

# WOMEN IN JAMAICAN DANCEHALL:

*Rethinking Jamaican Dancehall through a Women-Centered Informal Economy Approach.*

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts, Social Justice Education

Department of Social Justice Education

University of Toronto

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## **Abstract**

Some academic discussions that address women who participate in Jamaican Dancehall have taken the position that these women lack morality and agency and have internalized sexist norms (Lake 1996). This is because of the overtly sexual nature of the cultural expression. This research project aimed to expand the conversation concerning these women by investigating how female dancehall dancers, models and auxiliaries (designers, beauticians and vendors) make a living from Dancehall's informal economy. Through empirical evidence, this research will suggest that women who participate in Jamaican dancehall have subjectively and economically benefited from the informal economy that is embedded in dancehall.

# Acknowledgments

This research could not have come to fruition without the help of many amazing souls. Firstly, let me acknowledge St. Catherine Cooperate Credit Union for giving me my first job as a Client Care Representative. I would also like to thank them for not renewing my contract after three years, which gave me the freedom to earn a living while doing what I loved. Freedom from working at the Credit Union gave me the opportunity to work as a dancehall model. My experience as a dancehall model became a great source of evidence for this research. Secondly, to Freddie James, Meleissa Dunkley-Hamilton, Claudia, Marsha, Kerene (Kerro), Rochelle, Venessa, Shadhaile, Janica, Racquel, Francine, and the rest of the La Crème models, thank you for creating our family. To all the Dancehall Queens, dancers, models, nail techs, and the Dungtown (Downtown) street beauticians who resigned their suspicions of researchers and agreed to be interviewed, Big up unuh flippin self, Goodie! Thank you to Prof. Carolyn Cooper who sent her incomplete and unpublished essay on women, Jamaican dancehall, and the informal economy. My deepest appreciation goes to Prof. Melanie Newton for allowing me to write a paper called Pum Pum Rule Jamaican dancehall as a second-year undergraduate student. Thank you Prof. Alissa Trotz for supervising this thesis. You have helped me realize compartmentalizing my identity in order to be validated by the academe is unnecessary. You are like my Caribbean auntie who set me straight when needed, and remind me that what I have to say is important and pushed me to see the bigger picture. I now understand that what we have to say and speaking for ourselves—not being simultaneously invisible and hypervisible—can significantly impact the way we are perceived. To my husband, I know you thought perusing a master’s degree was unnecessary, especially since perusing a career in Law is my ultimate goal. Thank for understanding how important this project is to me. Finally, to my mother, Ms. Shirley, Ms. Fullerton, thanks for all the early morning callaloo runs you made in Dela and Lakes Pen. Even though I sometimes cringe when I see Callaloo, thank you for finding ways to create for us in times of need. I know you would be proud. Yuh wash-belly love yuh.!!

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JA \$12,000 (CAD \$235.00)

JA \$12,000 (CAD \$235.00)

JA \$3,800 (CAD\$74.00).

JA\$3500 (CAD\$60.00)

JA\$5000 (CAD \$52.08)

2Gran (JA\$2000.00)

JA\$2500-\$3500

JA\$15,000

JA\$500.

JA\$2000-JA\$3000.

\$1500

JA\$ 1500

JA\$1200. JA\$1300.,



## **List of Abbreviations**

HWT	Half Way Tree
MC	Master of Ceremony
DJ	Disk Jockey
DhQ	Dancehall Queen
MBW	Main Breadwinner
P.O.C.	People of Colour
JLP	Jamaica Labour Party
PNP	People's National Party
ICI	Informal Commercial Importers
Kgn	Kingston
Mo Bay	Montego Bay, St. James.
Dwn Twn	Down Town

# Introduction: Chapter One

## My Location

*Sas Christ! Mi ago late fi werk again!” Mi neva memba fi set di alarm dis mawnin wen mi cum een bout 4:45am. Mi jump outta bed an try fi hurry an get ready fi work. Mi ah one Member Services Representative ah St. Catherine Co-Operative Credit Union, Portmore Pines branch. Ah 7:30am now, an werk stawt 9.am. It nawmally tek mi at least a howa fi get ready, but dis mawnin, tirty minutes affi duh. Mi jump inna di bawchroom, wash mi necessaries, brush mi teet, put on mi clothes an ketch mi hair inna one wid a clip een di pieca pony tail. Mi step outta di house by 8:05. It tek mi bout fifteen minutes fi walk from Dela-vega City to outta Railway Mawket, Spanish Town, beside HiLo Shopp’n Center wich pawt di Portmore robot taxi stan deh. Ah times like dis mi glad say mi magla and cyan manage high heel boot. By 8:30am mi reach ah di taxi stan, an ketch one ah di shatta driva dem weh nuh siddung inna traffic. Tank God! Mi mek it fi werk inna di knick-a-time.*

*Countin down di minutes till 5pm. Mi tyad, an sleep a bite mi. Mi just guh owme an spread out inna di bed. Mi cud’n happia wen mi sih Mr. Levermore, di security gawd, lock Pines door. Is only by the grace of God seh mi transaction fi di day balance an mi nuh shawt di way how mi buck ova di cash regista. By 6:45 pm mi reach owme. Mi not even baid, fi tell yuh di chute. Mi jus change auff mi clothes, wash auff mi face, an jump inna di bed fi ketch up pan sum sleep. Mi Motorola Razor notification wake mi up bout 9:30pm. A Claudia dat ah text mi ah ask: “Gyal, ah weh yuh deh? You naah cum ova?” As mi get up, mi notice how di likkle tree howa sleep revive mi—mi ready fi duh road again. Mi get up, pack ah bag wid mi club clothes an shoes, guh baid an head out. Mi tell mommy mi aguh inna Kingston fi a show an mi aguh cum een late suh shi nuffi wait up. Shi seh, “again? Yuh nuh live no weh?” Me laugh, gih har ah hug, rub up miself pan har, an tell har “lata.”*

*Dis a mi second trip up inna Spanish Town fi di day. Dis time, mi aguh duh sup’m weh mi love—magglin. Mi jump pan a Half-Way Tree (HWT) taxi weh pawk a Texaco gas station an reach inna twenty minutes. Dem robot yah a road runna. Ah peer sawf shoulda dem drive pan, unlike di Jamaica Urban Transit Company Limited bus dem weh siddung inna traffic. As mi reach HWT, mi jump pan a Tree Mile robot an ask fi stop off a Omara Road pan East Street. By*

*10pm mi reach ah Claudia. Marsha already deh deh, an tank God shi cook sum food: curry chicken and white rice. If it did left up to Claudia, nuh food wud'n cook.*

*Wi chill an chit-chat likkle after wi dun eat. Wi mek sure nuh eat too much fi wi belly get big cause wi ave a fashion show inna Asylum likkle lata, especially since wi aguh magle swim suite. By 10:45pm, wi stawt fresh'n up: tweeze eyebrow, an get rid ah unwanted hair because a MDiz<sup>1</sup> fashion an Freddie James' swim wear (aka, Freddie's dental floss dem) nuh leave not'n to di imagination. Di tree ah wi reach Asylum by 11:30pm, an Freddie already outside ah di club a wait pan La' Crème girls fi gi wi di arm ban dem fi get inna di club. Wi get di arm band dem an as wi stawt chit-chat, Freddie run wi een to Melissa cause shi a wait pan wi fi duh make-up an final run chru fi di show.*

