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DREAD TALK: THE RASTAFARIANS' LINGUISTIC RESPONSE TO SOCIETAL OPPRESSION

by

CAROL ANNE MANGET-JOHNSON

Under the Direction of Dr. Mary Zeigler

ABSTRACT

Opposed to the repressive socio-economic political climate that resulted in the impoverishment of masses of Jamaicans, the Jamaican Rastafarians developed a language to resist societal oppression. This study examines that language--Dread Talk--as resistive language.

Having determined that the other variations spoken in their community--Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole--were inadequate to express their dispossessed circumstances, the Rastafarians forged an identity through their language that represents a resistant philosophy, music and religion. This resistance not only articulates their socio-political state, but also commands global attention.

This study scrutinizes the lexical, phonological, and syntactical structures of the poetic music discourse of Dread Talk, the conscious deliberate fashioning of a language that purposefully expresses resistance to the political and social ideology of their native land, Jamaica.

INDEX WORDS: Dread Talk, Rastafarian, Reggae, Iyaric, Language Variation, Caribbean Creole, Oppression, Standard Jamaican English, Bob Marley, Political Resistance, Haile Selassie I, Colonialism

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CAROL ANNE MANGET-JOHNSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2008

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2008

DREAD TALK: THE RASTAFARIANS' LINGUISTIC RESPONSE TO SOCIETAL OPPRESSION

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College of Arts and Sciences
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DEDICATION

"Your hands shaped me and made me"
~ Job 10:8

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my ancestors and those Rastafari *bredren* who have fought and are still fighting to preserve an esteemed African identity while spreading the love of *Jah* to the entire world. And, to *Jes-us Christ*--my Savior and Sustainer--who has already "made all the crooked places straight," I give thanks and praises.

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I appreciate all those in the English Department who have from time to time been helpful in organizing the conferences we all find so helpful or providing much needed information or feedback which help students like me navigate our way through the Department: those who don't teach, but work tirelessly behind the scenes. To fellow graduate students: I wish you the very best in your future endeavors. Some of you, you know who you are, have taken the time to mentor in such helpful ways when I first started this program. Your words of encouragement and advice have helped propel me to such a moment as this. To the library system for the research resources I have been able to access, and the personnel who provided critical help in finding those resources sometimes--many thanks. Finally, but of utmost importance, my appreciation goes to my husband, Neville, and my daughters Shaina and Lauren, for exercising such patience and understanding when I was very busy. *Jah love.*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Why This Study Is Important

> *"People evolve a language in order to describe and thus control their circumstances or in order not to be submerged by a reality they cannot articulate. What joins all languages, and all men, is the necessity to confront life. . ."*
>
> ~James Baldwin (1979)

James Baldwin's quote in his 1979 essay, "If Black English Isn't a Language, Then Tell me, What is?" postulates a plausible, fundamental *raison d'être* for the development of language: language is often used as a powerful instrument of resistance and change. Historically, people indisputably communicate with each other to improve social harmony and advance sustainable progress. That language is the preferred medium of such communication is undeniable. The development of various language varieties that exist today indicates one group's motivation to maximize its interaction with another in order to promote progress. But the American civil rights activist and writer, Baldwin, went on to add that language also functions "as the most vivid key to identify: it reveals the private identity, and connects one with, or divorces one from, the larger public or communal identity." Such were the motivations of a native Jamaican sect, the Rastafarians, who fashioned a unique language variety called Dread Talk, a variant of Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole. Their act of resistance started with the thrust to divorce themselves from the larger public identity of being submissive Jamaicans who did not resist the oppressive tactics of a post-colonial repressive political establishment. Language was the vehicle of such resistance. Baldwin articulates very well the reason why a group of oppressed people such as the Rastafarians may develop their own language. Standard Jamaican English (SJE) is the official language in Jamaica, and Jamaican Creole (JC), an English lexicon- based Creole, is the everyday speech the natives use in informal

interactions in their communities. Neither Standard Jamaican English, the aspiration of the educated upper/middle class, nor Jamaican Creole (JC), traditionally the speech pattern of the Jamaican poor (Pollard 4), was adequate to articulate the Rastafarians' resistance to their impoverished socio-economic condition. The Rastafarians therefore created Dread Talk, their own language of social protest, to challenge the existing visages of past colonial repression and the forces of oppression still existent in the current political establishment. They use the language to "confront life."

This study is a judicious investigation of the evolution of Dread Talk and its impact in native Jamaica and globally. Its importance is bound to the historical implications embedded in the language via the Africans brought to the Caribbean as slaves. They developed resistance movements and languages--Caribbean English Creole cultures from which the Rastafarians are descendants. An examination of the development of resistance in Caribbean English Creole cultures (See Part B) leads to the identification of Jamaica as a significant Creole culture and thereby attaches great significance to the origin of the Rastafarian movement. The perception postulated by Velma Pollard, former lecturer and linguist at the University of the West Indies, that significance lies in the notion that cultures of revival, politics and poverty are "inextricably [. . .] bound up with protest and protest with language," deserves support (2000 22). This insight is exactly correct about the Rastafarian culture. It is through the language of Dread Talk that the Rastafarians developed their rhetoric of resistance for their everyday philosophy of living, spiritual practice, and especially their music. Dread Talk is the language of much of Jamaica popular music especially reggae which has emerged from within the Rastafarian community (Pollard 87), and has become the protest music of the world. Reggae not only proclaims the injustices of the poor in Jamaica, but exposes social injustices such as apartheid and other forms

of discrimination in Third World countries. Many of the songs condemn corruption in "Babylon," the name given to establishments/systems of hegemony--political or otherwise--and inspire disenfranchised peoples everywhere to oppose ideologies that offer them a negative self-concept, diminish their culture, and rob them of economic and political parity. Thus we may ask the question, what does the exploitation of language, in this case in music, suggest about an implicit theory of resistance? (Nettleford 14).

The answer to that question corroborates the importance of this study. Colonization brought with it the imposition of the language of the colonizers. In the case of the Anglo-Caribbean colonies, that language was English. It often limited the expression of natives whose language and culture were not in harmony with that of their oppressors. As Ngugi wa Thiong, a Gikuyu writer from Kenya who now uses his native language exclusively in his literary works points out, "through language people have not only describe[d] the world but understand themselves . . . that language and culture are inseparable, and that the loss of the former results in the loss of the other" (cited in Margulis 1996). Thiong's observation is significant because the Eurocentric ideal of superiority that colonialism espoused was still very evident amongst natives of post colonial Caribbean countries. It acted as an agent to invalidate the Creole languages of the masses and erode their culture. Over time, the general conviction of many, even the natives, was that Standard English was superior language--a language to be acquired if one was to be considered educated and a member of the upper class. On the other hand, the Creole languages wrought through the crucible of slavery and developed from the pidgin of their West African ancestors were an indication of ignorance and poverty. If any aspect of their distinctiveness as a people needed to be safeguarded in order to preserve their culture, it was their language.

Centuries of the practice of erasing the memories of pre-colonial cultures and history the slaves had brought with them and the installation of the supremacy of new, more insidious modes of colonialism still plagued the psyche of the natives. They had come to accept their language as inferior--"broken English"--not worthy of being considered a language in its own right (Margulis and Nowakoski 1996). Historically, Creole languages developed through colonialism and conquest: out of contact situations that necessitated communication between people whose languages were mutually unintelligible (Margulis 1996). Yet, ironically the languages of the supposedly dominant culture--that of the colonizers--emerged as official languages, and that of the colonized as inferior vernaculars. Thus, in the 1950's the Jamaican Rastafarians, in a quest to "not be submerged by a reality they [could] not articulate," (Baldwin 1979) fashioned their own code, Dread Talk. Dread Talk was in response to the need to find an exclusive manner of expression that would replicate their philosophical, spiritual and political state (Pollard 1982b 81). This socially isolated group was determined to retain their identity as African descendants and native Jamaicans, and resist the domination of the establishment that sought to continue their subjugation. It is therefore notable and historic that this small community of underprivileged people was resolute enough to mentally free themselves through an avowal to create and speak in a language of their own making: one which subverts the language of the status quo. This feat is an exemplar of a unique linguistic accomplishment--a language that is a variation of a variation-- one worthy of exploration and perhaps emulation, hence the insistence that this study is imperative.

Pollard suggests that "Jamaican Creole the language of the Jamaican poor was made to expand its lexicon to accommodate an idiom that would express 'resistance to the mental and spiritual entrapment of the "Black mind" in its search for peace and love'" (1982b 81). Such an

idiom is Dread Talk. In her work, "The Speech of the Rastafarians of Jamaica in the Eastern Caribbean: The Case of St. Lucia," Pollard quotes Allsopp (1980 102) who concisely determines how: that it is "by . . . a kind of imperial intent in the structure proper of the English language." The Rastafarians made innovative adjustments to the lexicon and structure of Standard Jamaican English and minimally to Jamaican Creole to develop Dread Talk. The language extended over time beyond the boundaries of the Jamaican youth who, not withstanding class, were the first to embrace the language. It infiltrated the societies of other countries with substantial black populations, predominantly in the Caribbean territories where English was the lingua franca (81). Through the auspices of culture--its art, literature, artistic performances, and music--this language resonates with the hope and despair of a people. In times when injustices proliferate through the exploitation of man by man, language becomes the resistive force one group may use to combat the intolerance of another. This study intends to explore the establishment of a Creole language as a particular medium of resistance to societal oppression with specific reference to the Rastafarian community.

Dread Talk uses music as a vehicle for such resistance. The explosion of reggae music in the Caribbean in the 1970's acted as a conduit for the language through the message of the lyrics which was implanted in the consciousness of the people whose history differed only in superficial ways from the history of the people of Jamaica (81). One Trinidadian calypsonian, Black Stalin (1979) juxtaposes the unifying history of Caribbean peoples as espoused by Rastafari philosophy against the unfavorable governance of Caribbean economic and political institutions in the song "Caribbean Unity" (1991). The chorus states as follows,

One race (de Caribbean man)	Line 10
From the same place (de Caribbean man)	Line 11
Dat make the same trip (de Caribbean man)	Line 12

On de same ship (de Caribbean man). . . Line 13

This chorus exemplifies an emotive insistence of not only a shared history, but a common ancestry. The following lines insinuate the promise of unity but delivers divisiveness:

You say dat de federation[1]	Line 19
Was imported quite from England	Line 20
And you going and form a CARIFTA[2]	Line 21
With ah true West Indian flavor	Line 22
But when CARIFTA start running. . .	Line 23
Is just money speech dem prime minister giving	Line 25
Well I say no set ah money, could form a unity	Line 26
First of all your people need their identity, like . . .	Line 27

Each government's self-serving interests ignore the need for a common cultural identity espoused by the philosophy of unity and solidarity advocated in the chorus. The universal nature of the human condition--the similarities in man's aspirations, fears and expectations--lead to our collective hope that good prevails over evil (82). These are probably reasons why reggae music has extended to the cities of the world (82). In tandem with the common historical background of the Caribbean territories, it is not surprising that the message of the Rastafari movement and the language in which it is expressed has spread throughout the region and globally. People the world over could relate to the ideals of social justice, peace, and love that that message propagates. The most distinct contribution of Rastafari could be said to be at the level of consciousness. According to Eusi Kwayana (1987), Guyanese political activist and libretti, the Rastafari movement has succeeded in effectively "branding the existing regimes and existing

[1] Established in 1958, the West Indies Federation comprised the ten territories of: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, the then St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Saint Lucia, St.Vincent and Trinidad and Tobago. Its aim was to establish a political union among its members.

[2] CARIFTA- the acronym for Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA)- was founded by Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago on 15 December 1965, with the signing of the Dickenson Bay Agreement (the Agreement establishing the Caribbean Free Trade Association). They were joined on 1 July, 1968 by Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Saint Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines; and on 1 August, 1968 by Montserrat and Jamaica. In 1971 Belize (then British Honduras) joined the Association. These Caribbean countries had recently become independent, and CARIFTA was intended to unite their economies and to give them a joint presence on the international scene.

orders as illegitimate," and has not only gained the support of the masses in this perspective, but also has convinced those who conform to the traditions of the establishment (qtd. in Campbell xiii). Thus, the Rastafari has made and is still making an exceptional contribution to Caribbean resistance. The movement has a defining place in history. These are the reasons why this study is important.

B. The Development of Resistive Language in Caribbean English Creole Culture: The Jamaican Rastafarian Resistance

Caribbean nations, colonized by several distinct European imperialists at one time or another, speak African-based Creole languages that include lexicons of the various European languages--namely English, French or Dutch. Specifically, British West Indies or Anglophone Caribbean territories which were colonized by the British have an English lexicon influence. Countries like Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua, Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, most of the British Virgin Islands, and Jamaica are amongst those that were colonized by the British. Advocates of the Creolist hypothesis insist that socio-historical conditions of slavery that are supported by spoken language data are the basis for how Creole languages developed (Green 9). They provide evidence that certain structures in Caribbean Creole languages such as Jamaican Creole and Gullah from the South Carolina Sea Islands were derived from West African language influence (Eberhardt 19). Linguist John Rickford (revised 1997) in his study, "The Creole Origins of African American Vernacular English: Evidence from Copula Absence," supports this view and provides an extensive list of its best supporters, a lucid outline of the controversy surrounding it, as well as a reasoned presentation of the possible types of evidence that support the issue of Creole origins of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and

many Caribbean Creole languages. Though the scope of this study does not require an in-depth discussion of this issue, it is relevant to at least define and explain components of this issue as they have some bearing on linguistic structures found in Jamaican Creole and Dread Talk. Creolists argue that West African language (pidgin) influences are inherent in Creole languages with the origin of many of the slaves brought to the Caribbean and Americas being West Africa.

A simplistic definition of a *pidgin* is that it is a contact language born out of the necessity of "mother-tongue [native] speakers" of different languages having to develop a way to communicate amongst themselves in extended contact situations like trade, enslavement or migration (8.1). Elements of native languages are combined to form a more unsophisticated language that has "fewer words, less morphology, and a more restricted range of phonological and syntactic options" according to Rickford (8.1). *Creole* languages develop out of the crucible of pidgin languages. They have an identifiable time of birth in that they were non-existent at one time, but evolve as the descendants of pidgin speakers acquire a native language that becomes the language of the community, through what respected linguist, Salikoko Mufwene (1998), calls "approximations of approximations of approximations of nonstandard dialects of European languages" (Frank 6). Because of their expanded communal role, creoles have a more extensive vocabulary and complex grammatical structure than pidgins. As Rickford points out, though the assumption is that creoles evolved from pidgins there are some arguments that contend that many creoles, especially Caribbean Creoles, represent "abrupt creolization," that is--"they have come into use as a primary or native contact languages before a fully crystallized pidgin had had time to establish itself" (Rickford 1997 8.0). This assumption has implications for the *Creole continuum* often discussed in relation to Creole languages found in such places as Guyana and Jamaica where a range exists. The range subsist between the purest Creole spoken called a

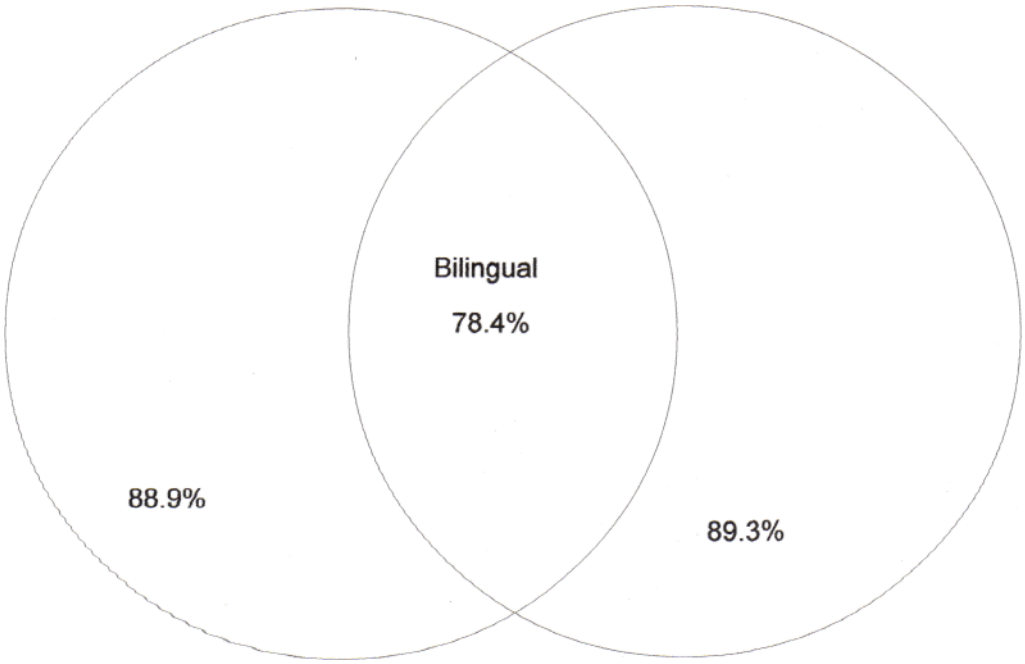
basilect at one end of the spectrum and the most standard variety of English, an acrolect, at the other end. In between, there are a number of intermediate existing varieties called mesolects (8.1). In Jamaica in particular, even today, there are pejorative sentiments associated with speaking along the continuum closer to the basilects and mesolects of Jamaican Creole, and not being bilingual, speaking both Creole and Standard Jamaican English (Jae 2008). Yet, this is not to say that Jamaicans do not relish speaking in the creole or "patois," as they prefer to call it, because most Jamaicans do speak in their native tongue. As the study on language awareness and attitudes conducted by the Jamaican Language Unit in 2005 (See Fig. 1.1) corroborates, a large segment of the population admits to speaking Jamaican Creole: 88.9% and 78.4% consider themselves bilingual--speaking both Creole and Standard English, respectively. Like Rex Nettleford, guru of linguistic and cultural development in the region indicates, "linguistic autonomy becomes the pride of a people and some would even die in defense of it . . . but it is Standard English of the metropolitan brand which, though functionally a second language, is culturally mandatory if one is to get in the society" (Nettleford 13). Standard English is still considered superior despite the people's obvious preference.

The visages of the colonial Eurocentricism remaining in the cultural and educational systems impact the development of social and cultural values and discourse in current feelings of social inferiority. Up until the late 1970's, like the rest of the Anglo- Caribbean, Jamaican educational system continued the post-colonial institutionalization of the British system of education through the O-level/A-level[3] examinations. These English-based instructions and examinations were responsible for the continuation of colonial values and ideals that rendered

[3] The ***O-level (Ordinary Level)*** is a subject-based qualification conferred as part of the General Certificate of Education (GCE). It was introduced as part of British educational reform in the 1950s alongside the more in-depth and academically rigorous **A-level (Advanced Level)**. An O-level is a qualification of its own right, but more often taken in preparation for an A-level syllabus. England replaced O-levels by the GCSE exams in 1988.

