwriters Capleton, Buju Banton and Sizzla Kalonji relate their postcolonial experiences, seeking to do so authentically using Dread Talk. In a search for belonging, Buju Banton reveals the internal repercussions arising out of living in Jamaica and feeling mentally and physically uprooted. Essentially, "through the processes of slavery and colonisation...the African self has become alienated from itself (self-vision)" leading to internal conflict, displacement and fragmented identity (Mbembe, 2002: 241). Rastafarians are critical of how the African self comes to be constituted in the postcolonial conversation. The songs "Destiny" and "Till I'm Laid to Rest" reflect Buju's experiences as a displaced Jamaican of African heritage, feelings of 'otherness' and a pervasive longing for home.

The alienation of the African self/African identity has come about through a history of displacement that reveals the ongoing impact of colonisation. In "True God" and "Praise Ye Jah" we see precisely how distortion operates. Central focus is placed on imposing depictions of a white God as an extant and sacred entity and the misrepresentation of Christianity as the only true religion (1997c, 1998b). 'Reimaging God' is set on the Rastafarian commitment to deconstruct the domination of white Christian masters and interrogate how notions of white superiority distort and diminish the cultures of the enslaved Africans. While Sizzla focuses on Christian missionary activities and rejects anything deemed adulterated teachings, Capleton and Buju Banton appeal to the Rastafari ancestral god (Buju, 1995b; Capleton, 2000).

Roots Reggae communicates Rastafari's implied rejection of the harmful assumptions of the coloniser, the colonial regime and the boundaries imposed by colonialism. We look at another theme constituting another postcolonial dilemma, 'The colonial present.' "Not An Easy Road" gives voice to Jamaicans living in poverty whose socio-economic conditions have been framed by colonial history in terms of racial inequality. It speaks to the importance of defying feelings of despair and not losing hope (Buju, 1995a). "Raggy Road" and "Babylon a Listen" present the emergent black

identity engaged in modes of resistance to social and political manipulation and the willpower and perseverance to work through adversity (Capleton, 1997; Sizzla, 1997a).

We then explore the 'sound-symbolic' underpinnings of 'Word Sound Power' and how certain expressions are symbolically applied to objects or events. The subversive meaning of the words such as 'Babylon,' 'judgment,' and 'fiyah,' denote institutionalised oppression, a day of reckoning in the context of God's punishment and a rejection of authority or anything that contravenes Rastafari values. In terms of Babylon and judgement, there is an apparent similarity between Buju Banton's solemn assertion of retribution and Capleton's insistent rebuke to neocolonial practices (Buju, 1993; Capleton, 1995a,b). Disapproving immoral and unethical behaviour, we come to enquire into the nature of 'fiyah' and the effect of this symbolic condemnation in Dread Talk (Capleton, 2002). We learn that fiyah is perpetually a symbol of God's wrath, but it also symbolises purification or destruction depending on the context of the message and how it is viewed.

The Rastafarians explicitly challenge the humiliating facilities and unfavourable position assigned to black people, as echoed through Buju Banton's "Mighty Dread." By professing the forceful and authoritative countenance of Rastas, Buju speaks of triumphing over corruption and imperial hegemony in exalted terms. Dread and dreadlocks hairstyle has become powerful expressions of identity, religious consciousness and symbol of subversion of Eurocentrism. Being self-affirmative, Rastas form the expression 'I and I' using the personal pronoun 'I' to signify oneness with their God, Emperor Haile Selassie I. It is also an expression of self-discovery and constantly speaking oneself into existence. We can find elements of the restoration of the black self and the re-emergence of the black body as a sacred entity in (Buju, 1997; Capleton, 1995b; Sizzla, 1997b).

We finally arrive at the innovations that are practical and have been transmitted and ultimately popularised through Reggae music. We are introduced to 'politricks,' a term that denotes political deception. Buju Banton turns our attention to how the rhetoric of nationalism in the postcolonial perspective is communicated through trickery and duplicity (Buju, 1996). The prefixes over in 'overstand' and down in 'downpress' elicit an oppressive effect (Capleton, 1995c; Sizzla, 1996).

These new words take on the opposite meaning in English, leading to further changes in Jamaican Creole. We can add to this 'Idren,' 'Sistren,' and other important terms Rastas use to express kinship relationships, not necessarily blood-related (Sizzla, 1998a). Moreover, words with the prefix 'ever' are characterised by their permanence and mean unending or eternal (Sizzla, 2002a). A celebration of the spliff emphasises the therapeutic benefits of smoking marijuana that Rastas believe opens channels for spiritual self-awareness (Buju, 2006). These lyrics occasionally feature recitals of Bible verses.