*Wi walk inna di changin room ah di back a di club an most ah di girls dem reach an get dem clothes already. Sum ah get dem make-up duh by Mel an sum by Phylicia—aneda magla who issa make-up artist to. Sum ah ketch up wid each other, and sum eida deh pan dem phone, jus a chill or a wine-up dem self to music weh di club ah play. As Mel see mi, Claudia an Marsha shi seh, "Oh, mi tink unnu did aguh late again!" Shi gi wi di two set ah clothes an di one swim wear weh Freddie sugges fi wi. Once all di girl dem reach, Freddie cum round ah di changin room fi see if him satisfy wid who a wear which swim suite. Him switch swim wear wid sum who him feel wear it best. A fi him design, him know how him want it fi look suh nobody complain. Ah di end a di day, wi aguh get pay fi magle whateva wi get so wi kip wi mout shut.*

*Is Tersdeh night, and Ladies Night free before 11pm inna Asylum. By 12:30/1pm, di club pack like tin sawdeen. Kevin, di DJ, ah play all a di hype song dem an club a gwaan wid beer tings. Mel tell wi fi get in line-up. Everybody know dem position because wi have rehearsals every Satdeh an Sundeh evenin inna Asylum. Kevin a wi DJ during rehearsal too, suh him ave wi play list an know wi que dem.*

*Mi always get nervous once mi inna di line up. Mi wih be aright before, even while mi inna di clothes an everytin, but once mi get inna di line-up, mi get nervous. Wi know di stage, wi know di music que dem, an wi know di routine inside out an from front to back, but mi still get nervous. Wi know say if wi drop while on stage di people dem inna di audience aguh laugh wi scawn. If di crowd feel like say wi no magle good, dem wih chrow paper, bokkle cover, an starw up deh pan wi. Not to mention di boo weh dem wih pudding if dem nuh like di clothes or di*

*routine. Di MC announce to di audience say di show aguh stawt: once, twice, an pan di tird time, Kevin start wi play list. A it dis. No turning back. Di show stawt.*

*One by one di magla dem gu up an di crowd guh wile. Di stage a get bang dung, people ah shot blanks inna di air, an whole heap ah uproar. From mi hear dat, mi know di ting shot! Wi done magle MDiz firs an second design dem, an everybody luv it. A di tird an final run—swim suite time. Marsha guh up aready ah cum back an tell wi seh one man deh a di front a di stage wid him camera phone a tek bear pum pum<sup>2</sup> picha. Yuh always ave dem pervert man deh weh tek up front row cause dem wah tek pich ah wi front wid dem phone fi dem personal use. Di only one weh Freddie allow fi teck picha is professional photographa, Nick from Nickfotoworks.<sup>3</sup>*

*Freddie ear wah Marsha seh an tell one a di security dem fi “deal wid it”. Is Kerro turn, an afta dat a h my turn. Kerro always get good response, especially wen shi magle swim wear. Shi can walk good an har body tick. Shi ave di perfect dancehall magla body. Mi cyan ear mi haawt a beat fassa an fassa as Kerro make har last turn an ah walk towawds di spot ah di back ah di stage beside di stairs.*

*A my turn now. Mi nuh ear no music, no crowd, no MC—everting jus quiet. Di only ting mi a ear now a mi haawt beat. Once kerro reach di e que wid har back still turn to di crowd an about fi turn to di crowd, mi step up pan stage. Mi count: one, two, tree, enough time fi di crowd realize seh ah new girl deh pan stage, mi. As mi start walk pan di stage, Kerro gu dung di stairs as smood as wen wi duh it in rehursal. No itch, no bounce up pan onadeda. Just smood.*

*Di suite weh mi a magle is a one-piece tong leopard print. It cut inna a V-shape wid di base jus big enough fi hide mi unmentionables. Di two string dem pan eida side ave jus enough material fi hide mi nipple dem. One string inna di miggie ah mi chest weh attach di two-piece ah material weh connect to di base an cova mi breas dem. Den, two smalla string weh sew on to eida side weh tie inna di miggie ah mi back fi support. Den di piece dem weh ova mi breast guh up to mi neck an turn in a alta back. Da piece yah nuh leave not’n to di imagination. Fi a girl weh grow up inna a Christian, Seventh Day Adventist home, an who did guh a Seventh Day Adventist predatory an high school, dis ah one a di few place dem weh mi feel di most free an happy.*

*Mi sense dem cum back, an di crowd aguh wile. Di big brite spotlight deh pan mi, an as mi stawt strut towawds di front ha di stage, mi feel ah rush an tingle all ova mi body. “Werk, Mona! Werk!” an “don’t you dear drop pan di stage!” mi ear mi a tell miself. As mi a walk*

*close to di front ah di stage mi look fi see if di perv still deh deh. Mi nuh si him. It look like di security gard dem kick him or sup'm. Even dough di purve gawn, mi still cyah stan up wide wen mi reach di front ah di stage. Freddie dental floss swim suite nuh gi whole heap ah coverage fi yuh private pawts. All mi affi duh is lean an kimbo pan di leff-hand side, cave een mi right foot thigh fi close up mi craches, kick out mi right leg likkle bit so it almost look like di letta K, an mek mi right-hand fall in front ha mi pum pum so dat mi nuh expose miself, too much. Dere is no way in hell mi cuda duh a Supera Girl, shero pose ah di front ah di stage widout mekin everybody look up inna mi brain inna dat deh swim suite deh.*

*As mi mek mi way cross di T-shape stage, di crowd nuh really get a good glimps ah di back suh dem nuh know issa a tang (g-string) yet. Wen mi turn mi back to di crowd fi walk dung to di battom ah di run way, Pupa Geezas, a datdeht time dem mek nize. Who naw fyah blanks ina di air, a beat dung di bar, or a jump up wid dem hand inna di air. Becawse a Ladies Night, a mostly oman inna di club an a fi dem voice ova powa di man dem own. As mi dun mi run an stan up ah di side ah di stairs, Claudia step up, an man, di crowd love dem Sexy Ras, as weh dem call har. Everybody get a reponse from di crowd dat night.*

*Two more girls uho up and den di MC call up all ah wi fi a last run wid di designa, Melissa Dunkley of MDiz. Di show was a success. Mel get a few ordas fi sum ah di pieces dem weh wi magle since nite, gi out har numba to sum possible new clients. Di club swing back from fashion show mode to club vibe again. Wi get wi pay from Freddie, an guh party di rest ah di night inna di club. Di club stawt turn on di light bout 3:30 am, an wi head out. Mi, Marsha, and Claudia guh cross di road in front ah pawkin lot fi get someting fi eat a di jerk man or soup lady—mi get soup an Marsha an Claudia share a jerk chicken. Wid di night still young an wi still wah duh road, so wi try fi decide if wi fi guh dung stairs Asylum ah Taboo fi guh watch sum GoGo, or fi guh Fire Links. By di time wi dun eat a 4:pm, so mi decide fi guh back ah Spanish Town cause mi have work a mawnin. Freddie get Parrot fi bring mi ova suh mi jus leff mi tings dem ah Claudia. Mi might cum back inna Kingston lata after work or just wait til Satdeh fi rehearsal.*

*Parrot drop mi auff about 4:30am, an m unda di covas by 4:45am. This week was a good week. Dis ah di second show mi duh since week— eight grand dat mi mek pan di side. Mi cyan gi mommy a money fi di light bill an extra money fi guh ah wholesale fi get grocery widout touchin mi pay check. As mi lie dung inna mi bed mi tink to miself how much money di gyal mek*