Fig. 1.1 Language Awareness of Jamaicans - 2005

Provided by the Jamaican Language Unit (2005)



Jamaican Creole **Standard Jamaican English**

Tile Concepts and Descriptions

1. **88.9%: Jamaican Creole**
   Percentage of speakers who declared that they speak Jamaican Creole

2. **89.3%: Standard Jamaican English**
   Percentage of speakers who declared that they speak Standard Jamaican English

3. **73.4%: Bilingual**
   Percentage of speakers who admitted to speaking both Jamaican Creole (JC) and Standard Jamaican English (SJE).

   N. B. Fewer than 11% speak only JC or SJE

*. Bilingual- Speakers of both languages

Fig. 1.1 This subsection of the Language Attitude questionnaire which produced this data provides insight into how Jamaicans respondents view their acceptance of the languages they speak.

Jamaican Creole languages in the continuum, inferior. Rex Nettleford asks these questions pertinent to this discussion in his work called Caribbean Cultural Identity:

- "How many are the young humans who have been relegated to stations of lifelong inferiority or a sense of irredeemably low status because their own linguistic potential has not been properly explored?" (13).
- "What excuse can there be for depriving [21st century Jamaican child] of his rich native tongue forged out of the specifics of his and his forbear[er]s' experience simply to make room for what is consecrated the universal and powerful language?" (14).
- "Is the diversity again to be on the terms of the traditionally dominant overlord?" (14)

The answers to these questions would raise the issue of language politics. As Mary Clark proposes in her work Structures of English for Readers, Writers and Teachers, "in real life, [. . .], the classification of language varieties is partly a political decision" (Clark 192). Language is often used as a means to discriminate against a group, race or social class in order to further the agenda of a dominant group or culture. This bias is quite evident if we look at the supremacy of English language worldwide. It is most often the lingua franca of many nations, imposed through British colonization or the aegis of nations designated as the "super powers."

Nettleford argues that the cultural history of Jamaica and the Commonwealth Caribbean renders the imposition of British English on these territories a constant reminder of the Eurocentric cultural onslaught to which generations have been subjected (14). This has caused its people to be psychologically dependant on Europe, and has sustained ex-colonial "bourgeois" mentality that reveres the lingua franca as the "legitimate language of Caribbean literature and the mastery of it a determinant of progress towards 'civilization' (14). Though in the three decades since Nettleford's arguments there has been considerable improvement in Jamaicans' attitude towards

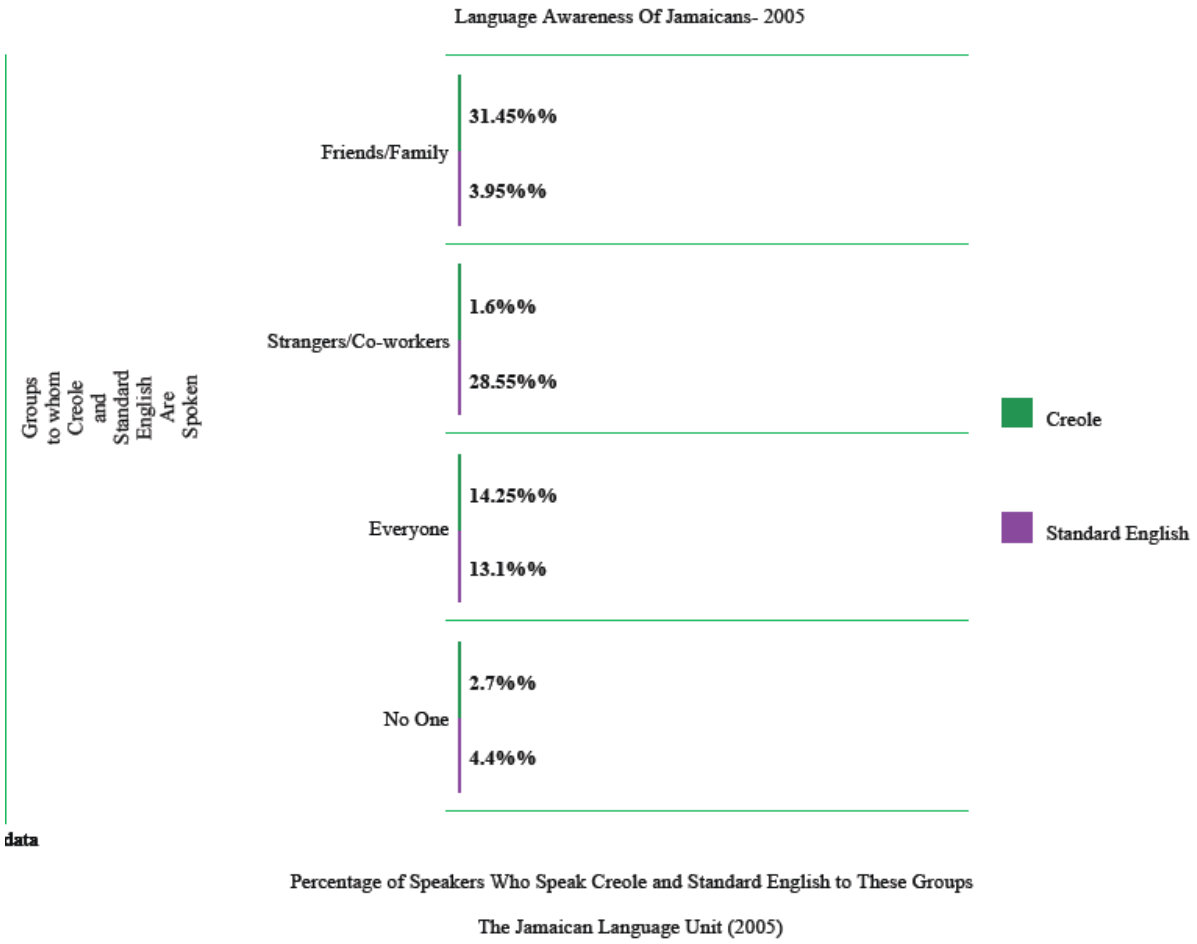
embracing their native language and some progress in imprinting the language of the people in cultural aspects such as literature, music and art, there is still considerable stigma attached to Creole languages in this part of the world. Velma Pollard in her seminal work, Dread Talk: the Language of Rastafari, calls the "panic-inspired notion that Dread Talk is replacing English as the language of the young people of Jamaica" simplistic, in response to the severe reactions of teachers on the island (4). To think that those responsible for educating the young believe that the language they predominantly speak is a threat to the lingua franca and needs to stamped out instead of embraced and given its place alongside the Standard is worrisome, because it is so self-defeating. Pollard advances that that fear embodies the fallacy that "English was ever the language of Jamaican youth" (4).

In an article entitled "Socio-historical Background of Patwa in Jamaica," writer Kae Dee Jae (2008) makes the statement:

> that among a group of boys on the corner, if you can't talk patwa you would be seen as an outcast. . . . It is more macho/manly/shatta yute. To speak English in that domain would be like social suicide . . . *dem would sey, a wah do da mama's bwoy . . . Mongse yuh bredrin yuh affi chat Patwa.* [Italics translated: *they would say, what is the matter with this mother's boy….Amongst your brothers/friends you have to speak in patwa.]"*

This example supports what Pollard intimates about Jamaican youth: that they do speak the Creole in their community, and it is their native language. Even though they can code-switch in formal situations to speak Standard Jamaican English, the language of preference is overwhelmingly Jamaican Creole and in recent years, Dread Talk. The statistics in Fig 1.2 illustrate the attitude towards embracing the language of the community. Perhaps these figures

Fig. 1.2 Language Attitudes of Jamaicans



do confirm that Jamaicans are very much aware of their native language and they use it. That there is a group of people who choose not to speak a Creole language, less than 5%, indicates that it is a matter of personal choice and not because of lack of access to the language. Many in the older generations, parents of the youth, in the upper--middle classes and even the poor still insist on the supposed 'superiority' of Standard English when it comes to their children's education. What Pollard sees developing is an attempt on the part of some people to expand the lexicon of Jamaican Creole and the Jamaican Standard English to accommodate a more precise way of representing the way of life and culture of the Jamaican people (5). Those people are

overwhelmingly the Jamaican Rastafarians. Though not the only group to struggle against any deculturation of the masses of people in the Caribbean, the Rastafarians is one dominant cultural group notable for their incursion through language, to prevent it. In Jamaica today, there is some persistence in the use of the Creole in myriad ways among different social groups across the country, as an act of resistance against deculturation (Nettleford 15). The Rastafarians helped create this greater diversity of speech through the conscious changes they made to the lexicon and to some extent the syntax in what Nettleford calls the "politics of protest" (15). The development of their resistive language is used to indicate the power of diversity and difference.

CHAPTER 2: THE ORIGIN OF RASTAFARI RESISTANCE IN JAMAICA

A. A Historical Overview.

The Rastafari movement carried with it a certain continuity from the days of slavery, a continuity of resistance and confrontation with white racism.
~ George Lamming (1990)

George Lamming, Barbadian novelist and professor, in this statement in his commentary on Rastafari in the *Daily News*, Jamaica, in September of 1990 hints at the continuous nature of the struggle between repression and resistance that has persisted from the era of slavery. In his commentary, he linked the emergence of Rasta to the roots of resistance to slavery-a relationship that history certainly corroborates. Resistance in Jamaica has historical significance dating back to the severe brutality of the slave regime and the slaves' rejection of it. In order to comprehend black resistance we have to reflect on the structures of oppression: 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 23). Though many who wrote historical records subscribe to paradigm of a history of domination, there is an ever-growing group of activists who are convicted that "the essence of black history in the diaspora is not slavery and colonialism, but resistance to systematic oppression" (5). Slaves were considered objects by their oppressors, but the very nature of their creative acts of resistance prove that they were subjects whose humanity was only placed in doubt by the laws and policies put in place by their oppressors. Ultimately, it was the resolute opposition and rebellion of the slaves that brought about the failure of the system of slavery and the attempt of the profiteers to make them into property. The fact remains that the slaves never allowed the colonial institutions and those profiteers to relax their guard, because under the apparent servile conduct the slaves displayed,

they practiced resistance every day. Thus, the "lopsided scholarship that focuses solely on the ruler – whether to defend or criticize--reduces the existence of the suppressed people to their subservience and sufferings born of the situation," and subscribes to an imbalance in the historical perspective of a 'history of pure domination' (4). Slaves fought back. They resisted this most heinous system of domination that took away their every right as humans. They found many ways to resist. Therefore an argument for a paradigm shift to a 'history of conflict' serves to restore their dignity as a people who ultimately freed themselves through centuries of resistance. This way of looking at history does not negate the attempted annihilation of a race of people through the genocide of slavery, but removes stigma that slaves were passive victims without the chutzpa to fight for their freedom (5). It is a way of negating the historical attempts to marginalize the cultural practices of the slaves, especially their acts of resistance (5), to which I wholeheartedly subscribe. This study is resolute about the position that the Rastafarians exhibit unwavering fortitude in defending their humanity through their acts of resistance: a legacy handed down from their ancestors who were brought to the other side of the world against their will.

Slave labor was the most essential foundation of mercantile overseas trade through the end of the eighteenth century with the discovery of the "New World," and the infinite wealth to be acquired from sugar production (Zips 23). A massive, cheap labor force was required if the Caribbean islands were to be transformed into the most profitable colonies of imperialism. By the year 1800 there were about 260,000 slaves in Jamaica compared to 15,000 whites and the fear of rebellion was perpetual (Moredecai 10). The disproportion in numbers prompted a constant organizing frenzy by impositions of laws and customs by the whites who had good reason to fear retaliation from their beleaguered subjects. Though the constant fear of reprisal

that plagued the many whites who managed the plantations to sustain the super rich lifestyles of plantation owners residing in England only actually materialized as an almost island-wide revolt in 1831, there were sufficient frequency of resistances to cause concern (10). Categorizing division among the slaves based on their origin and the functions they performed in the slave machinery was one of the strategies systematically used to help the whites divide and rule their charges. Slaves had different identities to begin with and were given tasks that created social stratifications like house slaves and field slaves which in themselves exacerbated the division amongst them. The varying identities through having their own language, religion, food, and other tribal influences accounted for differences that amalgamated to forge an 'African' identity through the crucible of the middle passage voyage from the west coast of Africa to the 'New World' (11). Those slaves who ended up staying in Jamaica, a major port and slave market for the Caribbean, were predominantly Kromanti, Mandingo, and Ibo though there were some from other tribes in east Africa (11). The process of reculturation in the slave society was geared towards the slaves' obedience and gruesome work as a deterrent to the maintenance of that African identity, but the slaves still found ways to resist so as not to be completely submerged by their circumstances. They taught each other, and newcomers, ways to survive through a process of creolization[4] (12). They talked to each other using music and an orality that the whites could not decipher: words from their languages that were not intelligible to their oppressors. Thus, though the division the plantation owners and their overseers orchestrated was effective in some measure, it failed in some instances because of the resilience of the slaves in finding a way to oppose. For example, over time the close proximity between slave and master inexorably led to

[4] The mixture of English and African tribal languages [blended] into some special kinds of native languages (patois, such as Jamaican patois or French patois. Another example is Beijan- the English used in Barbados closest to Standard English. The term is also used to describe Europeans born in the Caribbean or mulattoes.

intimacies that resulted in the birth of "a class of brown Jamaicans" (11). Slaves distrusted other slaves who were products of such unions and were often chosen to be house slaves because of the likelihood that they would be loyal to the masters. Even today the term 'house slave' has a derogatory connotation in the Caribbean. Yet, ironically such slaves were often at the forefront of rebellions, having used their positions of privilege to gather useful information (12). Most often house slaves behaved in a submissive manner towards their masters, while they furtively eavesdropped and later passed on the information. This was a form of resistance and rebellion in a sort of active/passive sense.

Throughout the 170 years of slavery in Jamaica, resistance to oppression occurred via rebellions, murder, work disruptions, economic sabotage, and the slaves' consistent escape to Maroon villages in the hills ((Chevannes 11). Werner Zips, in his work Black Rebels: African American Freedom Fighters in Jamaica, identifies a continuum of several different types of slave resistance from malingering to fake illnesses that sabotage work to even acts of imbecility and running away from the plantations (11). Running away was easier and the first choice of the slaves' resistance to slavery (Chevannes 11). But, the slaves had to have somewhere to run to. So it was that maroon communities began to spring up in parts of the uninhabited hinterland where they could eek out an existence-set up communities and defenses for them. Therefore, the maroons were comprised of organized communities of escaped slaves and their descendants (Zips vii). It was the individual and combined obstinacy of the slaves that frustrated efforts to keep them enslaved, and was in the final analysis the most successful weapon against oppression.

Though Zips would contend that the "African- American struggle for freedom in the diaspora cannot be limited to the maroon communities," in light of the many other modes of resistances, the formation of maroon communities was a distinct thrust for social independence

fortified by armed struggle (11). These communities began to appear throughout the mainland territories such as the Guianas, Brazil, Cuba, Brazil and Jamaica. There were four such colonies in Jamaica alone: Moore Town, Scots Hall, Accompong and Maroon Town. Since running away was an offense, these communities were forced to defend their freedom when slave owners came a calling to repossess their 'property.' As a result, there was a prolonged period of struggle which ceased in Jamaica in 1739 when a treaty secured freedom for the maroons on condition that they return future runaway slaves, and make available military support when the colonizers enlisted their aid (Chevannes 11). The maroons had become traitors to freedom and enablers to the many atrocities perpetuated against their own kind (Barrett 36). This proved to be a blow to the slaves' efforts to free themselves because runaways were returned and future rebellions such as the Taki (1760) and Sam Sharpe (1831) rebellions were suppressed due to the help given by the maroons to slave owners. However, the Sam Sharpe rebellion did hasten the death of slavery which succumbed in 1834, though oppression did not entirely cease. Yet, this treachery did not exist in every place. In Haiti, for instance, the unity between the blacks and the maroons resulted in the nineteenth- century emancipation of Haitian slaves from French domination (Zips 12). However, the ex-slaves' resistance continued as the economic conditions were exacerbated by the relentless greed of the plantocracy. The Morant Bay[5] Rebellion in Jamaica in 1865 resulted from such conditions, although race and color helped to compound it (Chevannes 12). The hopeless economic conditions in Jamaica had pushed the people over the edge, and they rose up and

[5] On October 7, 1865 a black man was put on trial and imprisoned for trespassing on a long-abandoned plantation creating anger among black Jamaicans. When one member of a group of black protesters from the village of Stony Gut was arrested, the protesters became unruly and freed the accused man from prison. When he returned to his home, Paul Bogle, a respected leader of the peasants, learned that warrants were out for the arrest of he and 27 of his men for rioting, resisting arrest, and assaulting the police. On October 11, Bogle marched with a group of protesters to Morant Bay. When the group arrived at the court house they were met by a small volunteer militia who panicked and opened fire on the group, killing seven black protesters before retreating. The black protesters then rioted, killing 25 people including magistrates and justices, injuring another 31,and taking control of the town. (Cavanaugh).

revolted against authority. The incarceration of one man was just the final straw that ignited the firestorm that resulted. Too long the poor had endured the appalling leadership of Governor Eyre[6] under whose government the economy had crashed resulting in high unemployment rates, escalating prices for food and clothing, over taxation, astonishingly poor healthcare, rampant racial discrimination, and disenfranchisement (Cavanaugh). Of the 436,000 blacks on the island only 2,000 could vote in the 1864 elections because of excessive voting fee blacks were required to pay in order to be allowed to vote (Cavanaugh). Only 60,000 blacks of the population were employed, while jobs went to the indentured laborers who were "coolies, Asians, and Africans brought in to replace the slaves after emancipation (Cavanaugh). There was only so much the people could protest before active rebellion became a reality. In the final analysis, the legacy of colonialism sustained economic deprivation and established discrimination based on class and color.