The analysis shows that the Rastafarians make a strong case for cultural identity. Indeed, the poet-songwriters in this research continue to represent and validate the Afro-Jamaican experience through Roots Reggae. Reminiscent of Louise Bennett's dialect poetry, Dread Talk counter-poetics retains the potential to reawaken the African sensibilities. Although many African values are slowly vanishing or transforming as Dread Talk is dispersed through Roots Reggae to new territories, it is not curtailed by globalisation.

It must be acknowledged there are some possible limitations and biases to this study that could be addressed in future research, the first being the language of composition. The very language in which this dissertation is written is paradoxical because its own internal stratification forces Jamaican Creole to a peripheral position. Since Jamaican Creole has no recognised writing system, I am forced to speak and must nevertheless write in British English, the language available for formal academic writing.

Another limitation of this study is the notable lack of diversity in the local music industry. Jamaican popular music is still predominantly male-dominated. The current generation of female Roots Reggae songwriters suffers from a lack of profile or music catalogue compared with their male counterparts. Thus, it is difficult to infer how females deal with the same topics. The same argument applies equally to the case of Louise Bennett, whose prolific output in the mid-twentieth century remains unmatched in range and popularity by any Jamaican male poet. This study also introduces a further potential bias in that this researcher is sympathetic to Rastafarians, which has become apparent. Finally, the study is centred around Afro-Jamaican aesthetics, which

is admirable given the ongoing struggle to advance black consciousness. Nevertheless, there is something to be said about the descendants of indentured labourers, especially those originally from Syria, Lebanon, India and China.

Scholarly discourse has subtly adapted and transformed patterns in the historical and literary representation of the 'native informant' in the light of postcolonial critique. From a theoretical standpoint, we have examined Jamaican popular culture, through new frameworks and started to understand Afro-Jamaican poetics with what could be argued, a high calibre selection. This study has fundamentally given a space for displaced 'subaltern' voices or to use Gayatri Spivak's term 'third-world' voices to be represented and heard in Western discourse. The study is a scholarly contribution that can be improved upon and can be applied to other disciplines. For example, we could hope to see research activities on Jamaican popular culture to help further discussions on bilingual education and language recognition. It could also be applied to the history of social movements for advancing our understanding of protest rhetoric in Reggae and other music genres.

From a practical standpoint it is important that we continue to pursue a postcolonial approach which is particularly sensitive to the influences of colonial legacies and potentially bring about a change in theoretic approach in academia. Now that we know that popular Jamaican cultural forms can be approached from a postcolonial perspective that might shift the way we perceive them and could potentially bring them academic weight. This could also encourage future researchers who might not have considered them before. The study supports Rex Nettleford's postulation that it is time to forge a postcolonial inquiry free of Eurocentrism whereby the development of Jamaica's cultural production is generally assessed in relation to the concept and definition of British culture (1989).

Future research on performance poetry could include a broader range of texts, many of which have remained unexplored or had elements explored within other disciplines. Jean D'Costa's *Voices in Exile: Jamaican Texts of the 18th and 19th Centuries* and Karina Williamson's *Contrary Voices: Representations of West Indian Slavery, 1657-1834* are good starting points (1989; 2008). Also, an examination of elements of Jamaican folktales - plot, setting and theme - that have an overall impact on the creation of characters in D'Costa's children's literature would make

an interesting topic for research. We also want to find a way to incorporate different cultural forms such as the Jamaican pantomime and the Mento tradition for an understanding of the predominant themes in those formative stages of Jamaica's cultural history. It is important to consider treating them as performance texts specifically because we have seen that this type of material can be critically examined in this manner within the broader postcolonial framework.

The history of Jamaican pantomime and the indigenisation of the British tradition through local themes and characters offers an especially attractive field of research for advancements in Jamaican popular culture. Correspondingly, the Mento tradition that retains valued aspects of West African customs while not fitting easily into the traditional categories of textual authority offers a space for scholars engaged in poetics of folk tradition. Postcolonial feminist readings of Lorna Goodison, Honor Ford-Smith and Louise Bennett related to gender inequity, sexuality, and the representation of the 'Third World' woman could offer a unique contribution to critical theory. These are only examples of avenues of research by which we may hope to see scholarship having an impact on reducing the traditional disciplinary boundaries that tend to view a research problem through an unnecessarily rigid framework.

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