*weh can duh tree an four jobs a week cyan mek. Like all Claudia, shi mek more than mi cause shi duh di same two show dem weh mi duh plus shi ah one Magnum Girl an shi werk wid dem one night fi dis week too. Wid less dann two howa sleep before mi haffi get up fi work later, mi mek sure set mi alarm pan mi phone before mi doze auff an cyah wake up fi guh ah di people dem werk.*

*As mi close mi eye a mommy dat a lick mi foot fi wake mi up. “Yuh nah wake up fi guh werk? Yuh sleep choo di alarm now yuh aguh rush like a headless chicken. If yuh cyah manage night life an work, keep yuh werk ah Credit Union an ease up offa di dancehall ting!” But is a pitty shi nuh know mi wuda pick dancehall everytime if mi did haffi chose. An wen dat day did eventually cum, a dancehall get di preference. By dat time, it did clear to mi say “Dancehall a Mi Everything.”<sup>4</sup> A few years lata, mi meet mi husband chru Phylissia, di same magla gurl weh mi say did a help Mel wid make-up fi di fashion show. Shi did deh wid him bredda, Paul. Shi introduce mi to Paul bredda weh live a Canada. Now di two ah wi married to two bredda, an mi siddung inna Robarts a write bout wi story inna dancehall. What a way life funny, eeh? If a neva did fi dancehall mi wudn’t meet hubs, mi wud’n deh a Canada, an mi wud’n ah duh dah research yah.*

*Tree monts afta mi reach Canada mi stawt guh University of Toronto. A year or suh after, mi find out bout Caribbean Studies department an a inna Prof. Melanie Newton’s Caribbean Pop Culture<sup>5</sup> mi read Carolyn Cooper’s, Lady Saw Cuts Loose.<sup>6</sup> Mi cud’n believe wen mi see how people inna academia luk pan oman like an mi friend dem, an “all other women” inna dancehall like seh wi a “play wiself” if wi believe seh wi “empowered” because wi participate inna dancehall.<sup>7</sup> A deh suh now mi realize say dem know bout di money mekin pawt a dancehall weh people like mi an mi fren dem experience. (Please see appendix 1 for English translation).*

This is my location. I am a former dancehall model who supplemented her income by participating in Jamaican dancehall. While working as a Member's Representative at the St. Catherine Co-operative Credit Union, I also worked some nights and weekend as a model. I did fashion shows for local designers, print for label promotion, and even as extra in dancehall music videos. When my contract with St. Cath Credit Union ended, the dancehall space became my main source of income. I was raised in a Christian home; namely, a Seventh Day Adventist home, I was even a Pathfinder. I am still friends with some of the women who make money from dancehall. I am a wife. I am a scholar at the University of Toronto who operates from a framework that centers the lives of Black Woman and Women of Colour. These are some of the different pieces of my life that make up my puzzle, and each piece of my puzzle informs this thesis and the way it is present

## Literature Review

Let me begin by saying that the current conversations about women in Jamaican dancehall has unfolded through the tropes of varied questions of morality. Let me begin with a definition of what dancehall is. The definition of dancehall can vary depending on the scholar and the framework from which they work. For Carolyn Cooper, dancehall is a “genre of popular Jamaican music that occurs in heterosexual space (heterosexist, even) where men and women play out eroticized gender roles.”<sup>8</sup> Norman Stolzoff defined dancehall as a music genre and a cultural institution that dates back to enslavement.<sup>9</sup> According to Barake-Yusef, whose work focuses on dancehall’s significance as a cultural maker with a focal point on aesthetics, dancehall is “something new,”<sup>10</sup> which emerged as a result of class conflict in post-independent Jamaica. For Noble, dancehall culture is defined through the “symbolic unity or homology (Hebdige, 1979) of sexually explicit lyrics, dance, music, fashion styles and values”<sup>11</sup> within the community. However, in the most surface based and colloquial terms, dancehall is a large-scale party that occurs on the streets of Jamaica dancehall. Dancehall started in Kingston inner city communities in Jamaica<sup>12</sup> and is now celebrated globally.

Dancehall emerged in the 1970s and early 1980s, as noted by Noble<sup>13</sup> and became one of Jamaica’s most popular markers of national identity by the late 1990. Dancehall’s “sexual explicit and erotic hedonism”<sup>14</sup> nature eventually and displays of sexual expressiveness, gradually grew in popularity. These characteristics are especially visible when expressed by women in wearing provocative fashion and dancing sensually. These actions openly defied normative moral values associated with female respectability in a bipolar religious nation like Jamaica. As a result, slackness became the meta-narrative that has historically been attached to women who participate in Jamaican dancehall.

## Slackness

“The Culture/Slackness antithesis that is mediated in the dancehall is one manifestation of a functional antagonism in Jamaican society between up-town and down-town, between high culture and low, between literacy and oracy.”<sup>15</sup>

What does slackness represent in this paradigm? Slackness, as a concept, and particularly in relation to dancehall, is any action that is read to be in service of “undermining consensual



standard[s] of decency”<sup>16</sup> in Jamaica. As a postcolonial region, the island’s standards of decency also reflect Eurocentric notions of culture and respectability — which, includes but is not limited to, understandings of tropes of morality that have been inherited and used by Jamaica’s middle class to police the actions of those whose actions are not aligned with Eurocentric lifestyle, art, and “Judeo-Christian”<sup>17</sup> values. In this respect, the church plays a significant role in the perpetuation of the colonial tradition “of racialized shame[ing]” black people by centralizing Eurocentrism through modes of Christian based moral values while simultaneously decentralizing and interiorization African people and their heritage<sup>18</sup>--a kind of freedom of sexual expression.

Cooper’s work, which superbly dissects and breaks down the politics of respectability and their implications for women in dancehall, is an integral influence in my work. Cooper has had to defend her decision to see the significant role *Patois* plays in providing a counter-narrative to the dominant structures in Jamaican music and culture as a whole. She has also had to defend her argument that slackness can undermine and disrupt the “patriarchal ideology and pious morality of fundamentalist Jamaicans.”<sup>19</sup> This patriarchal middle-class structure dictates a lady’s socially accepted conduct; what Denise Noble refers to as the “cult of respectability”<sup>20</sup> in a particularly gendered way.

In terms of gender relations in dancehall, Cooper noted that women who enjoy the humor and innocuous slackness of dancehall songs are frequently, if not predominantly, subjected to censure under the island’s prevailing double standard.<sup>21</sup> Cooper’s view, however, has not been embraced universally. In the mainstream Jamaican media, letters expressing disgust for women who support and enjoy dancehall songs also describe these women in terms of being “slack, lascivious lewd” and “promiscuous”<sup>22</sup> in response to Cooper’s understanding.<sup>23</sup> For instance, in one of her columns, Cooper cited a letter writer, Mr. McGowan, who urged Jamaicans not to “fool ourselves” in placing all the fault on dancehall artists’ immoral lyrical content because the fault should also be placed on female who dance and shout out when men stand on stage and give details of sexual exploits with women”<sup>24</sup> during their performances.

Another example can be found in a 2003 letter to the *Sunday Gleaner*, written by Iris Myrie which questioned Cooper’s defense of dancehall as a useful and positive tool for women as a source of liberation, as cited by Cooper.<sup>25</sup> In the letter, Myrie identifies herself as the vice president of the Business and Professional Club, Kingston, which clearly signaled her

positionality within the island's socioeconomic and political strata. For Myrie, Cooper's decision to defend these women's action through a liberating lens is synonymous with her defense of someone "vomiting to relieve the stomach of the surfeit, but doing so on the street in view of everyone else."<sup>26</sup> Such a strong reaction to these women and the space they choose to celebrate their femininity reifies the significance of the interrogation of discourses power: who is being silenced and who is doing the silencing. As a result, these modalities should be understood in the context of power; the <sup>27</sup>power that was exercised over poor black working-class female bodies in Jamaica and, thus, the power of women in Jamaican dancehall's ability to disrupt "middle-class respectability,"<sup>28</sup> despite its historical authority.