Even though slavery had ended, the talons of the plantocracy were embedded in the ex-slaves for another 130 years of colonial rule, evidence of the strength of the system of slavery (Chevannes 10). Its ideology persists in the injustices and repressive forces still at work in many societies around the world, even at the turn of this 21st century. Yet, we cannot overlook the fact that those Africans who became slaves under the most dehumanizing conditions managed to resist slavery and colonialism, some say even before they were taken from their homeland. Although many of their efforts at slave conspiracies and schemes were thwarted, they matched ideas with ideas and force with counterforce in their struggle against their oppressors (10). That resistive spirit was a legacy to later groups who continued to battle against any form of

[6] Edward John Eyre was a racist Brit appointed as Governor of Jamaica in 1862. He associated only with the white ruling class and had no sympathy for blacks and mulattoes, the greater majority of the Jamaican population. He was responsible for the acquisition and circulation of the famous "Queen's Letter" that basically called black Jamaicans lazy and did nothing to address their complaints of hardship (Jamaica Guide. info).

oppression- groups such as the Rastafari who characterize the most current form of resistance in Jamaica. Horace Campbell, activist and professor of African American studies and Political Science at Syracuse University, has worked to bridge the gap in political inquiry concerning the Rastafari in the Caribbean in the evidence of Caribbean revolution. In his seminal work Rasta and Resistance: From Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney, Campbell explicitly argues that the Rastafarian movement is an amalgam of the "heritage of the Maroons, the religious movement- called Ethiopianism- and the emergent Pan African movement which culminated in [Universal Negro Improvement Association] U.N.I.A" along with the influences of the inspired work of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican publicist who espoused black nationalism (Campbell 1). Garvey's teachings were the bedrock of Rastafari beliefs and he is still highly revered by the people who are a part of this movement.

Jamaican born, The Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887-1940), who is a National Hero of that country today, was not always a welcome presence on the island. He was despised by the elite class who rejected his militant kind of pan-Africanism that was catching on globally (Chude-Sokie 190). His discourse was embraced in places like the United States unlike Jamaica where talk about the people remembering their associations with Africa and the recovery of a national identity were rejected, because the remnant ideals that governed the infliction of slavery and colonialism still existed in the dominant classes. During his early life, 1911 to be exact, he went to England, where he attended London University after which he visited parts of the Continent and North Africa. Upon his return to Jamaica in 1914, he organized the Jamaica Improvement Association making himself president and his first wife secretary. His protest began for the political rights of the masses of blacks of the island, who were considered a lower social caste than the mulattoes, and his ideas about repatriation to Africa and the national identity

of Africans took root as his activism began in earnest. He went also among other West Indian laborers who were employed in the neighboring countries and advocated that they insist on better working conditions. Many Negro people considered him to be like Moses because of his talks and activism regarding the race problem. In March 1917, he organized U.N.I.A and chose twelve disciples to help him. Garvey's goals were to create an alliance among Negroes throughout the world to encourage a spirit of love and pride; to support raising the enlightenment of Africans; to establish schools and scholarships; and most importantly to establish a strong Negro nation. These goals, and the activism his life of resistance (even the ostentatious way he dressed was an act of resistance) demonstrated, were an example to the Rastafarians.

The Rastafarian People

Who are the Rastafarians? Leonard Barrett, Sr., professor emeritus of religion at Temple University, in his 1997 book The Rastafarians, describes them as the Rastafarian cult, "a messianic movement unique to Jamaica [whose] members believe that Haile Selassie [I] former emperor of Ethiopia, is the Black Messiah who appeared in the flesh for the redemption of all Blacks exiled in the world of White oppressors" (1). Though there are various ideas about who they are, his description includes the one salient connection found in most descriptions; their allegiance to Emperor Haile Selassie I. Barrett, who has observed the Rastafarians since 1946 and has carried out a systematic research among them for three years during the 1960's, lived in Jamaica from 1966 until the deaths of Emperor Haile Selassie I and Bob Marley, to study the development of this group (2). His work is often described as a classic on the history and beliefs of the Rastafarians whose roots of protest he demonstrates can be traced to seventeenth-century maroon societies of runaway slaves in Jamaica.

There are three major groups within the Rastafari movement:

- **The Twelve Tribes of Israel** who believe that His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I is Christ revealed. The members regard the wearing of locks as an option for members depending on whether they consider themselves to be Nazarites[7] or not. Their tams (caps) include equal bands of red, green, and gold. Bob Marley belonged to the 12 Tribes of Israel until shortly before his death, when he became an Orthodox Rastafarian.
- **Bobo Shante:** this group believes their leader, Prince Emanuel I, is the Christ who is now revealed. To them, Hale Selassie I is the Father and Prince Emanuel the Son, using Trinitarian terminology. The Bobo Shante group considers themselves to be Nazarites, and wear dreadlocks. They usually do not wear colors on their headdress, which looks like a stylized turban.
- **Orthodox or Nyabinghi**. This group tries to bridge Rastafarianism and Ethiopian Orthodoxy. Their theology is a combination of Christianity and Rastafarian beliefs. Members consider themselves to be Nazarites and wear dreadlocks. Their tams almost always include the color black.

Though there are slight differences between the Rastafarian branches as noted in the descriptions, their overriding philosophies pertaining to their separation from mainstream Jamaican society and their resistance to the establishment remain consistent.

Essentially, the Rastafarians are native Jamaicans-descendants of African slaves - who began a movement in the 1930's in protest of their socio-economic situation. The movement is

[7] The law concerning the Nazarite vow (Num 6) seems to imply, that it had been an institution already existing at the time of Moses, which was only further defined and regulated by him. The name, as well as its special obligations, indicates its higher bearing. For the term *Nasir* is evidently derived from *nazar, to separate*, and '**the vow of a Nazarite**' was to separate himself unto Jehovah (Num 6:2). Hence the Nazarite was '**holy unto Jehovah**' (Num 6:8). But, besides separation and holiness, we have also here the idea of *royal priesthood*, since the word *Nezer* is applied to '**the holy *crown* upon the mitre**' of the high-priest (Exo 29:6; 34:30; Lev 8:9), and '**the *crown* of the anointing oil**' (Lev 21:12), as also, in a secondary sense, to the royal crown (2 Sam 1:10; 2 Kings 11:12; Zech 9:1 (biblestudy.org)

believed to have been born out of the retention of 'Garveyism'- the ideology and inspiration of Marcus Garvey through his beliefs in Ethiopianism which he advocated in his Back-to- Africa Movement. Barrett suggests that except we see Rastafarianism as a continuation of the concept of Ethiopianism, it would remain a mystery as the beliefs and practices so often appear to outsiders (68). Marcus Garvey, considered a prophet of African redemption, was a purveyor of Ethiopianism, and the one who changed it from an ideology to a movement and a lived experience for those who followed his teachings (78). The enchantment with Ethiopia was born out of its position alongside Egypt as countries in Africa with a great deal of importance in the history of civilization and Biblical significance (68). The allusion to these countries in scriptural references such as Psalm 68:31 and Jeremiah 13:23 implied African lineage in Biblical characters, and notion that they were a called people to portray the God-like conduct missing in other races, primarily the white race (78). Figuring that Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus bear His cross, was an African, and so was the Ethiopian eunuch a man of influence, Psalm 68: 31 helps Garvey emphasize this point for the black race: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God." This passage is the essence of Garvey's movement, and is today the most popular reference in the Rastafarian movement (78). His oratory and passion held sway in his movement and was an inspiration to African leaders. Infuriated by the blatant disregard of African history and the concomitant distortions in British colonial history, Garvey called on Blacks to "affirm your ancestry, claim your history" (Sherlock and Bennett 10). Three hundred years of black achievement during their labor on plantations throughout America and the colonies- an astounding record of African-American triumph- were erased from history (10) or marginalized. Barrett posits that "the messianic dimension of Garvey's movement has not only a revolutionary thrust but indeed a high ethical force" in his discussion of the man's impact

on the reformation of a fallen race (Barrett 78). On March 16th, 1924 Garvey made a speech in Madison Square Garden in New York in which he described what he hoped his movement, U.N.I.A., would accomplish:

> The Universal Negro Improvement Association represents the hopes and aspirations of the awakened Negro. Our desire is for a place in the world; not to disturb the tranquility of other men, but to lay down our burden and rest our weary backs and feet by the banks of the Niger and sing our songs and chant our hymns to the God of Ethiopia.

Here, the message to his followers is one of inspiration, and the reference is religious (79). He talks about laying down burdens and singing and chanting songs to "our God," but the theme of Africa- going back to Africa for redemption- is ever present in his references to Ethiopia and the Niger River. According to Barrett, the god worshipped, the God of Ethiopia and the composition and orientation of his organization were intended to point his followers towards African redemption (79). This theme of repatriation to Africa, considered the motherland/fatherland, resonated in subsequent movements that also espoused Black Nationalism and was also embraced by the founding members of the Rastafari movement. From the beginning of the movement Rastafari have believed that all Africans in the diaspora, including them, are exiles in "Babylon" (Chevannes 1). Though Garvey left Jamaica in 1916, his final edict to "Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black King; he shall be the Redeemer" became a prophetic word that was believed by many to be a fulfillment of biblical prophecy when in 1930 Haile Selassie I was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia (Barrett 81). Following his departure, Garvey's followers were without strong leadership because there was no one compelling enough to marshal them hence there were scattered pockets of the movement. The 1930 crowning of Ras Tafari alias

Haile Selassie I as emperor of Ethiopia was a pivotal point for those who had considered themselves Garveyites.

Ras Tafari, from whose name the Rastafarians coined their name, was the great grandson of King Saheka Selassie of Shoa (81). He was crowned the Negus of Ethiopia and adopted the name Haile Selassie I which means "Might of the Trinity." He then added to his name the biblical labels "King of Kings" and "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah" which positioned him in the legendary line of King Solomon in the Bible. The pageantry and splendor at the coronation of this young Ethiopian king, attended by dignitaries from all over the world, became a revelation from God for those who remembered Garvey's prediction; and Haile Selassie I became the Messiah of African deliverance. So it was believed to be by many, including four Jamaicans, (some say original Garveyites) who viewed this occurrence as significant- Leonard Howell, Joseph Hibbert, Archibald Dunkley and Robert Hinds (81). Howell, who spoke several African languages, had travelled extensively, and was said to have served in the Ashanti War in 1896, became the leading figure in the development of the Rastafarian movement. He had returned to Jamaica the year the movement was birthed in 1930. Not much is written about these four men though they are credited with being the founding fathers of the Rastafarian movement (81). The nucleus was formed in Kingston, where the movement incubated for about four years, as members of the splintered cells left by Garvey was recruited and united (82). The Rastafarian movement was born.

Rastafarians combined the title "Ras" which is the Amharic title bestowed on Ethiopian royalty (similar to the English title "Duke") and the family name of the Ethiopian king, "Tafari" to create the Jamaican representation Rastafari- the name for the movement and what Barrett calls "a holy appellation and ritual invocation" (82). The movement is grounded in Old and New

Testament scriptures that its adherents are convinced are references to the Emperor Haile Selassie I's designation as Emperor of Ethiopia given divine sanction. For instance, Daniel's prophecy-

> And I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire (Holy Bible, Daniel 7.9)

has imputed this description to the emperor's roots in the Black race; as far as the Rastafarians are concerned (84). The description the "hair of his head pure like wool" asserting that the man is of the black race may not be "an empirical truth" as Barrett reasons, but it is an assurance in the doctrine that is most important to movements such as the Rastafari (84).

The success of the movement depended on the evangelization of the people. Jamaica in 1930 was economically and socially bankrupt due to the effects of the Great Depression and a natural disaster by way of a destructive hurricane. In addition, the country was still in the vice of colonialism, politically. The future was bleak for many, and people were looking for hope. To those who were Garveyites, Emperor Haile Selassie I represented that hope, and armed with such a message, Leonard Howell and his group began to make "the crooked path straight and the rough places plain" (84). Howell undertook this project by raising the money he needed through the sale of Selassie's coronation photographs (85). Henceforth the movement spread from Kingston to St. Thomas in 1933, the place where the Morant Bay Rebellion had taken place in 1865; a place Barrett says was ripe for "revolutionary doctrine" (85). According to informants this parish was chosen by Howell because of "its proud history of anti-colonial resistance," and so was the reason for moving to St. Catherine's later on (Chevannes 122). It was here at St. Thomas that Rastafarianism took on its radical revolutionary posture: one that was certainly to

the "Law and Order Code of the British Empire," whose representatives still presided in Jamaica (Barrett 84), though the island had gained a degree of local political control in the 1940's. Political backlash by both the British and local governments threatened the movement in 1933 when the founding four, Howell, Hibbert, Dunkley and Hinds were imprisoned for their activities in the movement. Howell was convicted for seditious activities in retaliation for advocating six principles of the movement at an open-air meeting. These principles advocated 1) hatred for the white race; 2) the complete superiority of the black race; 3) revenge on whites for their wickedness; 4) the negation, persecution and humiliation of the government and legal bodies of Jamaica; 5) preparation to go back to Africa; and 6) acknowledging the Emperor Haile Selassie as the Supreme Being and only ruler of Black people (85). Barrett submits when he wrote The Rastafarians back in 1997 that this doctrine has not changed much from the beginning of the movement, but I have found little evidence to support this opinion. Rastafarians today have a broader vision and deeper consciousness that includes the freedom from oppression of oppressed peoples everywhere, not just Rastafarians or Jamaicans. The rhetoric in their explosive music from the 1970's music can substantiate that. And, the call to return to Africa has abated as they have resolved to stand and fight for freedom, economic parity and respect in their native land, Jamaica.

Imprisonment of the leaders resulted in a temporary setback of the movement. However, others entrusted with the movement kept it alive by conducting their activities in secret. When Howell and Hinds were released, they resumed their activities. Howell formed the Ethiopian Salvation Society, this time quietly recruiting a huge following and moving to the hills of Jamaica--St Catherine--to avoid police persecution (86). Maroon-like the Rastafarians separated themselves in their first commune called Pinnacle on a piece of land in Sligoville, about twenty

miles outside of Kingston. It was a secret place- its access known only by members of the movement. It was there that they practiced a new way of living planting native cash crops including marijuana which they use in their ritual practices. It was said that this first commune was destroyed when surrounding neighbors alerted the Jamaican police to their presence in July 1941 (87). Apparently the Rastafarians in their disgust for the government were demanding that their neighbors pay taxes to them in the name of Haile Selassie I, and not to the Jamaican government. The subsequent raids of other phases of the Pinnacle communes and arrests of leaders like Howell only served to buttress support for the movement. The government grew weary of imprisoning them, having deemed them nuisances, but police harassment continued. After much persecution Howell died in 1981. The significance of the Pinnacle settlement was of such that a team of University of the West Indies (UWI) professors, Nettleford-Smith-Augier, conducted an investigation of the movement and did a report in 1960. This report was requested by some leading Rastafarian members who were fed-up with negative press about their conduct and doctrine (Sherlock and Bennett 398). The conclusion they came to is as follows:

> By all accounts, Pinnacle seemed to have been rather more like an old maroon settlement than a part of Jamaica. Its internal administration was Howell's business, not Government's. It is therefore understandable that the unit could have persisted as a state within a state for several years without the people or government of Jamaica being aware of it (Barrett 88).

This is a clear indication that this group exhibited the same resilience and resistance like the early maroons. The report also stated that the overwhelming majority of Rastafarians are peaceful members of society who reject violence (Sherlock and Bennett 398). Their attempts at isolation, and thus rejection of the Jamaican society and government declare their struggle to

resist any form of oppression that was still evident in the society, but it was by non-violent means. To be able to mobilize a movement and live as a unit that subverts the state, living out the principles and practices that they are identified with even today, demonstrate the Rastafarians' determination to maintain their own identity and live their philosophy. The destruction of the Pinnacle commune was no deterrent.

Subsequently, the Rastafarians regrouped and returned to Kingston to settle in an area known as "Shanty Town" because of the poverty and decrepit housing. The population exploded in Kingston between 1921 and 1943 almost doubling in size and had reached a staggering 500,000 by 1960 (Chevannes 16). The congestion led to every type of social decay- disease, stealing, and parasitism to the extent that Rastafari became the "hospice for the uprooted and derelict masses cast off by society." (16). Kingston was the place where the dispossessed found acceptance among their kind. It was a place where the displaced and semi-skilled struggled to carve out an existence selling brooms, wood, fish, fruits, anything to subsist. It was a place where the Rastafarians unleashed their extreme resentment for the establishment in Jamaica, and particularly the police. Howell's deputies took to the streets in a rant about the abominable social conditions in Jamaica, and extolled the "good news": Haile Selassie I was touted the deliverer of Black people. There were no distinct leaders. Perhaps as a result of the Howell's experience at the hands of the police and the destruction of Pinnacle, the Rastafarians have remained without a leader (Barrett 91). Ironically, this choice has been advantageous as the movement has been fortified in spite of it. Yet, these men gained the attention of the masses of dispossessed people as "their wild behavior attracted large audiences and their Rastafarian rhetoric of defiance made their presence felt in Kingston," according to Barrett (89). Despite their appearance (more intimidating because of their dread locks), people began to listen to their

message and soon many camps developed in Shanty Town as people joined. The movement gained momentum in 1955 after an official from the Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. visited Jamaica with a heightened message about repatriation to Africa and specifically to Ethiopia where Emperor Haile Selassie had set aside 500 acres of fertile land to accommodate the poor from Jamaica (90). This gave a great boost to the membership of the Rastafarian movement as adherents doubled. People were already leaving Jamaica- the repressed economic state- for England where they did not particularly want to go. Thus, an opportunity to go to Africa instead led to calls for "repatriation now!" The development of the Rastafarian doctrine of certain repatriation was solidified at least until the Emperor's visit to Jamaica on April 21, 1966. One hundred thousand Rastafarians descended upon Norman Manley International Airport to welcome Selassie I. He impressed upon them the need to become free in their own nation before aspiring to living free in Africa. The day of his visit remains a "holy day" to the Jamaican Rastafarian; it is called "Grounation Day."

Rastafarian Principles

Another summation coming out of the Nettleford- Smith -Augier Report about the Rastafarians reiterates an important observation about the beliefs of a people. It said, "What people believe or assert emphatically represents a social force which cannot be disposed of merely by denial" (103). The government's initial refusal to acknowledge the force of the Rastafari movement did not negate that they had become a force to be reckoned with. Barrett expands this notion with his theory that a vital supply of power is derived from the belief systems of a cult movement such as the Rastafari (103). He posits that such power emanates from the mental, emotional content of beliefs and not from the organization of logical truths (103). As such, he deems

Rastafarianism a religious myth that does not have to subscribe to any systematic logic necessary to validate other types of knowledge systems, since history has proven that people are quite willing to "die more frequently for religious beliefs than will the scientist for so-called "truth" (103). Observations of the movement over time confirm that beliefs and rituals may change from group to group, but there are some core principles that govern the Rastafari basic belief system. Those six unique beliefs as identified by Barrett are similar to the ones labeled seditious by the British representation in Jamaica when Howell was jailed. These beliefs, however, specifically reference the Rastafarians' native Jamaica as a vehicle for their oppression. They are as follows:

1. Haile Selassie is the Living God.

   The Black person is the reincarnation of ancient Israel, who at the hand of the white person, has been in exile in Jamaica.
2. The white person is inferior to the Black person
3. The Jamaican situation is a hopeless hell; Ethiopia is heaven
4. The invincible Emperor of Ethiopia is now arranging for expatriated persons of African origin to return to Ethiopia
5. In the near future Blacks shall rule the world.

To an outsider many of these Rastafari principles may appear to be wishful thinking-a sort of being out of touch with reality-and much of their rhetoric pointless chatter. However, on a deeper level of communication, these ideals are born from a race consciousness entangled with a class consciousness of African peoples subjected to Eurocentric civilization. That civilization sought to obliterate their cultural personality by the strategic mixture of economic and political domination (Lamming 1990). These principles, to my mind, seek to reinstate a positive psyche

of Africans' self-worth and cultural identity by an act of resistance and rejection of the types of racial and class complexes that attempt to render them inferior. What better way is there than to reverse the negative perceptions, but by imputing positive self affirmations of the race?

To take these beliefs apart for an in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this discussion, however. But it must be noted that in the face of cultural resistance the racist theories of slaves and Rastafarians alike found biblical justification much like the imperialists did with their pseudo-scientific deductions that led to theories of the genetic inferiority of black people to white people (Lamming). The former use theirs to resist and the latter to oppress. The resistance was manifested in religious practices, the preservation of African languages, African medicinal and curative techniques, dress and hairstyle, and musical forms such as reggae and dub poetry. As far as religion is concerned, Rastafarians believe that the Bible (the King James Version) is a holy book, but some of its contents are distorted by imperialist theology (Mordecai 48) in addition to corruption wrought through translations from the original Amharic language (Barrett 127). They use the Bible as a resource in their spiritual practices: reading at meetings, in defense of their claims of being God's elect through Haile Selassie's divine lineage, and in support of their use of marijuana as a healing herb in folk medicine as well as a religious sacrament (129). The Rastafarians' justification for the ritual practice of using marijuana comes from the scriptures "thou shalt eat the herb of the field," (Holy Bible, Genesis 3.18), and "Eat *every* herb of the land," (Holy Bible, Exodus 10.12). Marijuana use has been a subject of debate, and has attracted enormous attention as its ritual use by the Rastafarians and the illegal demand for the herb has been an additional burden on the Jamaican government in its effort to thwart its use. Barrett had observed during his ten-year study of a Rastafari group that "there appear to be no physical, mental or psychic effects on the

Rastafarians from the use of ganja [marijuana]. Most older brethren have been smoking for twenty years and are still as witty, hard working, and creative as other citizens of Jamaica"(Barrett 132).

Through lifestyle changes that smack of resistance, the Rastafarian sect distinguishes themselves from other Jamaicans. There are symbolic reasons for the way they dress, their execution of their ritual activities, and the choice of foods they eat. Dread locks represent a real symbolic disconnect with society (Mordecai 48). The Rastafarians grow their hair as an act of renouncing the Jamaican society. They resist integration under any conditions except to instigate radical change towards the poor (Barrett 138). Hair has been an indicator of social differences in Jamaica such that those with fine silky hair are considered superior and more socially appealing compared to those with coarse kinky hair (138). Worst still, men who grew their hair and wore beards were considered degenerates. Thus, the Rastafarians deliberately challenge the established order by consciously ridiculing the ambivalence of the society. Since, the hair takes much time to grow it demands a commitment from a member who wants to grow dreadlocks: commitment to the struggle. Not combing one's hair was "not merely antisocial, but extra social like mad derelicts and outcasts," declares Barry Chevannes, an anthropology lecturer who has studied this group extensively (158). The shock value of dread locks was debated and initiated by an organization known as Youth Black Faith in Jamaica. Along with the growing of beards, dread locks became a symbol of strength with the biblical significance attached to the Nazarite vow of Samson (158). To the privileged of the society, the concept of "dread" signifies filthy, dangerous and disheveled, but to Rastafari "dread" is an emblem of freedom, power and boldness. In a Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) documentary in December, 1980, correspondent Dan Rather raised the question of the Rastafari movement

"represent[ing] a large criminal element" to Professor Rex Nettleford whose vehement denial did nothing to quell the stereotype that this sect was dangerous (265). It was obvious that the group's non-conforming philosophy, attitude and appearance were under fire. The initiation of dread locks represented a threat of cultural independence that was not only strange but intimidating to even African-Americans, according to Chevannes (266). Yet again the Rastafari's resistance was felt beyond the borders of its native Jamaica. Not all African Americans or those from other ethnicities who wear dreadlocks adhere to the Rastafari lifestyle or philosophy. The fact that they do is a demonstration of the rooted nature of the movement (Chevannes 274). The style embodies sacred recognition- "the manifestation of the spirit of a Triumphant God within me," according to journalist Ken Jones, who came to that conclusion after a two- year struggle with the "spiritual, political and pragmatic realities" of adopting dreadlocks (274). He finally did.

Some of the rituals of Rastafari include observations of certain taboos such as fasting, music, prayers, sacrifice, and recitation of codes (Barrett 120). There are various types of gatherings during which these occur, and some activities are carried out individually. Typically meetings are held weekly and monthly depending on the activity- the most important one being the "Nyabinghi" the name derived from an East African religious-political sect that had resisted colonial oppression for nearly forty years (until 1928) (121). At a typical Nyabinghi meeting (more like a convention) held in different places across the island, in this case Jamaica, there is usually attendance by Rastafarians from all over the island. It is generally exclusive, and outsiders are not particularly welcome since if they are not Rastafari they are viewed with suspicion as representatives of "Babylon" (122). A ritual dance called "nyabinghi' is performed where an effigy of a figure in the establishment, for example a colonial governor, prime

minister or government official is burnt in the death-by-magic ritual as "participants dance under the spell of burru[8] drumming called "tuokin [stoking]the drum" (Chevannes 165). There was a political aim attached to the nyabinghi ritual, unlike the practice of Obeah, performed over only such public officials that were deemed oppressors- representatives of an oppressive system. This ritual is a throwback to the practices of Revivalism and the sworn commitment of a secret order (from whence the name nyabinghi was derived) whose edict was "death to white oppressors," and after 1960 was expanded to include "Death to black *and* white oppressors," according to the University Report (164). Revivalism, or what Chevannes calls the "Revival complex," (196) forms the basis for some of Rastafari beliefs and practices, though they reject the practice of obeah[9] and "poco-ism." The use of potions and brews are part of their arsenal of folk medicine-a part of this Revival complex (196). Remedies are not expected to be scientifically sound; they cure because of the spiritual and ancestral beliefs that they would. The likeness between the Jamaican Revival and Rastafari religions, express their resistance to the prevailing repressive symbols in the substitution of their own symbols (17).

One of the dominant public symbols of Rastafari is their food for which they observe some taboos. At the top of the list is the consummation of meat. Most Rastafarians abstain from eating meat, though fish no longer than 12 inches is permissible (140). The Rastafarian's rejection of the dead is extended to their distaste for eating "dead animals" especially the pig

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[8] Burru music, which would later be adapted in what is called Niyabinghi, revolves around a trio of hand drums: the huge bass drum is pounded with a large, rounded stick and the *funde* helps keep the bass drum in time with a steady two-beat rhythm, while the smaller *kette* or repeater drum takes the melodic, improvisational lead. Historically, the Burru have been among the most defiant of Jamaica's people and music was a major component of their defiance. But the Burru held immense appeal for another group of outcasts visible in the ghetto from the early 1930s: the Rastafari.

[9] Obeah – sorcery performed by an obeahman who manipulate symbols in order to harm their victims. Animate and inanimate objects take on sacred characters. For example, exudia such as hair or nail clippings can be used to hurt the owner and therefore are disposed of specially. Through obeah, spirits and duppies are invoked or exorcised, witnesses in litigation silenced, predial thieves intimidated or hurt, employers forced to re-employ, or business ventures ensured success (Chevannes 32).

which has the habit of foraging among garbage and consuming other dead animals. Other scavengers of the sea such as shrimp, crabs and lobsters are anathema to them. They also reject the tradition of eating salted pork and fish, foods that were the mainstay of runaway slaves and the maroons, and which remind them of the deprivation slaves suffered (205). Thus many Rastafarians maintain a strictly vegetarian no-salt diet which they call "I-tal." They prefer natural earth grown foods like ground provisions, vegetables, legumes and fruits (fruit juices and cane juice are relished) that they have planted themselves, and this makes land a desirable possession (142). One taboo that governs the preparation of food is that Rastafarian women are not allowed to cook for their men when they have a menstrual period, since this is forbidden in the scriptures (142).

Rastafari philosophy prescribes fundamentally different standards from those norms propagated by conventional modern western thinking. This is no mistake. Rastafari advocates the rejection of modern society which they deem corrupt and therefore refer to as "Babylon," while they embrace devotion towards their vision of "Zion," synonymous with the biblical Promised Land where God dwells amid His chosen people (Barrett). There is a ten-point moral code that Rastafarians observe (See Appendix 2), written by Ras Sam Brown, a spiritualist, activist and veteran Rastafarian. It is the other important code besides the Rastafarian prayer. Despite these codes no official organizational structure exists, and there is no particular representative for this faith group since no one individual speaks on behalf of the entire group. The religion is extremely individualistic such that each Rastafarian tends to his own worship, maintaining his own relationship with Jah manifested in his invocation of His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I. Personal religious items include an ankh (an Egyptian symbol signifying life), or other religious medallion on a chain and a crown, a black peak-less cap with red, yellow and

green threads interwoven throughout. These colors are symbolic. They are a throwback from the Garvey movement and are identifiable of Rastafari communes and possessions (Barrett 143). The black is symbolic of their African ancestors (143). Red represents the blood of maroon martyrs and other martyrs whose blood was shed in the history of the movement up to Marcus Garvey (143). Yellow is emblematic of the wealth of Ethiopia- the homeland. Green stands for the beauty and vegetation of Ethiopia (and Jamaica, only for some) and signifies the hope of triumph over oppression.

Historically, Rastafari observed that Africans were physically subjugated by the shackles of slavery. Currently, Rastafari believe that African descendants are still in bondage through poverty, illiteracy, inequity, and the white man's trickery. The movement continues to be a force that reminds those descendants of their heritage, and persuade them to resist this Babylon. They espouse freedom from spiritual, psychological and physical bondage, yet their central message promote love and respect for all living things and emphasize paramount importance of human dignity and self- respect. In an attempt to restore their dignity and identity diminished by the forced enslavement and brutality of the African people, they do extol the virtues and superiority of the bygone African cultures and civilization and those in current existence. This is their way of healing the wounds inflicted by the imperialists, primarily white people. Thus, their principles, often presented outside this context may lead to a negative portrayal of what they believe, and a premature accusation of racism. The reality is that "the Rastafarian 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" as accurately summarized

by George Lamming in a statement in the Jamaica Daily News back in 1990, on issues of Rastafari.

B. The Socio-Economic and Political Climates Contributing to Resistance in Post-Colonial Caribbean Countries with Special Reference to Jamaica

Socio- Economic Climate

Most of the Anglo-Caribbean islands are designated third world countries where poverty and lack are crippling facts of life. Many natives experience little exposure to the affluence and repose so often depicted in advertisements that claim that these islands as some of the most exotic destinations in the world. Jamaica, despite its thriving tourist industry, is one of those islands. With a heritage as historic as being the descendants of slaves, the people of the Caribbean islands exhibit a hardiness and spiritual strength that enable them to survive in destitute circumstances.

Historically, change did not guarantee a better life for the Africans or their descendants. Victory after a protracted struggle brought grudging relief from bondage and no concomitant economic uplift or "real" freedom. Their oppressors always managed to maintain existing systems of repression either by laws, sanctions or prohibitions. For instance, at the end of slavery in 1834 the English Parliament had provided compensation for loss of property: human property. They paid approximately twenty million pounds to slaveholders, while ex-slaves and their descendants whose blood bought their wealth, received no reparations to help them survive the aftermath (Zips 209). Emancipation had removed the legal infrastructure of slavery; however, it had also disbanded the support system for the plantocracy and the ex-slaves (Mordecai 15). In order to retain the slaves' labor they offered wages that were pathetic. The

slaves were prohibited from tilling the provision grounds they used while enslaved, and the occasional handouts of clothing and food ceased (15). Likewise at the end of the colonial era there were relatively few changes that occurred that benefited the now destitute inhabitants of the Anglo-Caribbean islands much like the circumstances after emancipation. People resisted with their feet. Internal migration was a means by which people tried to escape poverty that plagued the rural areas. This was problematic for the oligarchy who instituted vagrancy acts in 1834 and 1838 in an effort to restrain the peasants and keep them near plantations after emancipation (Chevannes16). They resolved to protect their labor force. The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed the external migration of the indigent section of Jamaican peasantry (15). Between 1883 and 1884, about 24.000 laborers and peasants had migrated to Panama alone (15). After the outbreak of WWI in 1914, the exodus of Jamaicans continued to Cuba and the United States for almost another ten years with most of those people never returning to Jamaica permanently (15).

The fundamentals of social structure and its dynamics changed minimally over the 100 year post-emancipation period particularly in Jamaica (Mordecai and Mordecai 18). The power relations continued to exist as the white émigré (now locals) had the support of the British oligarchy. Race and class relations remained stratified as positions in the government were held mostly by whites and lighter-skinned Jamaicans. This was a problem for the “subject races” or non-whites most of whom were blacks experiencing the type of discrimination that kept them out of jobs and therefore in financial distress. By 1865, many of the senior administrative positions were given to Jamaican-born bureaucrats, and the whites in turn did not like this (18). The civil service was dominated by those in the population who were brown-skinned or colored. Those positions offered a salary and prestige, but also isolated these brown-skinned people who were

viewed with suspicion by both the blacks and whites (18). The color of one's skin determined the absence or presence of rewards. Those people who were brown sought to emulate the values of the dominant group with the hope of reaping the rewards of such acculturation (19). On the other hand, some blacks, sadly did not want to be black, and as the saying went among Jamaicans "every john crow t'ink 'im pickney white," (translation: the useful, though despised, black (john crow is a black bird that eats carrion) wanted to pass his child off as white)" (19) – a distressing commentary on the effects of race and class discrimination that were the offspring of two oppressive systems: slavery and colonialism. These distinctions gravely affected the social relations between the different people groups in Jamaica, but it was the spiraling economic decline that would compound the masses' disenchantment with the political establishments. The lack of economic parity fueled the call for resistance among the disenfranchised and the resultant civil strife that were to plague the country in the wake of its total independence from British rule, ensued.

Robert Budhan maintains that the "world structure perspective on globalism is based on an economic model." He explicates a model that describes how the economic conditions in the Caribbean progressed to the sad state of underdevelopment that has persisted over the decades, despite the abundance of natural resources available in the Caribbean territories. Budhan submits in his model that industrialized countries occupy the "center" of the global economy, and the less industrialized countries are at the periphery- the Caribbean territories make up part of that periphery. The general argument is made that the center became industrialized on the backs of those now underdeveloped countries existing in the periphery, because of the excavation and depletion of their human and natural resources. Case in point, Europe became rich from the slave trade and sugar cultivation in the colonized Caribbean territories. As a

matter of fact, West Indian sugar trade and African labor produced the wealth that funded the Industrial Revolution (Sherlock and Bennett 161). The activities of the slave trade expanded world trade for the British, and brought about some critical technological developments in addition to alerting them to the possibilities of expansion for exporting other products in vast quantities (162). Ultimately, the level of progress in the "center" required an expanded labor force, which it was able to attract from the periphery to augment its further development. Studies show that after WWII Britain, France, the United States, and the Netherlands encouraged migration by opening migration divisions to recruit the cheap labor from the less developed nations (Budhan). The consequent migration of people from those less developed nations (the periphery) was responsible for further underdevelopment and more poverty and this became a vicious cycle as people continue to leave in search of a better life in the industrialized nations.

The exploitation continued as people then began to consider the center as their savior-rescuing them from a domed life of poverty in their own countries. The Caribbean became an exporter of surplus labor, because excess labor was available. Overpopulation exacerbated unemployment, and the staggering economic crisis led to emigration, which served as an outlet for the overpopulation. Countries like Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic registered birth rates higher than industrialized nations like the United States, for example (Budhan). Immigration would eventually take its toll on the development of the Caribbean territories as these countries, which are laden with untapped natural resources, remain underdeveloped and poor.

In many instances this continued to be their reality, because of their own political-ideological positions, notwithstanding the languishing effects of colonialism. Many of them

sought to gain control of their economic and natural resources like bauxite and aluminum, which were owned or controlled by foreign capitalists. Jamaica was one of the world's largest exporters of bauxite, which accounted for half of the island's revenues, but depressed world prices and reduced demand had led to static income. Such attempts at control had serious repercussions for the country which tried to "nationalize" (by kicking the émigré out) any of its industries. These repercussions materialized in the form of covert foreign trade sanctions which placed embargoes on produce from the errant country. With fewer opportunities to sell to the capitalist world, some islands turned to exporting to countries like Cuba and to the Soviet Union whose political ideology was anathema to the superpowers like the United States. Thereafter, they were technically black listed in such countries as Canada and the United States which had the capital to buy, while their socialist liaisons, Cuba for example, could not afford to import nor had any use for excessive amounts of the product. Those countries were producers of some of the same products, sugar for instance. This situation created economic crises for the errant countries, and more so for their peoples who experienced grave food shortages for staples, like flour which was not produced in the Caribbean. Further, foreign governments and organizations like the CIA[10] were accused of manipulating political parties to further their own agendas. This caused political strife which led to warring factions and acute violent disturbances in the form of riots, which claimed hundreds of lives as civil strife erupted in places like Jamaica and Guyana.

[10] CIA- Central Intelligence Agency (United States). During the 1970's, Manley accused the CIA of being intimately involved in the destabilization of the PNP government. According to a former CIA officer, Philip Agee, the CIA "was using the Jamaica Labour Party as its instrument in the entire campaign against the Michael Manley government. I'd say most of the violence was coming from the Jamaica Labour Party side, and behind them was the CIA in terms of getting the weapons in and getting the money in" (King 147).

Political Climate

The political climate in post-colonial countries Caribbean territories influenced the economic conditions which in turn predisposed social stratification and social interactions of their people. Jamaica is one of the islands in which this reality had dire consequences for the poor. Back in January, 1958 this island was a British colony united in the Federation of the West Indies, but due to disagreement over Jamaica's role, the federation dissolved. On August 6, 1962 the nation gained Independence and started a succession of Prime Ministers- men who campaigned from the major political parties, and won 'free and fair' elections to become heads of government ("Jamaica" 2005). The late Walter Rodney, Guyanese political activist and scholar, argues in his work, The Groundings with my Brothers, that these men maintained a social structure that ensured that the black masses remained at the lowest stratum of the society while they represented the interests of the foreign imperialist system (60). Rodney who was an advocate of "Black Power," supported the ideals and efforts of the Rastafari as a movement with creative people- a strong people with depth who are able to survive in the stifling circumstances present in Jamaica, at the time (68).