The debate is not singularly located in the context of class relations and politics in Jamaica. Cooper's response to the letters published in the *Sunday Gleaner* was her argument that "[s]lackness is thus feminized and censured...[and subjected to the u]ndomestic female sexuality—erotic maroonage—must be repudiated"<sup>29</sup> by the middle-class Jamaican—who remain opposed to understanding these women's action as exercising their agency through "sexual liberation."<sup>30</sup> Cooper's work has also been contested on an international platform. Though not the only scholar to do so, Obiagele Lake's *Rastafari Women*,<sup>31</sup> comes readily to mind. In her book, Lake examines heterosexual and highly patriarchic nature of Rastafarianism movement in Jamaica during the 1990s when the revolution was at its zenith.

In her discussion of Cooper's *Women and Dancehall*,<sup>32</sup> Lake concluded that female dancehall artist "Lady Saw and all other women...lack agenc[y] and internalize[e] sexist norms that reinforces the objectification of women's bodies"<sup>33</sup> because they participate in Jamaican dancehall. She then observed that women participate in such a male dominated and patriarchal space that predominantly produces songs dealing with the acquisition, treatment and the maintenance of the female genitalia, because they have "internalized sexist norms," perform for male gaze, and lack agency."<sup>34</sup> In this work, Lake expressed her inability to understand how "[p]opular cultural critic, Carolyn Cooper (1993) condones misogynistic lyrics as well as lascivious behavior of women on the dance floor" in dancehall."<sup>35</sup> The author further states that the claim of empowerment is a "figment of imagination" when one closely examines the condition under which these women live.<sup>36</sup>

An overly simplified version of Cooper's response in *Lady Saw Cuts Loose*,<sup>37</sup> Lake's misreading of her work is both insightful and humorous in that Cooper argued that Lady Saw is a character Marion Hall has invented who has enabled her to make a "good living in the theater of dancehall," Lake should not take the artist' call for her partner to "stab up mi meat" literally, the reason why Lake employs such a literal reading of the artist lyrics is due to her "unseasoned ear" and cultural difference.<sup>38</sup> One of Cooper's essential points is that, like Lady Saw, women who participate in dancehall are actually celebrating their erotic and their spirit of fertility, which is a practice that can be traced back to the Motherland, in a public space via topics that the politics of respectability deems to be matters of the private space.<sup>39</sup> As I previously mentioned, academia's relationship with dancehall has predominantly been in the question of morality, agency, and freedom of sexual expression.

## The Research Problem

This research is not interested in understanding the cause and effects, existing ideologies, nor perpetuation of popular discursive narratives concerning women in Jamaican dancehall's subjectivities, which are predicated on questions of morality. Therefore, in an "effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of"<sup>40</sup> Jamaican dancehall's informal economy, I have identified three categories of women who make money from dancehall's informal economy. Informal economy in this context "refers to income-generating activities that are unregulated by the legal and social institutions of a society in which similar activities are regulated (Portes et al.1989),<sup>41</sup> according to Donna Hope.<sup>42</sup> Knowledge of these categories are grounded in the author's lived experience as a model in Jamaican dancehall's informal economy. The research design called for fifteen women to be interviewed: five dancers, five models, and five auxiliary staff. In the end, five dancers, three models, and seven auxiliary workers interviews were recorded (four were lost).

My aim for this study is to expand the conversation around women in Jamaican dancehall. In agreement with Baraka-Yusuf who acknowledged that researchers who examines dancehall "generally focused on lyrical content, the sound system and the economic production of music (Stolzoff 2000; Cooper 1993a),<sup>43</sup> these analyses tend to overlook the nuanced ways women who participate in Jamaican dancehall. According to Noble, another focus of much of the work on dancehall has been on exploring dancehall as an expression of the contested class relations of

Jamaican society and politics, or as an important transnational public space in which negotiations take place over the status of sexuality and gender in local and diasporic Jamaican and black identities (Meeks, 2000; Noble, 2000; Stolzoff, 2000; Stanley Niaah, 2004; Cooper, 2004; Hope, 2006).<sup>44</sup> Even more strikingly, these analyses rarely pay attention to women who are not dancehall artists, but who earn money from dancehall. This is the point of departure for my research.

A major portion of academic research concerning women who participate in Jamaican dancehall has predominantly produced a singular narrative regarding these women's subjectivities that is swaddled comfortably in a dichotomized blanket predicated on concepts of "slackness"<sup>45</sup>/ respectability both locally and internationally. Carolyn Cooper, is one of the first scholars to examine the relationship between class, language, gender, and culture from a post-colonial and their implications on dancehall with enthusiasm. Admittedly, Cooper acknowledged that her initial academic approach of the examination of the relationship between the oral and scripted text in reggae frequently pays attention to the sound and not simply the sight of text and not enough on the nonverbal elements of production and performance [, which includes the] melody, rhythm, the body in dance and the dancefloor itself as a space of spectacular and display,"<sup>46</sup> as is visible in reggae and dancehall. Cooper has since "earned"<sup>47</sup> a name for herself as a scholar who is verse in dancehall cultural critiques.

The focus of this research is to examine the experiences of women who earn from dancehall—particularly, women who play the roles of: dancers, models, and auxiliaries (beauticians, designers, and vendors). While these women overwhelmingly outnumber female dancehall artists and are the core personalities who make up dancehall, they have yet to be explored solely as women who (only operate but also) benefit financially from Jamaican dancehall's subculture through the context of an unregulated economy.

## Research Design

The points of departure for this research should be understood as taking a three-pronged approach. Firstly, it is problematic to use female dancehall artists as the yardstick for 'all other women'<sup>48</sup> who participate in Jamaican dancehall. Secondly, through empirical evidence, this research will argue that there is a woman centered informal economy that exists within Jamaican dancehall despite its patriarchal nature. Here I take inspiration from the work of Cooper, who understands these women's action through a triad framework of: "sexual liberation,"<sup>49</sup> a fantastic

way for women to “make visible”<sup>50</sup> their erotic through aesthetics, and as a series of “fertility feats” that can be traced back to African heritage, before enslavement, which was practiced on the mother-land of Africa.<sup>51</sup> Thirdly, it focuses on how these women are able to exercise agency, and achieve some level of financial empowerment while simultaneously participating in transnational and globalized connection because of this women-centered informal economy.

This thesis is the result of a qualitative research study on women who are involved in the informal economy in Jamaican dancehall. This research was conducted in Jamaica over a period of six weeks. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they give to their experiences.<sup>52</sup> This is why the primary focus of this study is to understand how these women interpret their respective roles, how they construct their world in the dancehall place and space both locally and internationally, and what meaning they give to their experiences in relation to their earning capabilities. Do they consider their actions as work? Do they see this as their occupation?

To understand the meanings women in Jamaican dancehall offer to their relationship with the informal economy, a multi-disciplinary approach was employed. This involved an interpretative approach which includes ethnography, interviews using opened ended questions, participation observation, and informal discussions in both Kingston city and Montego Bay, St. James. The interview questions had more to do with understanding how these women make money from Jamaican dancehall in terms the roles they play, and if they experienced<sup>53</sup> any form of benefit as a result. (Other benefits could include popularity or lasting kindnesses similar to those I established with my friends Marsha, Claudia and Melissa.) I was really interested in finding out whether dancers, models, and the auxiliary staff considered what they do/did to earn from dancehall as their work or their occupation.

I used several methods to organize interviewees. I began by trying to use a Facebook page I created called Women in Jamaican Dancehall. Originally, this page was intended to act as a medium through which I could communicate with women who participated in Jamaican dancehall. This approach created the problem of the digital divide which excluded those who did not have access to the internet,<sup>54</sup> which would probably be the street side vendors. The dancers, models, and beauticians use Facebook to publicize their product. However, Facebook proved to be a failure as none of the women replied. When social media failed, I turned to my own network and connected with models and dancers I knew from the days when I used to model in

dancehall between 2003 to 2008. A friend of mine, and a past International Dancehall Queen, agreed to be interviewed a week before my departure for Jamaica. She then connected me to other dancers who either previously or currently earn(ed) an income from dancehall once I arrived.

Two field research sites in Jamaica were chosen: Kingston city and Montego Bay, St. James. These sites were chosen because Kingston city is the birth place of dancehall and the capital of Jamaica, while Montego Bay is the old capital of the island and the other major metropolitan city in Jamaica. These two sites are widely known in Jamaica to be the two *hot-spots* for dancehall events. The research design called for fifteen interviews: five dancers, five models, and five auxiliaries. These categories were chosen because of my experience in dancehall as a dancehall model and patron. I remember being at auditions with models and with dancers, who were at times also dancehall queens, and I would also order custom designed outfits from designers or model their clothes. I also worked with other women who played a major role in assisting me to create the desired dancehall look for an event—all of which, were done for a fee.

Questionnaires were designed to find out what roles these women play in dancehall, if they make money from dancehall, and if they considered what they do in dancehall to be their work. I also conducted participant observation by attending dancehall workshops taught by dancers and dancehall parties in both Kingston and Montego Bay. While at dancehall parties in both Kingston and Montego Bay, I would ask patrons or dancers permission to take their pictures for my research, or record them while they danced. As a result, I collected numerous pictures and video clips of women's fashion and videos of them dancing as well.

Once at a dancehall party in Kingston, I explained my research to female vendors who sold goods outside the venue. Other auxiliary staff were organized by women who became aware of my research. In the end, I conducted three interviews in Montego Bay with two dancers, (one was a Dancehall Queen), and one higgler who specializes in female dancehall clothing. In Kingston, I was able to conduct interviews with five dancers where one is an International Dancehall Queen. In terms of models, I was only able to collect three interviews with models, and the remaining interviews conducted in Kingston were from the auxiliary staff: two vendors, two nail technicians, one designer, and one hair stylist.

## Chapter Two

### Methodology: Significance of Patois/Patwah

The pejoration of ‘the vulgar’—the people, the language, and the corpus of culture production—marks the high /low-euro/afrocentric culture divide that is encoded the Jamaican body politic...In all domains, the ‘vulgar’ is that which can be traced to Africa; the ‘refined’ is that which can be traced to Europe.”<sup>55</sup>

The above is an excerpt from Carolyn Cooper’s 1993 book.<sup>56</sup> In this work, Cooper examines the relationship that exists between the oral and scribal text tradition and their discourses on Jamaican popular culture.<sup>57</sup> She examines the “non-verbal elements of production and performance<sup>58</sup> by drawing on techniques used by Disc Jockeys (DJ), Jamaican orature, and reggae and dancehall with a focus on how these acts as cultural resistance to the hegemony of anglocentricism<sup>59</sup> in Jamaica. In other words, Cooper examines the ways in which language is simultaneously used as a way to categorize Jamaicans through class relations and how it is used to challenged prevailing power structures.

The significance of Cooper’s work is crucial to this research in a myriad of ways. Firstly, I have used her analysis to firmly anchor and legitimize my used of *Patois* in locating my lived experience in this research. While not exclusively, Jamaican vernacular, or *Patois*, is predominantly used as a class marker in Jamaica. Those of us who speak the vernacular are understood to be members of the lower class, to be vulgar, and to have bad taste whereas those who prefer the English language are associated with a higher-class status, being aesthetically and culturally refined, are seen as the embodiment of Eurocentric ideologies and, pertinent to this research, respectability.<sup>60</sup>

### Classism and Language

The idea of respectability politics is inherently a colonial legacy. In *Downtown Ladies*, Gina Ulysses examines how marginalized women in Jamaica remade themselves through Informal Commercial Importers (also known as ICIs), and *[sic]* blurred the once strongly demarcated class lines within Jamaica through economic mobility.<sup>61</sup> Ulysses historically traced the construction of Jamaica’s class structure to colonialism and how it works to create a dichotomized understanding of ladies and women.<sup>62</sup> According to Ulysses, Jamaica’s current class and colour mediations<sup>63</sup> were constructed during enslavement; and is legacies can be felt in contemporary society. Mintz and Hall made this observation in 1970 when they stated that the

“Jamaican peasantry of today originated within the physical boundaries of the slave worked sugar estates and within the normal pattern of slave-estate administration of two centuries ago”<sup>64</sup> in their amination of the genealogy of Jamaican labour structure.

Originally, the power structure on the plantation during enslavement can be visually understood in terms of a pyramid. White planters and occupied the top tier, white employees sat in the middle, while the enslaved population, the largest, occupied the base. As a result, white and lighter skin colour and western ideologies became the major characteristics of civility and power because they signaled one’s proximity to whiteness.<sup>65</sup> Since “whites were considered human,” mixed race persons and especially Africans were inherently positioned as inferior the and beneath them.<sup>66</sup> This power structure and their according coding were also mirrored within gender relations. White women stood at the highest point of the pyramid of power where codes of “feminine beauty was bounded up with notions of purity, delicacy, modesty, and physical frailty” assigned while mixed and black -African women rested.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, white Christian women were automatically ascribed ideals of Christianity morality, which translated in them being ladies.<sup>68</sup> Either way, white women were read to be “virtuous”<sup>69</sup> ladies while black women’s subjectivities were placed in sharp opposition, as noted by Cooper.<sup>70</sup>

Then race mixing came into play. Racial mixtures varied between white, black, “Chinese, East Indians, ad Syrians”<sup>71</sup> as a result of indentured servitude. Generically, black women women’s subjectivity was densely coded as hyper-sexual, animalistic, dark, dangerous, fecund, and pathological.<sup>72</sup> However, the group was not at all monolithic. Mixed women were coded as being more “civilized” than darker skinned black women, who could aspire to the status of *lady*.<sup>73</sup> As a result, mixed women not only engaged in, but, more importantly, also internalized a performativity of “whiteness”<sup>74</sup> because their complexion alone did not secure their, distinction from the blacks, and, their connection to whiteness. In other words, they needed to exhibit the characteristics akin to that of white, civilized, culture as well. Speaking *Patois*, acting vulgar and un-*lady*-like, in the Victorian English sense of the word, would reinforce the coding that they are attached to their African counterparts, from whom they were trying to disassociate. Therefore, while black females were portrayed as “immoral temptresses or seducers of white men and the embodiment of evil,” mixed women embodied the coding of intra-racial superiority based on their “proximity to whiteness.”<sup>75</sup> These racial demarcations essentially served to “set” coloured and black women against each other.<sup>76</sup> As Ulysses noted,



while mixed “black women were placed on the lowest rung of the great chain of society,”<sup>77</sup> black female subjectivity was very nuanced and, not at all, monolithic.