Edward Seaga of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) swept into power in the year of Independence, replacing Norman Manley (in power since 1955), to become Prime Minister until 1972 (Nettleford 86). By the mid- 1960's the fragile national unity brought about by independence began to deteriorate into political instability and social disorder. Jamaica continued to endure economic reliance on foreign states, trade inequities, escalating unemployment, land displacement, and food and housing shortages (King 26). The Jamaican elite benefited from the initial economic boom while in contrast "the poor survived in West Kingston's "blazing" war zone of cardboard shacks, human waste and steel- gray cement

factories" (King 26). As the social conditions worsened, protest groups progressively resisted the political leadership of the governing upper classes. The Rastafarians declared their cultural pride more openly, while defiant young thugs in Kingston's ghettoes banded together into what became known as the Rude Boy[11] youth rebellion (King 27). The mounting resistance reflected the impoverished masses' "bold assertion of a black radical consciousness [that] challenged the political and moral leadership of the dominant classes" (King 27). This consciousness was stimulated by the explosion of liberation movements around the globe (27). The JLP reacted to the resistance by instituting repressive measures. The government boosted the police force, by allocating more funds to that establishment rather than healthcare; maintained class division by encouraging the neo-colonial stratification of whites at the peak of the socio-economic structure and blacks at the base; supported landlords and foreign interests whereas they neglecting Jamaican small business owners the increasing numbers of unemployed youth (27). By the end of the first decade of Independence, the breadth of mass poverty and the "highly selective though somewhat increased prosperity," of few; civil disturbances of 1968; and the rising Rastafarian and Rude Boys opposition to continual class distinction, color discrimination, and economic deprivation, had signaled time for a change (86).

Michael Manley (son of Norman Manley) and the nationalist People's National Party (PNP) regained power, and restored the party's old socialist commitment of 1940 to institute democratic socialism in 1974. Trouble started when this leftist ideology was embraced and was compounded when Manley's friendship with Communist Cuba's Fidel Castro became public knowledge. The country became polarized along party lines, and by the time Manley's term was

[11] Rude Boy is that person, native , who is totally disenchanted with the ruling system; who generally is descended from the "African" elements in the lower class and who is now armed with ratchets (German made knives), other cutting instruments and with increasing frequency nowadays, with guns and explosives ~ Garth White (King 26).

over, the next election campaign became a bloodbath where more than 800 Jamaicans died at the hands of clashing political gangs. These factions engaged the youth who were surreptitiously handed arms, and the urban areas became paramilitary zones as they tried to take over, or capture or protect, the political strongholds of the different parties (Chevannes 264).

A precursor to this political mayhem was the youths' enchantment with Rastafari from the middle of the 1960's all through the 1970's (263). The Rude Boys had adopted the symbols of Rastafari which identified them with the movement though many of them did not practice the religion nor live the principles of the group. Many did not adhere to the Rastafari's convention of non-violence, and consequently when they became involved in acts of violence, the movement was vilified because they appeared to be a part of Rastafari. The youth used the language, wore the colors (some even wore dreadlocks), and ate like foods- all of which became marks of identity for them (263). To attract the youth therefore, it was judicious of the PNP party and its leader Michael Manley to penetrate the youth through Rastafari discourse. This political savvy, enabled them to use the symbols of Rastafari- in this case the rod- which Manley used during his campaign to establish pseudo solidarity with the movement and hence capture the youth who were bound up in identifying with it. Needless to say, the PNP party won the ensuing elections and by the middle of the 1970' political violence had risen to an all time high, never before experienced in Jamaica (264). Such manipulation of the youth had serious consequences for them (the youth), the Rastafari, and the country, in the ensuing years.

After a general election was called in 1980, in excess of 900 people died because of the violence that resulted from "partisan politricks" (264) – the organized in-fighting between the two major political parties and the recruitment and manipulation of followers to win elections and access power. Many who died were youths. As a result of the unstable conditions in

Jamaica, many of the youths immigrated to the United States. Those who had committed crimes went there to avoid punishment, some to smuggle arms back to Jamaica, and others to traffic drugs. As a consequence, the image of Rastafari was sullied by the very appearance of these youths who were not the real Rastafari, but whose identities were connected to the movement because they displayed the symbols especially the language Dread Talk, the wearing of the Rastafarian colors and dreadlocks, and their avowed loathing for "Babylon" (264).

The outside world began to view Rastafari as a dangerous sect- a decidedly criminal element of drug addicts. This most unfortunate depiction of Rastafari outside of Jamaica combined with the Rastafarian's defense of their use of marijuana and the appearance of their strange "hairstyle," dreadlocks, led to two CBS documentaries on *60 Minutes* and further scrutiny of a group whose essential characteristics as a religious and cultural group added significantly to their struggle (265). The basis of the "criminal image "of Rastafari was the confusion between the fundamental beliefs of the group versus aspects of a ghetto youth culture that had adopted Rastafari overt symbols and none of their inherent philosophies. Regrettably, this error in judgment was responsible for the misrepresentation of the image of Rastafari outside Jamaica especially in the United States. Ironically, although there was a lingering hostility between the Jamaican law enforcement and Rastafari, there was no such distortion concerning what the Rastafarians represented in Jamaica (266). However, as time went by the negative associations in the media lessened though the graphic representations continued to be broadcast via pictures of people wearing dreadlocks (268). According to Chevannes, the movement was gaining recognition as a religious force in the United States (268). Reggae music and a positive image of Bob Marley's (and others like him) life lived out as a practicing

Rastafarian, whose philosophy came through in his music, did much to encourage a positive image of the movement worldwide.

As far as the calamitous effects on the country because of the political manipulation of the youths is concerned, needless to say it ultimately worsened the economic conditions and social relations between the political factions, the Jamaican poor and the establishment (Babylon)- the police and government deteriorated. The efforts of the administration of each political party (mainly the PNP and the JLP) as they take turns in power usually "fell prey to the very economic (and by extension social) "sins" of which it accused the Party it had displaced," as was the case back in 1962 (Nettleford 86).

In addition to the local political unrest which helped in the degeneration of socio-economic conditions, international politics and natural disasters made the situation worse. The country was economically devastated by the number of bad international aid deals and economic miss-steps. Though Edward Seaga (JLP Party), who became Manley's successor, severed ties with Cuba and established ties with the United States, the economy never recovered, because of the weak prices that Jamaica's mineral exports commanded, and the devastating effects of Hurricane Gilbert in 1988 ("Jamaica" 2005). Gilbert, one of fifteen hurricanes to hit the island over the past century, left 500,000 people homeless (Mordecai 3). Such devastation often depleted the resources and created further hardship for already poor Jamaicans. Manley's return for another term in 1989 exacerbated the situation, and though he resigned after three years, Jamaican election politics continued to be tinged with violence. Poverty has become the fate of many Jamaicans, and among the poor were the Rastafarians.

CHAPTER 3: THE DEVELOPMENT OF RASTAFARI RESISTANCE DISCOURSE WITHIN JAMAICA

As a direct result of the political turmoil in Jamaica in the two decades starting in 1960, the economic situation worsened and masses of lower class blacks experienced hardship. Unemployment was at an all-time high during those years and the youth became a rebellious force in the society. The Rastafarian movement with its "different philosophy" appealed to them, so they adopted the language and some of the practices of that group. Dread Talk in the popular music, reggae, developed at a rapid pace through the novel lyrics and resistance to the political establishment espoused in especially the poetic music of Bob Marley.

A. The Language of Rastafari

Rastafarians' rejection of both Standard Jamaican English and to some extent Jamaican Creole was established in the 1950's as a new vernacular which emerged among alienated young men of the Rastafarian culture. They called it Dread Talk. The spread of this "new language," which the establishment (in this instance the Jamaican academia) had hoped would fizzle and die away, gained momentum within that youth culture right alongside popular Jamaican music which eventually became the reggae music of the early 1970's. The most significant influence on the youth during this time became the reggae music written mostly by Rastafarians. It contains the lyrics that convey the language in messages they considered serious, so that "while the Children of Israel (The Rastafari) create words and music, the Children of Babylon (The Establishment) are by no means deaf," as Pollard astutely states in her analysis (Pollard 15). Henceforth the lexical items from Dread Talk were summarily included in the youths' everyday speech, Jamaican Creole, despite the rejection of the language

by parents and the educated middle class society at large (15). Fear of the language, however, may have stemmed more from the social impact of the Rastafari movement than any apprehension of the language as a linguistic menace, though the linguistic impact would definitely penetrate the peoples' consciousness more (16). Language is power, and hearing the language would keep the image of Rastafari before the society. The language has been sustained within the Creole speech community as well as exported internationally, and this gives added support to "the phenomena of language [or speech style] affecting language where the influence is remote and the means of transmission impersonal," so aptly articulated by Velma Pollard (1982 b) in her essay, "The Speech of the Rastafarians of Jamaica, in the Eastern Caribbean: the Case of St. Lucia." Dread Talk exemplifies this influence on speech varieties of the eastern Caribbean region. What is significant and unique about this code is that it has managed to spread outside the boundaries of the community it was created to serve unlike similar codes formed for a specific purpose by a particular group.

Its intent, in the beginning, was for Dread Talk to act as a code of communication – a secret way of talking among members of the movement that the hegemonic forces in the society could not decipher, much like slave ancestors did to undermine their oppressors. Even today it is still difficult for an outsider to interpret this language. Dread Talk is talk or language that articulates the Rastafarian's resistance to oppression. It serves the cultural and philosophical beliefs of Rastafari in a manner that is most extraordinary for language. According to Mordecai, Rastafarians speak this language with an attitude of boldness and assertiveness as they skillfully subvert some of the lexicon of Jamaican Creole (Mordecai 83). It is resistive language. It is a language that conveys an attitude and posture--that exudes a speech behavior

undergirded by a rational view of language and the world wherein words have an innate power to evoke and to "be" the thing that it means (83).

This language created by the Rastafarians to articulate their philosophy, underscores the creativity of this group of people. Though they are often reviled as ignorant, poor and shiftless, their sagacity tells a different story. The discourse/conversations that their poetry and music initiate are crucial to the reality many people are living. They have an understanding of creating words that make sense for what it is supposed to reveal. There is a perceptible conciseness, associated with Dread Talk neologisms when compared to the lexicon of Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English: it is as if in the compressing, the meaning becomes clearer. The words usually contain clues as to the meaning or feeling and often convey an attitude towards something or someone. Rastafarians resist the word *Jesus*, for example, because they deem the normal pronunciation, /*Je-sus/*, objectionable, because they believe it is a misrepresentation of the original Amharic intended to mislead Africans (Mordecai 83). Instead they believe that the pronunciation should be similar in sound to 'just us" /*Jes us/* from the Jamaican Creole- an intonation which communicates the fact that Christ is incarnate within man (83).

Non- Rastafarians use the terms Dread Talk or Rasta Talk to describe the language, but the Rastafarians call their language "Iyaric" which is a combination of the first person pronoun "I" + "Amharic," a Semitic language spoken in North Central Ethiopia, "the official working language" of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Rastafarians also refer to their language as "Livalect" which is a combination of the words "live" and "dialect." Whatever this language may be called, it is one of the many registers of a Creole-Jamaican. To be exact, the language indicates social standing--class distinction (one of the legacies of colonialism and an oppressive force in the Jamaican society)--as its speakers were considered members of the

lowest class of society. Velma Pollard who has done extensive work with this language, sums it up as "a conscious attempt to speak in a way that could accurately describe his [Rastafarian] socioeconomic position as the man looking up from under" (87). Far from being the language of the ignorant, the language functions to forcefully instigate awareness of deep social problems not only in Jamaica but internationally. Barrett describes Dread Talk as "soul language in which binary oppositions are overcome in the process of identity with other sufferers in the society," (144).

Rex Nettleford's description of the Rastafari movement as one of the region's "most authentic expressions of organic revolt in appropriate if anguished response to some of the deepest social forces . . . that determine the discrepancies of our Caribbean society," (Pollard 83) embodies the language of the movement which represents one of the forms of expression in the movement. As an extension of that declaration is the notion that the language of Rastafari acts as a conduit of the other expressions of the movement. Dread Talk is religious and Rastafarians view their speech as a "holy tool" as the many poetic, biblical references and metaphors make the language mysterious to those outside their community and culture. Stacey Herbold reiterates that point in her essay "Jamaican Patois and the Power of Language in Reggae Music." Scrutiny of the construction of the language will indicate why this is true. Velma Pollard has identified three models of lexical modifications that would be helpful in identifying how the Rastafarians evolved their own language by making some major changes to the lexicon of Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole. Some of these modifications are part of the discussion on linguistic innovations in Chapter 4.

B. The Emergence of Dread Talk Aid the Perceptions About the Language Inside and Outside the Rastafarian Community.

Dread Talk was a decidedly selective code in the inception. Rastafari was a closed group and the language was initially meant to be solely available to those within the group who shared a common belief and way of life. They were the insiders for whom the language expressed in particular ways their perceptions of what was going on in the Jamaican society and by extension the world. They felt cast off by elitist government and the Jamaican middle class, outsiders, whose attitude of disapproval and disdain for the sect was extended to their language. But, the sentiment was mutual. Rastafari had a profound contempt for the establishment and the imperialist ideology that still operated in a nation that was supposedly free but still mentally enslaved with a Eurocentric complex that made them ignore their African and cultural roots. Their defiance in developing their language, and the fact that it has been sustained beyond the expectations of the elitist class, is a testimony to the resilience of the movement against all negative evaluations of its people and their beliefs.

The negative valuations of Creole languages typically come from those who occupy positions of relative power in a state, but who are outsiders to the Creole culture. These outsiders viewpoint are inclined to be emphasized because it is connected with well educated people who have authority (Frank 2). In the Jamaica situation, many who were not outsiders to the Creole culture rejected Jamaican Creole and especially Dread Talk because to them it was "broken English" inferior to the Standard variety, and that was what they had been brain-washed to believe by the century of Eurocentric ideals imposed on colonies. Dread Talk is especially noted because the language represented the movement which inspired dread in the elite classes who feared the success of the movement more than they did the language. In addition, there

were other compelling forces such as advancement, education and assimilation into the middle/upper classes that militated against the acceptance of any Creole. Many were poor blacks did not want their offspring to speak the Creole languages because that would somehow debar them from receiving an education that would be their ticket out of poverty; though they embraced other aspects of their culture. On the contrary, other forces such as identity, solidarity and cultural pride incited speakers to converse within their communities in a relaxed manner. These forces engendered acceptance of Creole language varieties as speakers realized that their language may be a corruption of a "more prestigious standard language," but that did not persuade them to abandon their own language (Frank). Instead, Creole can symbolize solidarity and resistance to conforming to other groups' standards (Frank). These inconsistencies still exist in some measure today in some Caribbean territories including Jamaica, though there is a greater acceptance of varieties along the continuum due to the explosion of cultural pride in the literature and music coming out of the region today. Insiders see the Creole language as "rich and a treasury of folk literature and wisdom" (Frank). It is the language they live in, resist in and forge their dreams in. Cultural outsiders view the persistence of these types of speech as anomalies, because they find them difficult to understand and usually perceive that they will become extinct. Still other outsiders, such as powerful establishments, seek to diminish and ascribe such varieties as inferior in their quest to maintain their own status quo and perpetuate their agenda of dominance.

Thus perceptions of Dread Talk differed significantly during the development of the language and its early use. For insiders- the purveyors of resistance within the speech Community- the Rastafarians, and those others who embraced it, the rebellious Jamaican youth of any ilk, it was a code of communication that reflected a distinctively different outlook about

humanity and its place in the universe. The language was organic to the Rastafari movement in that it gave impetus to the movement's popularity and through its use in the music, placed Rastafarianism on the map.

One early "insider" on the music scene, Count Ossie who stated in an interview that "We were fighting colonialism and oppression but not with gun and bayonet, but wordically, culturally" (1972) lent credence to the edict that language and culture often team up against oppression. He was the first musician to record "nayabinghi" drumming. Born in St. Thomas, Jamaica he was raised in a Rastafarian community where he was taught the art of chanting and hand drumming. He combined Jamaican traditions with the inherited traditions and conscious rediscovery of lost African traditions that made Nyabinghi drumming and Rastafari so powerful. The rhythms of chants were influenced by popular reggae music and the three major drums used were the bass,[12] funde,[13] and akete[14] drums. Sounds achieved authenticity as a space for cultural discourse after Independence in Jamaica. The uneasiness that had existed between the political powers that be and the black masses-tensions that had to do with racial inequities--found expression through the music/sound. Only then was Africa and its traditions embraced as the key foundation of positive individual and cultural associations, and became an aspect of the official narratives of Jamaica (Adjaye 188). As a matter of fact, it was on the eve of independence that sound systems became the overriding mouthpiece of the country's black masses.

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[12] The bass drum is the largest drum used in reggae music that plays catchy rhythms repeated continually to keep the grove of the tune. Generally, the drum is made from wooden stakes secured by metal bands/pegs and it is approximately 60 centimeters across, about 4 feet tall, and the head of the drum is made with cow or goat skin. It is played by use of a heavy padded stick from the drummer's lap (Kahn).

[13] Funde/fundeh – similar to the bass drum only smaller with one end left open for higher resonance of sound. Drum is played by using the fingers or hands to tap as the instrument is held between the drummer's legs (Kahn).

[14] Akété / *kété* drum – One of the 3 main Nyabinghi drums with the highest pitch. It is also called the "repeater" or "cutter." It is a small skinny cylindrical drum played with the bare hands usually by the most experienced drummer and its musical role is that of improvising over the steady pulse of the background rhythm. (Dickerson).

Any study of Rastafari resistance must include scrutiny of how the language in the poetic music supports that resistance. This study, so far has given an exhaustive look at the context for such a discourse by looking at the historical implications for the beginning of the Rastafari movement, the philosophies that govern its existence, and various people and events which have impacted the force of resistance against oppressive establishments and their ideology, beginning with those in Jamaica. However, an examination of what poetics do to use the language of resistance is at the core of Dread Talk as a resistive discourse.

The poetic music/poetry is the vehicle of the language which anchors every facet resistance. Through tracing the evolution of poetics in what I term the Jamaican Rastafarian "cultural heist," one can also trace the evolution of the struggle. I use the word "heist" loosely, not emphasizing its definition of robbery, but the idea of seizing by force, their right to create and communicate in a language of their own that resist the imposed culture and repressive ideology of the dominant group and fight to elevate their own. It is suitable the way Louis Chude – Soeki in his essay, "The Sound of Culture: Dread Discourse and Jamaican Sound Systems," explains the use of sounds in that culture as 'an inexorably emergent (always "just come") space of resistance and survival in the black diaspora. . . . a sounding, an establishment of boundaries in a separate ontological space" (Adjaye and Andrews 186). In resistance movements, very often the depressed masses have to use those elements of their culture that are readily accessible to them. More often than not that translates into a culture's language, through the activism in its music and literature which are used as weapons of resistance. The ways of being and the relationships that exist in that culture determine the entities, such as its language, that survive. For the Rastafari, and other such revolutionary groups, the workings of sound--poetic music--is not restricted by the limitations of society's definition of literacy. Any

"seemingly illiterate group" can project their culture according to their own consciousness and as they deem fit, despite the lack of sanction by a dominant class existing alongside. The Rastafarians did; and their language has survived beyond the boundaries of the place and people for whom it was developed despite the disapproval of the Jamaican elite.