Black women, otherwise called “blackies,”<sup>78</sup> did not share the same experience of some accessibility to whiteness as mixed women did. These women were coded as “good for nothing niggers” while simultaneously represented as mannish being accustomed to hard physical labour, and lacking morals and having an unrestrained sexuality that debased them as archetypal female animals,<sup>79</sup> hence, unrefined. Their inability to speak the “Queen’s English was naturally attached to connotations of inferiority, backwardness, and “a measure of status”<sup>80</sup> in Jamaica. Consequently, dark skinned women were disproportionately represented in positions of servitude both during and after enslavement.

While the practice of institutionalized enslavement ended in 1834 (with a transitioning period that lasted until 1983), white and brown Jamaican maintained the socioeconomic and political hierarchies that were established during enslavement in Jamaica. The majority of the black population remain at the bottom with “brown” middle-class Jamaicans assuming the position of stewards of Eurocentric ideology and culture,<sup>81</sup> which [sic] manifests itself through the concept of middle-class respectability.<sup>82</sup> As far as language and its significance are concerned, upper and middle-class Jamaicans are more educated (in a formal sense) than the majority of Afro-Jamaicans. Marginalized Jamaicans are overwhelmingly represented through tropes of vulgarity, unattractiveness, and illiteracy<sup>83</sup> which signals a certain level of disgrace or embarrassment to the nation.<sup>84</sup> The ability to speak the English language plays an integral role in legitimizing the regressive ways *Patois*, as a language, is viewed and speaks directly to the ways its speakers are also viewed.

My aim here is to problematize such reductive associations. *Patois*, according to Cooper, is understood as “interiorized,” one that is not a “preferred...[in]...academic discourse;”<sup>85</sup> however, it is the language that is inherently preferred and mastered by the majority. As noted by Cooper, *Patois* is considered vulgar - the root word of vulgar in Latin is *vulgus*, which translates to “the common people.”<sup>86</sup> In the context of Jamaica’s economic and political power relations, it is “the common people” whom I genealogically identify. By centering Patois, and, by extension, de-centering English, however temporary,<sup>87</sup> I intend to evoke a paradigm shift. As a member of this “unintelligible”<sup>88</sup> group, how do we begin to rethink these ways of knowing given that I am also an MA candidate at the University of Toronto and the one who is writing

this thesis in English—while consciously navigating and creating ways to fuse and interlock *Patois* within it?

By positioning *Patois* as the reader's first point of contact with this research, my intent is to "upset the existing [scholarly] order," by forcing you, the reader, to experience a "temporary surrender of your privilege of literacy" because of how unnatural *Patois* looks and feels.<sup>89</sup> This serves to make "literate in English become the slow learners...they...assume" *Patois* speakers to be.<sup>90</sup> Admittedly, even though some of the essence and sound of *Patois* is lost by merely representing it in written form<sup>91</sup> there is a certain level of power shift that occurs, which prepares the reader to begin to think of the different ways of knowing, of living, and in the way they approach this research. Moreover, the position and placement of *Patois* serves another purpose. In the spirit of unapologetically centralizing the language of the common folk, my peers in Jamaica, and centralizing women earners who are not Jamaican dancehall artists in this research, the English speaker will have to search for and carve out a space for themselves in this research with regards to gaining access to my lived experience.

The last reason for centering *Patois* is to maintain a certain level of *authenticity*. How *authentic* could the recollection of my lived experience as a former dancehall model be had it been narrated in English? *Patois* is the "language of dancehall,"<sup>92</sup> as noted by Cooper, and speaking about my experience in dancehall as a former model and avid participant using proper English would, for me, be unnatural. Honor Ford-Smith, cited by Cooper, acknowledges that "*Patwah*" is not a practice that is employed for serious "silent reflection or for purposes other than entertainment,"<sup>93</sup> but, more so, it is written as performance. By writing my reflection in *Patois*, my intention is to move away from the understanding of *Patois* being used in a less official context. The aim here is to disrupt and problematize the "imperial authority of the English-father-tongue"<sup>94</sup> by sharing my lived experience in a way that most closely reflects my mood and countenance in that space and time.

Additionally, speaking from the perspective of a woman who was (and in some sense, remains) a member of the dancehall fraternity and a community in Spanish Town St. Catherine whose name has had a close relationship with reggae and dancehall over the years (St. Jago Dela-vega),<sup>95</sup> why would I begin my story, our story, in a language that was superimposed—but not conventionally nor colloquially mine? Sharing my experience of that moment in time, with you, about dancehall, in English would diminish a certain sense of authenticity—not for the

reader, as much, but for me, the narrator. I want to “illuminate lives of real people”<sup>96</sup> instead of compromising it by relying heavily on the English language. The English translation can be found in the appendix. Marginalized women, and, particularly, women in Jamaican dancehall, has had to either search for or carve out spaces for themselves both with the national context and the dancehall context. These are the reasons I have chosen to not only center *Patois* in this research paper but to also legitimize it.

## Reflections

One of the limitations I experienced is the phenomenon Harrison identified in 2008 as a consequence of being an *Outsider Within*, which was a term coined by Hill-Collins.<sup>97</sup> As an Afro-Jamaican woman researcher who is examining a cultural phenomenon that has been positioned in such a way that has historically been subjected to questions of morality, I am fully aware that my lived experience (as a former dancehall model and as a researcher) is—and will consistently be—“racially marked.”<sup>98</sup> Citing Hill-Collins, Harrison describes the condition of outsider within as “the locations of people who no longer belong to any one group...who [find] themselves in marginal locations between groups of varying power.”<sup>99</sup> In other words, because the outsider within is able to move in and through multiple groups, they occupy a precarious location where there is no “homogeneity in their identity,”<sup>100</sup> or they do not identify only with one group. One example Harrison gave of this kind of double consciousness as an outsider within academia is the reality where her “authority in the classroom may be reelected” by student’s especially when her teachings are critical of their commonsense world view.<sup>101</sup> Not only do I anticipate evoking a similar response, but I also anticipate that my interventions and convergences will also be subjected to critiques that are predicated on Global South/Global North ideological differences.

While conducting my field research, I was also struggling with figuring out how to depict these women and their realities in a way that would be palatable to my peers and those who would be scrutinizing my work—the review committee. As a researcher, my particular knowledge/power relationship, one of gaining knowledge about or of a dominant group without gaining the full power accorded to members of that group<sup>102</sup> is most prudent in explaining my location as an outsider within the academe. It is “[I]ike [I am]one of the family,” but despite knowledge gain about the associated groups, I will never be a member a full-fledged member.<sup>103</sup>

However, I take solace in Hill-Collins's observation that Black social scientists also have a unique angle of vision or—in light of heterogeneity among Black women—that informs the role they play in producing new knowledge and effecting change within the academia.<sup>104</sup> By the end of my Master's program, I am aware of this phenomenon and can name and theorize it.

Unfortunately, while conducting this research in 2014, unable to name and theorize what I was going through, my feelings of wanting to sanitize my work, created an internal conflict. While I identified with these women's subjectivity in a very generic way, I also felt the need to possibly present my findings in a way that would make it more acceptable to a Western audience. I have since abandoned this approach. I now understand and can theorize my positionality as an outsider within the academia, and understand how my work might be 'marked,'<sup>105</sup> and I am ok with it. This difference need not to be oppressive on my part. At the end of the day, if you are unable to relate to the feeling I get when mommy said: "yuh wih si how wata walk go a pumpkin belly,"<sup>106</sup> because of my refusal to head a warning, I am convinced that some of the essence of this essay will be at a loss to you. It simply comes down to a matter of "cultural difference,"<sup>107</sup> and my nuanced positionality.