According to Chude – Soeki, during colonial and post colonial times in Jamaica, language, more exactly the printed word, represented the divergent orientation of the upper echelons of the society, whom the Rastafari called "dounpressors" or "Babylon," ignoring that of the so-called uneducated ghetto "sufferahs" as they would want to think of them (186). Rastafari insight emanates from the pre-colonial magic of the talking drums and traditions of their African ancestors (186). They are not ignorant because they don't confirm to a culture foisted upon them. They dance to the beat of a different drum, and one that vigorously announces the existence of their separateness and desire for self-determination and resistance to submerging their cultural identity under that of any other. Ironically, the philosophy of life and living that derives from this group reflects a deep understanding of reality and foregrounds their capability of responding and defending their existence with rhetorical tropes through the subversion of the language of the status quo. In those early days of development of the language (1950's) and music (1960's), the Rastafari's principle of "word sound power" (see explanations in Linguistic Innovation Table 4.3, especially) is as innovative as it is strikingly potent not only on the level of the lexical quality of the language and its metaphoric or "logo centric" properties, but in the sound (187). As the language evolved "the sound itself was pregnant with semantic--as the tiny nation moved towards independence--national possibilities," to put it in the vernacular of Chude-Soeki (187). He observes that the outcasts Rastafarians imagined a utopia: a mythical free African continent, existence in the fatherland Ethiopia, and a dream of abundance. The drums

("funde" and "repeatah") reverberated with the tropes, symbols and images of their African identity (187). But, these hopes became transformed as we witness the ascendancy and command of a new revelation of sound, politics and culture manifest in a deliberately unsophisticated image. Thus, we are made to re-examine Rastafari insight and its exploitation of "word sound history." It is within this framework that we want to trace the emergence of Dread Talk: the evolution of the language from its creation in the 1950's as a "step up" from Jamaican Creole through its quite revolutionary journey via Bob Marley's poetic music discourse-reggae.

C. An Iconoclast's Résistance: Bob Marley and the Rhetoric of Social Justice.

> *"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."*
>
> ~Jay S. Kaufman (1987)

Kaufman's declaration in the article "Music and Politics in Jamaica" published in the *Caribbean Review* (1987) is undoubtedly perceptive as the popularity of reggae music which began as protest music of the Jamaican poor gained momentum in the 1970's and became widespread outside Jamaica. The power of the music and as a consequence the power of its language did indeed influence political and social change. Reggae defied the world view of "Babylon"- any oppressive system- and has evolved to become progressively more revolutionary and political, condemning oppressive and apartheid systems the world over. Undoubtedly, it is the effective use of the resistive language in reggae, Dread Talk, which has extended the discourse and heightened awareness. Today, the world is acquainted with reggae music because of its identification with the Rastafarian Movement to which many of the early reggae musicians belonged. One of its most influential devotees--often touted as an icon, a musical and cultural

martyr of this genre--is musician and prophet Robert Nesta (Bob) Marley (1945-1981) (Bordowitz xiii). His contributions are more significant than anyone else's in introducing Jamaica, reggae, and Rastafari worldwide (Chevannes 270).

Marley's momentous career began under very humble circumstances in December, 1963 (though he was an active musician since 1962) in Kingston at Studio One where every "wanna be" musician turned up for an audition, or just to play, hoping to be discovered (Farley 74). With his friends Peter Tosh, and Neville "Bunny" Livingston in tow, the group undertook to play a song Marley had written two years before called "Simmer Down" (75). Christopher Farley in his biography of Marley, Before the Legend: The Rise of Bob Marley, describes the song that made Clement Dodd (a.k.a. Sir Coxson Downbeat), owner of a sound system and scout for musical talent, take notice. Farley calls it "a generational anthem [that] . . . captured the spirit of freedom of post colonial Jamaica and it distilled the sense of rebelliousness that had been brewing among the new nation's youth . . . . its lyrics were deceptively simple . . . but its modest surface was part of its power" (76). The lyrics of "Simmer Down" were "sung in a local language . . . and it was something uniquely Jamaican-a musical declaration of independence" (76). Though the song was performed to the local beat of the day the "ska,[15]" the very characteristics Farley describes seem to have permeated Bob's music when his beat changed to reggae. With the rude boy era in full swing (1960's) Bob Marley's lyrics were described as "challenging conventions and resisting the law (87). It was early in his career that he recorded "Burnin' and Lootin' (1973) and "I Shot the Sheriff" (1974) which had decidedly revolutionary

[15] **Ska** (pronounced /ska/ or in Jamaican Patois /skja/) is a music genre that originated in Jamaica in the late 1950s and was a precursor to rock steady and reggae. Ska combined elements of Caribbean mento and calypso with American Jazz and rhythm and blues. It is characterized by a walking bass line, accented guitar or piano rhythms on the offbeat. In the early 1960s, ska was the dominant musical genre of Jamaica, and it was also popular with British Mods.

lyrics. In the ensuing years, Marley "embraced the insurgent spirit that the public only imagined" (87) as he climbed unabated to international fame for the next eighteen years. Though his life was cut short at the height of his fame and activism, age 36, Marley is remembered for the rhetoric of social justice his songs espoused. He creatively "blended multiple cultures, syncretistic religious influences, and a commitment to freedom, justice, hope, and unity through the gift of his musical and lyrical genius," according to W. Alan Smith in his work, "Songs of Freedom: The Music of Bob Marley as Transformative Education," to reveal how one can successfully unite religious faith, political activism and militancy to radically change the abject circumstances of many distressed people in Western nations.

Admitted to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1994, Bob Marley is credited with integrating reggae and its socio-political and religious views into the consciousness of world culture. In a tribute to Marley upon his induction, Robert Palmer wrote, "No one in rock and roll has left a musical legacy that matters more or one that matters in such fundamental ways." This is a significant testimony to Marley's impact outside his initial sphere of influence among the Rastafarian sect and the residents of the most destitute communities in Jamaica. His music was a drum roll, because it heightened their awareness of the forms of domination and the injustices they were subjected to daily due to the policies of those who ruled over them. His use of reggae music and the clout of his public and international popularity enabled him to advocate resistance to the evil systems of hegemony by encouraging the disenfranchised to participate in the movement towards freedom. Marley's public persona implied that he was a man who was instinctively conscious of the power of symbols of resistance, which he would cleverly utilize in a number of ways, to communicate his belief that he was chosen by Jah (the Rastafarian name for God) to be an agent for change on behalf of the impoverished people of his native Jamaica

(Smith). Later, this limited commitment eventually became more absolute as he dedicated himself, through his music and activism, to liberating not only his fellow countrymen but the entire world's oppressed citizens. Maureen Sheridan in her book *Bob Marley: Soul Rebel -the Stories Behind Every Song*, submits that "Marley's unfinished mission was to change the mindset of the poor and downtrodden, and lead his people to a better place" (Smith).

His allegiance to his Rastafari faith was powerful, and was the basis for his rhetoric of social justice and the inherent speech acts incumbent in the lyrics of his songs. Marley, a member of the Orthodox /Nyabinghi sect of Rastafari towards the end of his life, made references to repatriation in keeping with Marcus Garvey's repatriation ideal of returning to Africa, and the promise of freedom and dignity based on the decolonization of Africa (Hubbard et al. 153). Two of his songs that express the anticipation of repatriation are "Africa Unite" (1979) and "Exodus" (1976) The first song, which comes from the 1979 album *Survival*, begins with a portion of Psalm 133 which implies a call for unification and a return to Zion- the historic land of Israel, symbol of the Jewish people- in this case Ethiopia which is symbolic of all Africa (155):

Africa, Unite	Line 1
'Cause we're moving right out of Babylon	Line 2
And we're going to our father's land	Line 3
How good and how pleasant it would be	Line 4
Before God and man, yeah	Line 5
To see the unification of all Africans, yeah	Line 6
As it's been said already let it be done, yeah	Line 7
We are the children of the Rastaman	Line 8
We are the children of the Higher Man (lines 1-9).	Line 9

The idea of African descendants across the diasporas uniting and returning to Africa signifies the desire to end all forms of injustice and oppression- the after-effects of slavery, apartheid and

colonialism- and restore the dignity to Africans and their descendants to self- govern and become masters of their own fate. Maureen Sheridan in Bob Marley: Soul Rebel -the Stories Behind Every Song posits that "Reggae's Messiah [Bob Marley] stated on many occasions that his message was for the whole world, but his heart was in Africa." However, by the end of his life "the earlier Rastafarian message that Jah was going to lead all Africans back to their African homeland began to give way to a much more universal message." His rhetoric had changed to include social justice for all disenfranchised peoples globally and not just Africans and their descendants. The refrain in "Exodus" expresses similar sentiment.

Exodus: Movement of Jah people!(Oh-oh-oh, yea-eah!)	Line 1
So we gonna walk- all right!- through de roads of creation	Line 6
We the generation (Tell me why!)	Line 7
Trod through great tribulation (trod through great tribulation)	Line 8
Exodus, all right! Movement of Jah People!	Line 9
Open your eyes and look within:	Line 12
Are you satisfied with the life you're living?	Line 13
We know where we're going;	Line 14
We know where we're from.	Line 15
We're leaving Babylon, y'all!	Line 16
We're going to our Father's land	Line 17

Exodus, the enormously successful album and namesake of this song, was touted by *Time Magazine* as the album of the century and commended by authors Ian McCann and Harry Hawke in their book *Complete Guide to the Music of Bob Marley* for "drawing inspiration from the Third World and then giving voice to it the world over." The essential theme of the song is the conclusion of the suffering of *all* Jah's people. The imagery of Israelites exodus from Egypt (Babylon) bound for their fatherland, Israel, and the decisive power of that event in the life of Israel, is the depiction this song aims to capture for African descendants. In the repetitive line in the song, "Exodus, movement of Jah people Move! Move! Move! Move! Marley entreats Jah to

send another Moses to lead the people across the Red Sea and for Jah to "come break down 'pression,' rule equality, wipe away transgression, and set the captives free" (Smith). Repatriation to the fatherland does not represent the pursuit of racial purity, in Marley's vision, but is a call for "a return to a more humane philosophy" (Smith). Like his message in other songs, the prophet implores his audience to become involved in the pursuit of peace, love, freedom, and unity. His rhetoric challenges his listeners to become active in the movement back to a symbolic Ethiopia, more so than a literal one. His own experience of being away from Jamaica, his native land, after he was nearly assassinated in 1976, deepened his feelings for being in exile and heightened his vision for Jah's people to return to the promised land of Zion whether metaphorical or literal. However, though repatriation is central to Rastafari ideology, it is not pervasive in the activities of the Rastafarians, today especially (Mordecai 48). There are many Rastafarians who belong to the middle class. Selassie I's influence that they seek freedom in Jamaica first, helped to members to re-focus on addressing problems in Jamaica rather than leaving. Since they looked to Selassie I as the one who would lead them back to the Promised Land, many Rastafarians refused to accede that he had passed away in August 1975, though he had, and looked for him to return to fulfill that Biblical prophecy. Others emphasized activism towards social reform wherever they dwelled (Hubbard et al 154).

Many of Marley's songs contain lyrics that are considerably explicit religious subject matter and make references to Jah and Selassie I and other Biblical references that inform the rhetoric in his songs. From the time of his conversion at eighteen years old, his Rastafarian faith is pervasive but infinitely more so after the failed assassination attempt on his life by suspected political party henchmen in 1976. His allusions to the omnipotence of Jah are sustained through

many of his songs where he reiterates that God/good will prevail over evil as in the song "War" (1976). Social justice will be attained whether by violence- or his preference- mankind's love, one for another. The song, "War," links the role of Marley's religion with the development of his political activism and increasing militancy. He truly believed that oppression anywhere, in Angola, Mozambique, or South Africa, oppressed countries named in the song, equaled the struggle his people in Jamaica had been waging for centuries, and that "Jah" was the aide of justice and an end to racism" (Smith). Perhaps that rhetoric could be substantiated as prophetic and viable because systems of apartheid have since crumbled in South Africa, and hegemonic governments have been "toppled and utterly destroyed" (Marley 1976) in Angola and Mozambique like the lyrics of the song have proclaimed.

The idea that Jah's goodness is inherent in each person, thus implying man is divine, is one of the tenets of Rastafari that seeks to reject the Babylonian system of class and racial differences as well as naming in Christianity. To the Rastafarian, the "I" sound in Rastafari represents an identification with Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie I) (Mordecai 47), and specifically an "original and personal relationship with God" (Hubbard et al 15). Some songs protest situations of exploitation, prejudice and injustice such as the lyrics of the first and third lines of "Redemption Song" (1980) can attest:

Old pirates, yes, they rob I;	Line 1
Sold I to the merchant ships,	Line 2
Minutes after they took I	Line 3
From the bottomless pit.	Line 4
But my hand was made strong	Line 5
By the 'and of the Almighty.	Line 6
We forward in this generation	Line 7
Triumphantly.	Line 8
Won't you help to sing	Line 9
These songs of freedom?	Line 10

’Cause all I ever have	Line 11
Redemption songs, redemption songs	Line 12

Marley attacks the physical degradation of slavery and draws attention to the evil of slave traders calling them ‘pirates” (line 1). Allusion to the Middle Passage and slave trade (lines 1-3), which helped to shape Jamaican African heritage, are directly referenced at the beginning of the song. The slaves’ helplessness is evinced and injustice reeks throughout the music of the slow dirge-like tenor of the song. But the song shifts gears in the second verse from the physical degradation of 17th-18th century slavery to talk about the psychological slavery that continues to oppress long after that form of slavery has been officially abandoned (Smith); it admonishes.

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery	Line 13
None but ourselves can free our minds.	Line 14

This admonition in (lines 13-14) calls for people to free themselves from mental slavery by taking personal responsibility for their lives and educating themselves about what is happening in the world. Today it is a different type of slavery--mental slavery--that is exacting a comparable degree of damage on the communal and individual psyches of Rastafarians and other oppressed peoples. The responsibility lies at the door of those who continue to suffer this emotional bondage to be proactive and take the steps necessary to achieve their own liberation; hence Marley’s refrain in lines 9 through 12,

Won’t you help to sing	Line 9
These songs of Freedom?	Line 10
’Cause it’s all I ever had,	Line 11
Redemption song/ Redemption songs	Line 12

The illocutionary power of this repetitive speech in Redemption Song is an example of the characteristic rhetorical speech act prevalent in many Bob Marley songs. The verse is intended as a “commissive”--a statement which commits the speaker [Marley] to a course of action, and a

"directive" for his listeners--a statement which encourages them to commit to a course of action to fit the preposition he makes, if we apply John R. Searle's theory of speech acts in How to Do Things With Words to the analysis of this song (Cline). McCann and Hawke claim "Redemption Song" is "perhaps Marley distilled to his essence--the spiritual side at least….casting aside fears of man's vain and warlike science for a belief in a greater power, no more elegant appeal on behalf of any religious belief was ever constructed" (McCann and Hawke 98). Also, the metaphoric use of "pirates" to name the slave traders, for example, serves to paint a powerful picture of the misdeeds of thieves who have robbed people, not of material things, but freedom and their very lives. Marley's use of such metaphors and other linguistic devices like signification and intertextuality helped to support the notion that reggae is a speech act of the Jamaican Rastafarians.

The Rastafarian ideology interwoven with the music popularized by Marley expressed cultural authenticity (Stan E. Smith). The various themes of his songs were "rooted in the sociopolitical, spiritual and cultural experiences of the Third World and his lyrics were filled with passion and emotion" (Stan E. Smith). His music can be subdivided into songs revering Jah/ Selassie I, songs about an exodus to Africa or Zion, songs about the "downpression" (repression) meted out by Babylon, songs about cosmic or mystic malevolence, and the early songs about sexual attraction and love which were more of the residue from rock steady. One outstanding element of his music is that practically all of his songs are optimistic somewhere in the lyrics or beat despite the rhetoric of the Rastafarian movement against injustice, oppression, racism, and exploitation that are pervasive in most of his works. Listening to his reggae engenders the feeling "that God is in heaven and all is right with the world" to use Smith's description. An audience could easily be transported by the catchy rhythm of reggae. Yet when

one is attentive to the lyrics, it is incredulous to notice the militancy, the calls to action, and the unfailing call for justice one finds in those same seemingly benign songs. It certainly induces further thought about the inequities in social justice, and is transformative in the way it would most likely encourage listeners to take some form of social action whether to improve their own personal situation or for advance the collective good of their communities or nations. I believe a fitting summation of his influence could be summed up in the words of Hank Bordowitz--"the real secret is that Marley's music is about something. It has value. Bob's art is life-transforming, answering our highest needs. It answers in a positive way the question that Carlos Santana says we must ask before we begin any activity: How is this going to make the world a better place?" (Bordowitz xix). If the answers to that question incorporate responses that would serve the greater good of mankind, then peoples' actions would likely propagate social justice, and exploitation as the world knows it would be diminished. Marley's use of language, metaphor, rhythm, symbol, and even ritualized action [his dance is trance-like and mesmerizing, to my mind] became one of the most dominant forces in popular music not only in Jamaica and the Caribbean, but in Africa, New Zealand, Great Britain, and throughout the Third World. The music has a remarkable quality as transformative education, because of the multiplicity of forms of resistance that are identifiable in his lyrics, his musical form (reggae), and the messages he delivers to the disenfranchised of the world, through this music (W. Alan Smith).

Hailed as a musical prophet and cultural icon, Marley's story is archetypical, and that may be the reason why it continues "to have such a powerful and ever-growing resonance," to quote the words of Neville Willoughby, who had interviewed the artist in 1973. His audience continues to expand, and according to music professor Matt Jenson at Berklee College of Music:

> "To Westerners Bob's apocalyptic truths prove inspirational and life-changing; in the Third World his impact goes much further. Not just among Jamaicans, but also the Hopi Indians of New Mexico and the Maoris of New Zealand, in Indonesia and India, and especially in those parts of West Africa from which slaves were plucked and taken to the New World; Bob is seen as a redeemer figure returning to lead this planet out of confusion."

Maureen Sheridan sums up Marley and the impact of his music this way: "Music is ultimately a stronger agent of change than any other medium- the reason why Marley was such a threat to the establishment" (qtd. in W. Alan Smith). His conviction of his vision of "One World, One Love" attests to his resistive yet non-violent way of encouraging the struggle against social injustice. His absence has created a giant gap in reggae music since his predecessors and successors, with their "market-driven mentality, [fail to emulate] the combination of beauty, depth, subtlety, refinement, musicianship, and risk that Marley and his contemporaries blended so masterfully" (Jenson).