Even within the dancehall fraternity I experienced the feeling of an outsider. This intersection is/was also nuanced. As a researcher who also identifies with the dancehall community as a former dancehall model who earned a living from dancehall, I, nevertheless, needed a member of the dancehall dancer's community to connect me to other dancers in order to secure interviews. Women I reached out to using the Facebook account were non-responsive. Even though a Jamaican and former participant in Jamaica dancehall informal economy, I was not a member of the dancer's fraternity. A Japanese dancer by the name of Kiss Kiss,<sup>108</sup> has more access to this community because they are dancehall dancers. My "sameness" as a born and raised Jamaican woman who also earned from dancehall's informal economy did not negate my "difference"<sup>109</sup> as a non-member of the dancehall dancers group.

Additionally, my sameness as a former dancehall actor also worked to create a heightened sense state of reflexivity. As outlined by the work of Reeves et al on qualitative ethnographic methodologies,<sup>110</sup> the practice of reflexivity (that is, the relationship a researcher shares with the world he or she is investigating) is a central element of ethnographic work, owing to the relationship the ethnographer shares with participants and the ethical issues that flow from this close relationship.<sup>111</sup> I had to constantly employ a system of check-and-balance within my

multifaceted identities in order to be fair to the evidence I was collecting and not superimpose what I believed to be the case. One example was when the pseudonym Tattooed goddess, a model who I worked with for a long period of time, informed me that her reason for modeling was only for the “exposure” and “fun”, and not for the “money,” I was quick to read her response as a masking and disavowal because I knew her circumstances. After a moment of reflexivity, I reminded myself that this was her truth and not mine to read in any other way than how it was presented.

I also had to remind myself that on this trip home I was a scholar. I was there as a scholar whose job was it to conduct a “study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within”<sup>112</sup> dancehall groups—namely, female dancers, models, and auxiliaries. This time my visit was different. I could not to just dash out an gwaan bad pan di dance floor<sup>113</sup> as I would have usually done. This time I was a researcher. Another limitation was the lack of privacy during interviews on the streets of downtown Kingston and Montego Bay, in addition to the fact that interviews were frequently conducted after dancehall workshops, street sides, or in the presence of my travel companion—which was particularly evident during the Montego Bay segment of the research.

I conducted four interviews from dancers in Kingston and then lost the recording device with interviews in Montego Bay, St. James. I had to replace the recording device, but was unable to replace all the lost interviews upon my return to Kingston. I also encountered suspicion from street side vendors on Princess Street, Kingston. They were concerned if interviews were being conducted by the Jamaican government, which will be discussed later. However, once these women learned I was a student and the research was a school project, they were willing to assist. Another limitation I faced was not being able to navigate Montego Bay, St. James as a researcher who remains far more familiar with Kingston’s city.

## Demographic Information

The table below provides the demographic information of the respondents. An undergraduate Ethic Review Protocol was submitted to and approved by the Research Ethics Board, Social Sciences and Humanities Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto in the month of May 2014. The pseudonyms chosen for the women I interviewed were based on their most memorable phrases, attitudes, or physical attributes. Also, **MBW** is the abbreviation for Main Bread Winner. A copy of the **Questionnaire, Information Letter, and Consent Form** can be found as a single document in appendix 2.

DANCERS									
<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>MBW</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Other Source of Income</u>	<u>Nationality</u>
Mad Ting	Dancer	34	Spouse	1	CXC	Yes	Mo Bay	Dancer/Hustler	Afro Jamaican
Good Gyal	Dancer	25	Single	2 (1&2)	No	Yes	Mo Bay	Dancer Hustler	Afro Jamaican
Nature Girl	Dancer	25	Single	N/A	6 CXC/CAPE	Yes	Kng	Model/Artist	Afro-Jamaica
Black Barbie	Dancer /DhQ	28	Single	N/A	4 CXC	Yes	Kgn	Promoter/Agent	Afro Jamaican
Tiny	Dancer	30	Single	N/A	High School	Yes	Kng		Japanese
Excavated Voice	Dancer		Single	1	CXC				
MODELS									
<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>MBW</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Other Source of Income</u>	<u>Nationality</u>
Empress	Model	37	Common Law	1	3 GCE	YES	Kgn	Beautician/ Party promo/ Promo Girl	Afro Jamaica
Teacher	Model promo	23	Single	1	College Student	YES	Kgn	Dancer/ Manager, Promo Girl	Afro Jamaican
Tattoo Goddess	Model	31	Engage	N/A	CXC	YES	Kgn	Nail Technician	Afro-Jamaican
AUXILIARY									
<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>MBW</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Other Source of Income</u>	<u>Nationality</u>
Sassy	Nail tech/ Promo	32	Visiting	(2) 1/12	CXC/Computer Course	Yes	Kng	Party promoter/Nails/ ICI	Afro Jamaican
Goodie	Higgler	40	Single	(4) 25/19/16/9	Dropped out	Yes	Mo Bay		Afro Jamaican
Summer	Hair		Common Law	(3) 16/14/6	High School	No	DwnTwn		Afro Jamaica
Christian	Nail	28	Single	2 ½ Pregnant 2 Minor	High School	Yes	DwnTwn		Afro Jamaican
Original Diva	Designer	50	Visiting	3 (Adult)	Secondary	Yes	Kgn		Afro/Jamaican
Tib Tib	Street Side Vendor	40	Single	(4) 24/21/17/1	Dropped out	Yes	Kgn Hand cart		Afro/Jamaican
Mama, P	Soup Lady	59	Married	2 Adult	High School	Yes	Kgn	Soup Lady/ ICI/	Afro/Jamaican

## Theoretical Concepts: Theorizing Black-Feminism and the Politics of Naming.

There are three overarching conceptual frameworks of this paper. The first frame that will be used to conceptualize my research is from an Afro-Jamaican woman-centered perspective, the second is heterogeneity, and the third is intersectionality. As it relates to the Afro-Jamaican women-centeredness framework or woman-centered perspective, I consciously decided not to use a Black-feminist framework. This is because there is a politics of naming. There is a nuanced and subtle significance that is involved in explicitly claiming a Black feminist thought as an empirical methodological approach that I take seriously.

In 1996, Hill-Collins cited black theorist and activist, Pearl Cleage's definition of feminist as “the belief that women are full human beings capable of participating” in every aspect of society in a way that confronts sexism.<sup>114</sup> While feminism as a school of thought aligns itself with women’s empowerment and its aim to dismantle sexist, patriarchal ideologies, it can often become less inclusive once we factor in racialized bodies. Understanding the term and subculture feminist as a “for-whites-only”<sup>115</sup> movement that is socially, economically and politically aligned with “politics of white supremacy in United States of America,”<sup>116</sup> the prefix “Black” was added to the term feminism in order to include critiques that were <sup>117</sup>grounded in intersections of the marginalized; namely, race, class and gender in the interrogation of heterosexual and heteropatriarchal ideologies.<sup>118</sup>

In line with this reasoning, *The Combahee River Collective Statement* affirms that Black feminism evolved mostly in connection with the second wave feminist movement that began in the late 1960s,” which was also informed by the “Civil Rights, Black Nationalism, Black Panthers movement.”<sup>119</sup> Essentially, feminism with the prefix “black” denoted a black consciousness paradigm. In this context, the term “black feminist serves to disrupt the system of racism that is inherently present in feminism”<sup>120</sup> both ideologically and politically. Black feminism, more succinctly put, is a tool that “provide a voice for women who are not represented in mainstream feminism,” according to Njoki Wane.<sup>121</sup>

When bell hooks boldly opened her 1991 essay by declaring: “I came to theory because I was hurting”<sup>122</sup>, she was highlighting the significant role theorizing her lived experiences as black women living in a black body, in an attempt to better understand and [sic] navigate this society played. This remains a significant feature of Black-feminism. It provides the necessary



interventions from a racialized framework, which represents those who are the most marginalized. These representations are essential to the challenging of system of heterosexual and patriarchal oppression by incorporating aspects of “self-recovery, of collective liberation,” which inherently reveals the “gap[s that] exists between theory and practice”<sup>123</sup> within mainstream feminism. Even within the framework of black feminism’s liberatory practice there are strong divides.