With lyrics that incite discourse about oppression, class distinction, poverty, apartheid, and myriad other social, political and economic struggles, Bob Marley became a world changer. Marley's social and political activism, both through his music and through his private life, also had a remarkable impact in his own country. He brought the heads of warring political parties (then Prime Minister Michael Manley and Opposition Party Leader Edward Seaga) together in 1978, in an act of solidarity to promote peace in his homeland (BOBMARLEY.com). He toured the world- Japan, New Zealand, Australia in 1979 where he and his group, the Wailers, really broke ground with "truly international style reggae" (Farley); performed in African nations such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Gabon, and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) where he headlined the independence

celebrations alongside Prince Charles in 1980 (Jenson); wowed Europe, which included a 100,000-capacity crowd in Milan; and traversed various parts of the United States with two concerts in Madison Square Garden. Through his fame, fueled by his songs that encouraged determination, resistance and a call for justice, Marley's extensive travel concerts increased awareness about the plight of oppressed peoples everywhere. He saw himself as messenger of Jah, and used his music as a rhetorical device to empower people globally towards personal and corporate transformation. His efforts on behalf of the Third World's poor and powerless made possible many impressive awards, one of which the United Nations awarded him in 1978- the "Medal of Peace." In 1982 the government of Jamaica conferred on him its highest honor, the Order of Distinction just before his death. The Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award became his posthumously in 2001 and he became a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. As one of the twentieth century's most compelling figures, his spirit lives on in reggae music.

CHAPTER 4: LINGUISTIC MODIFICATION OF STANDARD JAMAICAN ENGLISH AND JAMAICAN CREOLE BY RASTAFARIAN DREAD TALK

> *Discourse is seen as a constitutive factor of social relations and belief systems. This view is based on the socio-semiotic approach in which language performs the ideational function of representing the world and the textual function of relating discourse and context, but also the interpersonal function of enacting social identities and relations.*
> *~ Jan Renkema (2003)*

In the most elemental way, this explanation of how discourse functions according to Jan Renkema, Professor of Discourse Quality at Tilburg University, Netherlands presents a suitable framework within which to examine the Rastafari's poetic music- reggae. The notion that language conveys the ideas that embody the world and serves to provide context for the discourse of such ideas lends support to the language Dread Talk as a conduit of the resistance discourse of Rastafari. The development of Dread Talk did enact the social identity of the Rastafarian sect as different and diverse from the elitist establishment in Jamaica and served to articulate the consciousness and awakening of the religious group's resistance to the social injustices that were meted out to the disenfranchised masses which overwhelmingly included them. The proliferation of reggae albums that hit the airwaves in the early 1970's helped to broadcast Dread Talk.

A. Language in the Discourse of the Poetic Music: Reggae as Resistance Response

The dissemination of Rasta philosophy and the diffusion of the language are indebted to the popularity of reggae. The lyrics of this poetic music in the mouths of its most active promoters, Bob Marley and the Wailers (Burning Spear, Peter Tosh, and Junior Braithwaite), who viewed their role in the Rastafari movement as a social and spiritual responsibility, became a discourse of the power of difference and diversity in a socio-economic environment that

favored class and color distinctions in the Jamaican society. That discourse changed over time to include larger issues of oppression in many Third World countries. The discourse environments where Dread Talk flourished were mainly through grassroots musical performances, Rastafari ceremonies such as the "grounations" and "nyabinghi chantings," dub poetry, and later the prolific reggae recordings. Rastafarian aesthetics imply that "every invention of "Africa" was a return to authenticity" (Adjaye and Andrews 192). African oral traditions inherent in these performances such as "call and response," and other traditions such as the Myal[16] religious practices influenced the execution of these performances by imbuing them with an African cultural presence that helped to forge an identity and a truly authentic culture unique to Rastafari, and eventually Jamaican. These traditions are quite evident in Jamaican sound systems especially reggae which is an integral element in this study's discussion of the language of its lyrics, as resistance response.

Reggae is an avenue of Rastafari self-expression through which their language Dread Talk resonates in the lyrics, the antics and the attitudes of its performers. Through the advancement of the Rastafari movement, whose revolutionary awareness of their African roots made them question every facet of cultural life, the language was launched in radical terms, for the first time. As Carolyn Cooper, Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica contends in her book Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture At Large, "the naming of popular music reveals complex ideological meanings" (236). That the music the Rastafarians used as the initial vehicle for the language that propagated their ideologies and symbolic resistance is called reggae is no accident. Cooper delves into the

[16] Myal- African spiritual practice that involved the exorcism of "bad spirits." The Myal-men were considered healers and spiritual leaders much like medicine men who knew the best curative properties of local plants. This practice I opposed to obeah which has the reputation of being witchcraft. "Myal first came to the attention of Europeans in the Taki Rebellion of 1760. It enabled a rebellion to be organized on Pan-African instead of strictly ethnic lines for the first time in the history of Africans in Jamaica" (Schuler 1979, qtd in Chevannes 17).

etymology of the word in a fashion that bears repeating to substantiate why the naming of the music "reggae" is significant:

> The words 'reggae" and "ragga" share a common ragged etymology that denotes their identical urban ghetto origins in the concrete jungle of Kingston. The 1967 Dictionary of Jamaica defines "reggae" as "a recently estab[lished] sp[elling]for *rege* (the basic sense of *ragged*- see *rege rege* with possible ref[erence] to rag time music (an early form of American jazz) but referring esp[ecially] to the slum origins of this music in Kingston." "Rege rege" is defined first as "rags, ragged clothing"; its secondary meaning is 'a quarrel, a row" . . . compare "rege-rege" with "raga-raga" which is defined in the nominative as "old ragged clothes," as adjective it means "in rags, ragged;" as a verb, it means "to pull about, pull to pieces" (236).

The references to 'rags" and "ragged" in the definition of "reggae" seem to connote a state of disrepair, lack or poverty- the state of the underprivileged urban blacks whose youth were the creators of reggae music. The implication of "quarrel or row" represents a significant facet of its meaning because the worsening of the economic state of the poor people was reflected in the discourse of the poetic music that was coming out at that time. The music reflected the poor's disenchantment with the Jamaican elite and the establishment who now represented the repressive elements in the society. The two genres that were precursors to reggae were the "ska"[17] and the more politically aggressive "rock steady[18]," whose musicians "were coming to grips with the stifling social conditions which pervaded life in the ghetto, from which most of

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[18] Rock Steady is the genre that followed the ska on the Jamaican music scene. It was more sophisticated and carried a relaxed rhythmic beat. The drums are less prominent in rock steady and provides accent while the less-rigid beat allowed more possibilities for vocals.

them came," according to Verena Reckford in her 1997 essay "Reggae, Rastafarianism, and Cultural Identity" (qtd. in King 28). Stifling social conditions frequently prompt group resistance which is very often broadcasted through the music/language of the people.

Language produces discourse: "It is the most obvious manifestation of a very general and complex influence" (Pollard 51) - that of the culture, identity and philosophy of its proponents. The focus of the rest of this study rests on one such advocate of the language, Bob Marley, through whose discourse in the poetic music he created, this discussion seeks to establish reggae as resistance response to societal oppression.

A basic understanding of the linguistic terms necessary to access an understanding of the discussion on the modifications made to the Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole needs to be addressed. As these elements appear in the discussions, explanations will be given to render clarity to the discussion.

For each of the following four sections on linguistic innovations, the discussion will be centered on the linguistic features of at least one of the five examples given in each table [Table 4.1 through Table 4.5] which will provide the references. All words will have definitions that will clarify their meanings both in the Standard and the Creole varieties, thus providing an understanding of their differences in meanings; and in some cases differences in structure will be evident just from the construction of the words. Those illustrations discussed will demonstrate how Dread Talk consists of a systematic rendering of its word structures (morphology), though there are meanings that exist that cannot be written down. Being systematic makes the components of the language grammatical especially since there are two groups of the Dread Talk lexicon that include rules for modifying (Linguistic Innovation 3- Table 4.3) and combining

words (Linguistic Innovation 2) to express different meanings, as the discussion will show. All Standard English definitions come from The American Heritage College Dictionary.

B. Linguistic Innovation 1: Lexical Expansion within a Creole Classification: The Re-definition of Existing Standard Jamaica English and Jamaican Creole Words

The lexical items in this first of the four groups of linguistic innovations identify words that are given new meanings which articulate the Rastafarians' particular perception of images and concepts. They are a re-definition of words that exist in Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole- words whose meanings are subverted and whose power and symbolism inherent in the metaphors, initiate movement. Though renaming as a manner of cultural liberation is not exclusive to Rastafari, what is distinctive about the movement is that "unlike other cultural movements confronted with colonialism, Rastafari asserted themselves and refused to become the *Other* thereby ceding authority to the colonizer" (Philip). The acquisition of a lexicon (vocabulary) was their creative thrust towards developing a language, but in order to speak the language there had to be a phonological level- a systematic pronunciation of the sounds, and a semantic level where the context and meaning of the words foregrounds the discourse. The discourse of the language of the lyrics being a resistance response will be evident in the following examinations of Dread Talk lexicon identified in Marley's reggae music. The first three items in the discourse popularly used in the poetic music are "Babylon," "Dread," and "Trod/Trad/."

Common Standard English definition of the word "Babylon" denotes it as a "city or place of great luxury, sensuality and often vice and corruption" [See Table 4.1.]. There was also a reference to the city's affiliation as an ancient empire of Mesopotamia. These references may

support the Rastafarian's choice of word to subvert, as a site of oppression. The idea of an empire with connotations of corruption and vice would be suspecting of hegemony, and thereby "enslavement" of the masses. Whether or not this may be the reason, the word "Babylon" (pronounced /babilan/) is used by the Rastafari to generally identify the unjust of the establishment such as the police, the state and its officials, orthodox religions or any system that they perceive to be corrupt and oppressive.

LINGUISTIC INNOVATION 1 Redefinition of Existing Standard Jamaican English Lexicon	
Standard Jamaican English	**Dread Talk**
"Babylon" A city or place of great luxury, sensuality, often vice and corruption	**Babylon/Babilan/** The unjust in the establishment: government, policemen, soldiers, and any oppressor or oppressive system
Dread Profound fear or terror. To anticipate with alarm or trepidation .	**Dread** A genuine Rastafarian. Also means bad, terrible, and difficult. A person with dreadlocks -natural hairstyle
Trod Past tense and past participle of tread	**Trad** Walk; travel- go on a journey
Sufferer One who suffers pain distress or loss	**Sufferer** The poor, one who lives in the ghetto
Reasoning Use of reason to form conclusions, inferences or judgments	**Reasoning** Rastafarian "Idren" (brethren) gather to talk about scripture, argue politics, and generally converse sometimes while they smoke ganja from a ceremonial chalice.

Table 4.1- Lexical Expansion within a Creole Classification

Rastafari have a deep mistrust for these groups whom they recognize as instruments of domination and whom they resolve to resist. Allusions to the antagonism that exist between

Rastafari and these groups are the subjects of many of reggae songs. After the destruction of Pinnacle they developed an intense hatred for the establishment in Jamaica which represented Babylon- land of oppression. They took to the streets of Kingston "calling down fire and brimstone on Babylon . . . with their "rhetoric of defiance," to the dismay of onlookers (Barrett 89). They use the language forcefully with stresses in their utterances that reflect their rank disapproval. Leonard Barrett's own experience illustrates the point. During a visit to a nyabingi meeting in 1975, he, against his better judgment, attempted to take some pictures at the behest of his Rastafarian friend despite a warning from the host that cameras were not allowed (124). Immediately after his flash went off, he was surrounded by a group of incensed Rastafarians shouting "Babylon! Fire! Burn Him! Death to the spy! Death to the oppressor! Burn the traitor! (124). Needless to say his paraphernalia was confiscated and he had a difficult time convincing them he was not a spy. As it turned out, those young men were not true Rastafarians, but the disgruntled Jamaican youth who had appropriated their symbols. However, this is a good example of how much of an anathema the idea of Babylon is to not just Rastafarians but the poor who have appropriated the name and exhibit the same suspicion of the establishment that Rastafari does. Two appropriate examples of the use of "Babylon/babilan" discourse from the lyrics of Bob Marley's poetic music are as follows:

(a) Africa Unite/ 'Cause we're moving right out of *Babylon*/ (Marley <u>Survival</u> 1979 lines 4 & 5)

(b) Babylon system is the vampire, yea! (Vampire)/ Suckin' the children day by day, yeah! /Me say: de Babylon system is the vampire, falling empire/ Suckin' the blood of sufferers, yea-ea-ea-ea-e-ah! / Building church and university, wo-o-ooh yeah! / Deceiving the people continually, yea-ea! (Marley <u>Survival</u> 1979 lines 13-18). The pronunciation of the word /babilan/ is infused with the Rastafarians' rejection of the system. This is where the language, spoken, better

expresses the speaker's attitude in its potency more so than the written word could. Marley calls for all Africans in the diasporas to come together, and move out of the imperialist countries (aka Babylon) in the lines of this song (a), "Africa Unite." In the lyrics of the next song (b), "Babylon System," Marley extends his definition of Babylon to include not only oppressive countries, but different systems within a society; in this example, churches and universities. He considers them parasitic because they prey on the poor (sufferers) whom they (the systems) indoctrinate and deceive in the process. The implication is that the system teaches that which keeps the masses subjugated. Consequently, Babylon represents both a place (countries /states) and a people (those who work for the systems of Babylon). Finally, the meaning of Babylon has connotations of the biblical Babylon, a metaphor for confusion and hegemony. Conversely, Rastafarians use the term "Zion" in opposition to "Babylon," to represent a site of freedom and equality.

The word "dread" is a significant word in the Rastafari lexicon. According to Pollard, its key meaning deviates from that of the English meaning (Pollard 2000 72), and instead expresses the highest level of "suffering or joy: good or bad" (72). The word is used both as a noun and an adjective and could be used to denote a person wearing dreadlocks hairstyle, a grim or perilous situation, a stern person, and more often than not an experientially awesome, fearful confrontation of a people with a primordial but historically denied racial selfhood" (104). The lyrics from "Natty Dread" (Marley Natty Dread 1974 Lines 1-8) are as read:

Dread, Natty Dread now, (Natty Dread)	Line 1
Dreadlock Congo Bongo I. (Natty Dread)	Line 2
Natty Dreadlock in a Babylon (Natty Dread)	Line 3
A dreadlock Congo Bongo I. (Natty Dread)	Line 4
Eh! Children get your culture (Natty Dreadlock)	Line 5
And don't stay there and gesture, a-ah (Natty Dreadlock)	Line 6
Or the battle will be hotter (Natty Dreadlock)	Line 7

And you won't get no supper. (Natty Dreadlock) Line 8

They illustrate the depth of meaning ascribed to this word and its various uses within a poetic discourse. It acts as an adjective as the first word in line 1--"Dread" meaning bad/troubling, a time of intense suffering, as suggested by lines 3, 7 and 8 where we see Natty Dreadlock (Rastafari) in Babylon and get a pictorial view of this site of struggle and resistance. But, the intonation in sound in the actual music suggests a certain degree of anger and opposition to life in "Babylon." This reference appears be a symbolic naming of someone to be admired-a defiant Natty eulogized by the song's refrain which is its namesake. In line 5 the reference "children get your culture" alludes to confronting a "historically denied racial self-hood" as one of the definitions of dread suggests. In another reference, the hip-hop dictionary, *A 2 Z: The Book of Rap and Hip-Hop,* Natty Dread is one of twelve words of Jamaican origin that have crossed over into the lexicon of hip-hop and its meaning is listed as *admirable*. The more familiar term, dread locks, is the name given to the hairstyle which originated in an organization in Jamaica called Youth Black Faith. The trend was said to have started in the 1940's, though there are various explanations for its origin in ancient Egypt, the Celts, the Greek, the Vikings, and among different Germanic tribes. Amongst the many reasons given for adopting this hairstyle, however, for the Rastafarians it is an expression of spiritual convictions, a manifestation of ethnic pride and a political statement. The hair was thought to instigate fear, hence the use of the term "dreads locks" (Chevannes 266). However, the overriding portrait of dreadlocks is an attitude: one that is fearless in proclaiming non-conformity.

The American Heritage College Dictionary lists the word "trod" as the past tense and past participle of "tread" which is defined as "to walk on, over or along." Dread Talk changes the word to its frequently pronounced form, /trad/ because of the habitual use of replacing the sound

of /o/ with the sound of /a/ in Jamaican Creole, and intensifies its meaning to include 'to leave, walk away from, or travelling on a long journey. Rastafarians use only a single form of the verb- that of the past tense. The Rastafarian's use of this form of the verb has motivated its integration into Standard Jamaican English and resulted in the near total extinction of the present tense, "to tread" (Makoni et al 66). This is good example of the significance of "word sound power " (See Linguistic Innovation II) which effectively changes the way the language is perceived. Word sound power represents the religious principle that undergirds the Rastafari's extensive alteration of Standard Jamaican English to satisfy their ideological needs (Dickerson). The general premise is that we transform the world we inhabit by invoking the power inherent in our words in the same manner "our Creator spoke the world into being" (Dickerson). Through our vigilant deliberation, we need to creatively infuse the words we use in our every day discourse with optimism and a collective consciousness; if we are to defy the anguish and injustices with which we are confronted (Dickerson).

The popularity of 'Buffalo Soldier (Marley 1984 lines 24-26) immortalized the use of Dread Talk as Marley chants about

Buffalo soldier troddin through the land, wo-ho-ooh!	Line 24
Said he wanna ran, then you wanna hand,	Line 25
Troddin through the land, yea-hea, yea-ea.	Line 26

The term "trod" was at home in the Standard Jamaican lexicon when the media began to use it in the Standard.

Lexical innovations within Dread Talk can therefore be seen as one of the significant markers that a new variation has been developed, since most successful language development begins at the lexical level. Whether the words are neologisms or changes in the existing lexicon of a Standard or other variety the lexicon and semantics go hand in hand as the former is the

repository for words that speakers access when they are familiar with a language system and the latter provides the meaning and context for use. The lexical expansion within this Creole classification, Dread Talk, certainly meets this criterion.

C. Linguistic Innovation II: Morpho-Phonemic Variation: Morphological Variations that Create Contradiction

Of equal significance as the redefinition of existing lexemes-dealt with in the previous section- is the morpho-phonemic variation that Dread Talk has developed to add to the repertoire of words and sounds that the language provides for the exact articulation of Rastafarian ideology. Thus, what follows is an examination of the next linguistic innovation of DT: the creation of words that reflect morphological and phonological features.

Morphology is a system of structure of words and relationship among morphemes, "the smallest units of meaning that are put together to build words" (Green 1). Phonology refers to the system of language sounds- vowel sounds and consonant sounds called phonemes- that have a systematic nature of sound combinations and are produced in a systematic way in different environments (107). These two linguistic systems are the focus of this discussion on morpho-phonemic variations in Dread Talk: how the language modifies Standard Jamaican English, using these systems, to develop an array of words that contradict the meanings of some lexemes of the lingua franca. But, there is an additional feature, uniquely Rastafari that affects the development/creation of the words used as examples in Table 4.2.

LINGUISTIC INNOVATION 2 Morphological Variations that Create Contradictions	
Standard Jamaican English	**Dread Talk**
Righteous Morally upright, In accordance with virtue and morality	**Upfull/ Upfull Sounds** Righteous. New words with contradictions between sounds and meaning
Depress/Depression To cause to drop or sink lower/ A condition of feeling despondent	**Dounpress/DOWN(pression)** Oppress. To be forced down or restrained socially and economically down as the Rastafari see themselves to be by the system.
Jehovah God	**Jah** Name Rastafarians call God. For many, Jehovah; and still others the alias of Haile Selassie I as in "Jah Ras Tafari"a.k.a. Lion of the Tribe of Judah
Understand To grasp, perceive and comprehend the significance of.	**Ovastan/Higherstan** To Replaces understand.
Undercover Police/ Snitch To steal something; To turn informer	**Outformer** Police spy; a snitch

Table 4.2 - Morpho-Phonemic Variation

J. W. Pulis, in a 1993 article entitled "Up-Full Sounds: Language, Identity, and the World- View of Rastafari," in his discussion of "word- sound power" as it relates to Dread Talk, gives some more direct insight to that which was discussed before about how this philosophy functions on the linguistic end. He posits that "word- sound power is a way of speaking in which a tension between Creole and Standard English words and meanings are used to contest traditional structures of identity" (Pulis). This tension is what the Rastafarians emphasize as they seek to establish meanings that contradict that which Standard Jamaican English words represent. Dread Talk dismantles various English words and combines them to form new words

called “up-full sounds,”--meaning powerful word sounds that create images and incite awareness and attitudes towards a concept.

There is a whole lot of consciousness-raising going on in the lyrics of Marley’s poetic music discourse. The positive nature of his music does not deflect his activism in getting the message of the struggle across to his audience. He uses the language of Rastafari skillfully with all the wattage of word sound power behind it to bring the reality of social injustice to the forefront. In a two separate songs he addresses the oppressor as “downpressor” and “downpressor man” in a stirring commentary about his (the oppressor’s) fate on the day of his judgment. Marley sings in “Downpressor” (re-release 2004)

Downpressor man	Line 1
Where you gonna run to?	Line 2
Downpressor man	Line 3
Where you gonna run to?	Line 4
You gonna run to the sea	Line 8
But the sea will be boiling	Line 9
You gonna run to the rocks	Line 15
The rocks will be melting	Line 16

With a dirge-like quality that belie the consonant-laden phonemes in the base word “down,” *d*, *w*, and *n* which produces the sound akin to being pressed down, this is a good illustration of the morpho-phonemic quality of the word. It represents a combination of meaning and sound and contradicts the Standard Jamaican English “oppress.” Rastafari creation of the word was based on the “overstanding” that the prefix, “op” in oppress is a positive sound representing a negative concept, hence the language dismantles the word removing that suffix and replacing it with “down” which more accurately describes the meaning and sound of the words “depress” and

"depression." Likewise, the word 'dounpression,' according to Velma Pollard, provides the sound that signals a feeling of depression or feeling down- it emphasizes oppression, the word it replaces, because people are forced down or restrained socially or economically (Makoni 64). Rastafarians believe that no speaker is under, below, or beneath another speaker whether they are speaking Jamaican Creole, Standard Jamaican English or Dread Talk. The implication is that people are on the same level, and this is the way in which the language resists the ideas of class distinction and the attendant oppression that goes with it.

D. Linguistic Innovation III: Re-organization of Standard Jamaican English Words Modified for the Formation of Descriptive "Upfull" Word Sounds and Meanings

It has been established that word sound is integral to the development and execution of Rastafari' Dread Talk. In this speech community the use of the lexicon is enhanced by the posture and attitudes of the speakers who generously utilizes the sounds and implications of the meanings in their speech events. Consequently, the creativity used in the re-organization of Standard Jamaican English words makes for a more descriptive, articulate manner of expressing ideas. This linguistic innovation illustrates the depth of the Rastafari spiritual side, their connection with nature, and most of all their resistance to having the mores of the established systems in Jamaican society imposed upon the.

On a lexical level the "I"/ |ai| sound in Dread Talk is a morpheme that is always exaggerated in the lexical items constructed from it. This diphthong, which combines two vowels sounds to make one sound, |a| and |i|, makes the most significant sound in the lexicon of Dread Talk and is a symbol of identification to Rastafari. Similarly, "ai" is a diagraph in many of these items because it is a combination of two graphemes that represent a single sound in the

written discourse. Dread Talk shows significant structural components that make this language a bona fide variety as further discussion of the reggae lyrics will substantiate.

The most important word to the Rastafarian is the personal pronoun "I." In most reggae songs there is a reference to "I," not because the artists are self-centered, but because the meaning constitutes a reference to the masses of people sometimes. In very many of Bob Marley's lyrics there are several references to 'I-n-I" (See Table 4.3): there are countless references connected to the meaning of this phrase, and thus its significance is amplified.

LINGUISTIC INNOVATION 3 Substitution of "I" of the Initial Syllable in DT Words--|ai|, "I," and Y words for the beginnings of English Words Modified for the Formation of Descriptive "Upfull" Word Sounds and Meanings	
Standard Jamaican English	**Dread Talk**
I Personal pronoun used to refer to oneself. The ego or self.	**"I n I" or "I an I"** Represents positivity. I, me, us, him , she, God in Me. Oneness between two or more persons or between Rastafari and God
Creation The world and all the things in it. All creatures	**I-ration** Creation
Alright	**Irie/ I-re/Irey** Feeling good; everything is alright; powerful and pleasing. A salutation.
Meditate To reflect on; contemplate. To train, calm or empty the mind.	**I-ditate/ I-ditation** Prayerful, introspective state of mind sought by Rastafarians when they are at a "grounation" or "nyabinghi"
Brethren A plural of brother.	**I-dren** Children of Jah; my friend or Rastafari brother or sister, not related by blood.

Table 4.3 Re-organization of Standard Jamaican English Words

The lyrics from the song "Crazy Baldheads" on the album Rastaman Vibration, (Marley 1976), is just one example of the use of "I-n-I" making an allusion to the plurality of this construction:

"I-n-I" build the cabin	Line 6
"I-n-I" plant the corn	Line 7
Didn't my people before me	Line 8
Slave for this country?	Line 9

Then with reference to one person, Marley belts out in 'I Shot the Sheriff" (1973),

I-I-I-I shot the sheriff	Line 46
Lord, I didn't shoot the deputy. Yeah!	Line 47

in a militant posture yet a vehement disavowal of having committed a crime. This song has garnered much criticism over the decades for inspiring other artists in writing lyrics that professed a deadly dislike for police authority.

This first reference to the profound meaning of "I-n-I" in Rex Nettleford's Dread signals a definitive connotation of the phrase; he says that "At the heart of his [Rastafari] religious system are the notion of his own divinity and the first person image of self. As if for emphasis, the terms "I-n-I" and "I-man," are used as a constant reminder of the transformation of a non-person into a person" (qtd. in Philip). In another reference "I" represents the Roman numeral I, which is an appendage to the name of the revered Emperor Haile Selassie I (Chevannes 167). Rastafarians do not use personal pronouns such as "me" or "mine" from the Standard nor "mi" from Jamaican Creole; it is always "I." The phrase "I n I" is used to remind speaker and listener alike that Rastafari is a community and one that acknowledges the presence of Jah, their name for the Almighty God (Pulis 1993). This religious meaning extends the notion that Rastafari is a part of God and "if God is a visible living man, it must mean that the Rastafari is another Selassie, another "I' (167). Ennis B. Edmonds in his writings "Dread "I" In-a-Babylon: Ideological Resistance and Cultural Revitalization," explains that "Since 'I' in Rastafari thought signifies the divine principle that is in all humanity, 'I-an-I' is an expression of the oneness between two (or more) persons and between the speaker and God (whether Selassie or the god

principle that rules in all creation" (Edmonds 33). Pollard submits that the use of "I" attaches a code for the ego, "I" that "most important self, and "eye," that window to the soul, represents the most important of the senses: sight (Makoni et al 62). This phonological representation of |ai| is often responsible for the difficulty non-Rastafarians have in understanding this speech. "I" represents the most positive word to Rastafari, as each word using that personal pronoun in its construction emphasizes an affirmation of a separate identity and the power of diversity and difference is further solidified.

E. Linguistic Innovation IV: Completely New Words Created for Dread Talk's Articulation of Distinct Images and Concepts

Though these words are given corresponding meanings in the lingua franca, they are nevertheless neologisms that describe a concept or thing that the language wants to express. Though discourse requires more than vocabulary, it is nevertheless the words and their meanings that help to establish context for a discussion. Thus, word choice is important. For the Rastafari, the creation of neologisms establishes difference from the existing languages spoken in Jamaica (the Standard and Jamaican Creole). To express the struggles or ideals of the masses in the movement in a unique language is to draw attention to that difference, and to create a subversive arena for engaging the oppressor who fears a lessening of control; for, to control the language is to control the progress of a people. To be in a position to engage resistive language in a socio-political discourse that comes through the airwaves and sound systems of Jamaica placed the Rastafari at the center of attention nationally, and heightened global awareness of social injustices.

Throughout this discussion many of the words constructed have to do with where the Rastafarians function most, and therefore their manner of conducting life influences the choices of what they must mainly construct new lexicon for or re-make existing ones to correspond with what they need to portray (Pollard 50). These meanings of these neologisms reveal some semantic logic though their forms are novel. Accordingly, in Table 4.4., the word 'deaders' signify something dead--a carcass to be exact--which is anathema to the Rastafarians who believe in consuming natural, vital foods from the earth. Thus, coining the word "deaders"

LINGUISTIC INNOVATION 4 Created for Dread Talk's Articulation of Distinct Images and Concepts	
Standard Jamaican English	**Dread Talk**
Meat The edible flesh of animals	**Deaders/ deadahs/ deddas** Meat of any kind. Most Rastafarians have an aversion to things "dead," especially dead animals for consumption
Marijuana Dried flowers of the cannabis sativa plant, smoked or eaten to induce euphoria	**Spliff** Portion of the marijuana herb rolled into a joint. Also known as ganja or kaya,
Money A medium that can be exchanged for goods or services and is used as a measure of their value in the market.	**Dunny/ dunza/ dunney** Money, which has the tendency to "finish" very quickly
Relax To make lax or loose; to reduce in intensity.	**Sata/ satta** Stay where you are, keep calm, rest, be quiet, stay put
Strong Capable of exhibiting great physical force	**Backative** Strength, stamina

Table 4.4 – Rastafarian Neologisms

using the word “dead” as a free base to which is attached the bound suffix “ers” is a logical construction since new words are developed with derivational affixes. What is noteworthy about this construction is that the suffix “ers” also functions as a morpheme. It is more grammatical/ structural than lexical in its use here because it pluralizes the word and changes its use. The word becomes a DT word with no singular formation, since the Rastafarians do not use the construction “deader.” Its meaning of “dead” is extended to capture a negative vibe, (Rastafarians extol positivity) thus semiotic of the Rastafarians disgust for meat.

The next Standard English word, marijuana--which is considered a sacred element of Rastafari religious beliefs and a healing herb--is referred to by several newly constructed words. Most of reggae references say “spliff” or “kaya” like the references to marijuana in Bob Marley’s poetic music. In the song, “Easy Skanking” (Marley 1976 Lines 3),

Excuse me while I light my spliff	Line 3
Oh God, I got to take a lift	Line 4
From reality I just can’t drift	Line 5
That’s why I’m staying with this rift	Line 6
Take it easy, easy skanking (repeat)	Line 7
Got to take it easy, easy skanking	Line 8

Marley’s reference “spliff” has now been extended to wider use. It is listed in the American Heritage College Dictionary as slang with a notation of meaning, “a marijuana cigarette,” ascribed to Jamaican English. This clearly shows how the language has been extended outside the borders for which it was created, through the poetic music discourse that has become international. However, it must be noted that technology played a significant role in this dissemination as Pollard so astutely recognizes, “The transference of philosophy and language by remote control to such a broad spectrum of society is new [gloss mine: at that time 80’s] and could not have happened before technology advanced as far as it had today” (Pollard 58). She

also advances that because the means of transmission of the language has primarily been over sound systems rather than through individual contact, that may have affected the development and choice of lexical items that have undergone modification (58). The activity of smoking marijuana joint, "a spliff," is largely associated with the Rastafarians and so there is a cultural connection associated with this word though its use now include a definition of "joint that rolled from a combination of "kaya/ganja" (to use other antonyms) and tobacco." This example speaks for the exploitation of a language by *others* who have made it their own.

Dunza, dunny, and dunney are various spellings of the totally new creation that stand for money. The connotation here may be that money is usually used up quickly, hence the insinuation of the sound of the word 'done.'

Of all the linguistic innovations, neologisms are perhaps the most innovative because these words are completely unique to Dread Talk and therefore strengthen its claim as a bona fide language variety.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION-- "*SIGHT UP RASTAFARI*"

Implications of this Study

The Jamaican Rastafarians' development of Dread Talk from 1950 to the 1980's as a "new" variety of Creole language is indisputably one of the most significant cultural contributions by any group in the Caribbean. Today, Jamaica is the proud home of Dead Talk, reggae, and Rastafarianism. The language which has been the backbone of Rastafari's resistance to societal oppression in their native country, has achieved such a measure of acclaim through the poetic music, reggae. It has gained notoriety, through the life and presence of the legendary Robert (Bob) Marley whose music resonated with his philosophies and ideas of resistance inherent in the language. His affiliation with the sacred sect placed Rastafarianism under global radar, and his influence has been far-reaching beyond his initial commitment to activism for social justice on the island to include a dedication to raising consciousness of social injustices in the Third World. The many accolades Marley has received in his short 36 years of life have implications for the resilience of the language and its dissemination to remote parts of the world. His speech, Dread Talk, became the speech of the youth not only in Jamaica but in ghettoes and suburbs in the United States and other urban centers across the world. This study sought to examine his language--the language of the Jamaican Rastafarian--in the discourse of his poetic music in search of the resistive qualities of the language which dared to modify the language of the oppressors in its defiance of socio-political domination.

This examination of the language--Dread Talk--as resistive language revealed morphological, phonological, and lexical components that gave power to the diversity and difference of Rastafari. Through their application of "word-sound power," the Rastafarians were

able to create an entirely new variety that reflects their unique philosophical and religious beliefs. The astute construction of a lexicon that keenly expresses ideas of struggle against social injustices, words like "downpressor," "ovastand," "livicate," and the intensely metaphoric /ai/ constructions like "I-n-I," "I-ditate," and "I-ration," effectively execute the rationale for developing and using such a language: "in order to describe and thus control their circumstances or in order not to be submerged by a reality they cannot articulate," as Baldwin's statement indicates. These powerful language constructions conjure up images and concepts through the words of the poetic music that are the embodiment of the revolutionary spirit of human liberty. They cannot be easily dispelled, but demand a discourse between the oppressed and oppressor. The ideas propagated through the language of the lyrics in reggae, especially Bob Marley's albums, create an awareness of man's inhumanity to man, and calls for activism and the responsibility of freeing themselves (the oppressed) from "mental slavery" (Bob Marley Redemption Song line 13), a decidedly powerful message of self-determination and destiny. There is nothing sissy about this language. It has managed to escape the fate of some Creole languages: being relegated to limited use then eventual extinction. It has endured the early disdain of the Jamaican elite who feared its survival more so than its incursion into standard usage in the Jamaican society. It has become a source of pride and prolific study of Educational institutions in the Caribbean. Dread Talk has gained the attention of global scholars, many who have found the philosophy of Rastafari, the popularity of Bob Marley, and the poetic music of reggae, a fascinating study.

Though Rastafarian Dread Talk possesses certain African language antecedents, Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English, this study demonstrates that this variety of language exhibits the components of an exceptional bona fide language that resonates on its very

own. It successfully articulates the Rastafari's power of resistance through diversity and difference, to all forms of cultural assassination. What the other language variations in Jamaica could not represent for them, Dread Talk was able to do; it inspired the Rastafarians to forge an identity that represented the resistant philosophy, music and religion that went beyond articulating their impoverished state to commanding global attention. This language is a testimony to the power of endurance of a people who fought to not be submerged by their circumstances. With the help of the authority of their language, they have endured.

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APPENDIX A

Rastafarian Prayer

Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand unto God. O thou God of Ethiopia, Thou God of divine majesty thy spirits come within our hearts to dwell in the parts of righteousness. That the hungry be fed, the sick nourished, the aged protected, and the infant cared for.

Teach us love and loyalty as it is in Zion.

Deliver us from the hands of our enemy that we may prove faithful for the last day, when our enemy has passed, and decayed in the depth of the sea or in the belly of beast. O give us a place in thy kingdom forever and ever. So we hail our God, Selassie I, Jehovah God, Ras Tafari, Almighty God, Ras Tafari, Great and terrible God Ras Tafari. Who sitteth in Zion and reigneth in the hearts of men, and women; hear and bless us and sanctify us, and cause thy loving face to shine upon thy children that we may be saved. Selah (Barrett 125).

APPENDIX B

Rastafarian Ten-Point Moral Code

■ We strongly object to sharp implements used in the desecration of the figure of Man; e.g., trimming and shaving, tattooing of the skin, and cutting of the flesh.

■ We are basically vegetarians, making scant use of certain animal flesh, outlawing the use of swine's flesh in any form, shell fish, scaleless fishes, snails, etc.

■ We worship and observe no other God but Rastafari, outlawing all other forms of Pagan worship yet respecting all believers.

■ We love and respect the brotherhood of mankind, yet our first love is to the sons of Ham.

■ We disapprove and utterly abhor hate, jealousy, envy, deceit, guile, treachery, etc.

■ We are avowed to create a world of one brotherhood.

■ We do not agree to the pleasures of present day society and its modern evils.

■ Our duty is to extend the hand of charity to any brother in distress, firstly, for ones of the Rastafari order--secondly, to any human, animal plant etc.

■ We do adhere to the ancient laws of Ethiopia.

■ Thou shall give no thought to the aid, titles, and possessions that the enemy in his fear may seek to bestow on you; resolution to your purpose is the love of Rastafari (Barrett 126).