In 2006, Coleman critiqued the limited conceptual scope of the womanist concept as an alternative to the term Black feminist.<sup>124</sup> For Coleman, Womanist only embodies nationalistic ideologies, but also Christian based ideas of morality that inherently centers heterosexuality.<sup>125</sup> By extension, womanist then excludes lesbian women and gay men. For instance, womanists have been quiet on questions of black lesbians (and gays) theology spiritual, and religious”<sup>126</sup> well-being. Coleman affirms that not only is this approach hypocritical but, more importantly, it further pushes non-conformist persons further to the margins of society. In the end, Coleman does admit that the distinction between womanist and black feminist remains somewhat ambiguous but also significant. She does, however, prefer to self-identify as a black feminist because of the “disruptive effect”<sup>127</sup> it has, and because it is inclusive to all black people (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) who aspire to achieve liberation from institutionalized racism, sexism and patriarchy.

My research looks into the ways in which women who earn from dancehall and in the process, disrupt ideals of moral decency. It also looks at how they do this on a global scale by building networks with women of different nationalities and races. In this academic research project that is focused on gender relations in dancehall, I have included members of the LGBT in the category of women. I wish to see how this community uses dancehall in similar ways despite having to do so in isolation because of Jamaica’s and dancehall’s homophobic ideological stance. I am not convinced that Black-feminist thought or Womanism provides the most appropriate conceptual framework that will be able to theorize these women and this phenomenon.

#### Afro-Jamaican (Caribbean) Women-Centered(ness)

While I draw from Black-Feminist scholarly discourse, my stance on not labeling my work as such is grounded in the fact that Caribbean women-centered initiatives and mobilizations historically transcend the second wave—while we weren’t even considered during

the first wave, which is evident in Sojourner Truth's 1851 plea, *Ain I a Woman?*<sup>128</sup> Looking at historian Rhoda Reddock's work on post-slavery economy of the 1930s and 1950s, there is overwhelming evidence of women fighting for rights to economic independence in Couva, Trinidad.<sup>129</sup> Between 1900 and 1903, there were three major disturbances in Trinidad: the 1903 Water Riot, the 1919 Labour Strikes, and the more well-known 1934-1937 Labour Strikes. In each of these instances, women mobilized together to demand better working conditions and better pay through the spontaneous strikes and direct negotiation with the planters.<sup>130</sup> Women led their own independent action in order to demand that their work be valued as much as the work of their male counterparts. Their activism and relentlessness in challenging systems of economic oppression gave birth to the Moyne Commission and its recommendations, which included policies to improve women's status in the labour force.<sup>131</sup> I understand my decision not to frame my work within an established conceptual framework such as Black-Feminist Thought, might tempt scrutinizers to positions might my work within tropes of discursive rhetoric which presupposes the notion that "blacks don't do theory"<sup>132</sup> within the academy. I hope I have been successful in explaining that theorizing women in Jamaican dancehall's experiences through a conceptual map that is aligned more with their experience—that is, an Afro-Jamaican women frame—is most appropriate for my work; although, admittedly, I am not convinced this concept is as established as its North American counterpart.

At home, women in Jamaica were no less active in their resistance to financial inequality during the implementation of neoliberal policies. According to Linden Lewis, who addresses women's responses to neo-liberalization policies in Jamaica, the advent of neoliberal policies from 1980 on to the 1990s was accompanied by the reduction of the role of the state.<sup>133</sup> The implications of the economic crisis were more visible on the working class population<sup>134</sup> where frustrations and resentment manifested itself in a plethora of social problems ranging from drug abuse, alcoholism, crime and nihilism, to physical and verbal abuse.<sup>135</sup> This was complemented by an increase in domestic brutality to the point where wife-beating in Jamaica became a common occurrence—though it was also experienced across the Caribbean basin.

The result was a large-scale mobilization that aimed to respond to the phenomenon of women being underrepresented, unvalued and abused. According to Reddock, civil society movements, such as religious-based women's organizations, the Jamaica Federation of Labour in 1919 and the Oilfield Workers Trade Union of Trinidad and Tobago in the 1930s<sup>136</sup> were some

of the first women's organizations established to provide means for women by women. Moreover, the post-independent Caribbean saw a reemergence in women's mobilization, which can be seen with the Guyanese based Caribbean Women's Association initiating transnational connection with other islands—with which most of the traditional women's organizations were affiliated.<sup>137</sup>

In 1977, the Sistren Theatre Collective was formed in Jamaica and spearheaded by Honor Ford-Smith.<sup>138</sup> This work consisted of predominantly working-class members who used drama and entertainment as a tool to raise consciousness about the economic oppression in the society.<sup>139</sup> Finally, the maternity leave that mothers in the Caribbean labour force enjoy today is a result of women's mobilization.<sup>140</sup> As long as there has been a Caribbean, its women have had to mobilize in order to collectively demand equitable treatment and to ensure their survival. Seemingly simple everyday act of women-centered mobilization such as a *Pardna*<sup>141</sup> should not be overlooked here. I am not convinced that our existing women-centered approach is unable to legitimately stand on its own without adding the prefix Black to system and school of thought that inherently profit(ed) from our marginalization during and after enslavement. No wave, nar nuh wave to mi ting. Mi gud. Chus mi!<sup>142</sup> Therefore, I am convinced that an Afro- Jamaican or women-centered concept is the most suitable framework for my work.

## Heterogeneity

The concept of heterogeneity is the second conceptual framework that will be used to theorize this research. As stated in my reflections, the condition of the *outsider within* consciousness manifests a positionality that is exiled from comfort of belonging to any one group.<sup>143</sup> The idea of heterogeneity speaks to the dual consciousness we experience as a result of our interstitial and hybrid locations,<sup>144</sup> which can provide a nuanced intellectual discourse. This is wonderfully captured by Audre Lorde's 1997 poem *Coal*,<sup>145</sup> where she identifies a double consciousness of how the system of whiteness sees her as a "coal" versus how she sees herself as a "diamond".<sup>146</sup> In the academy, the dominant archetype of production of knowledge within academia has been "historically constituted largely Western white male domain," which structurally worked to deny access and legitimacy of contributions made by Non-Western scholars.<sup>147</sup> In particular, people of colour (POC) and our "angle of vision"<sup>148</sup> can assist in producing narratives once deemed invisible. My race, gender, and class locations inform my narratives and the ways in which I interpret social realities and academic discourse. Sadly,

within the academy, my identity and respective intersections places me on the outside of the dominant ideology where my work is inherently “racially marked.”<sup>149</sup> The beauty of heterogeneity is, however, that this dual consciousness can produce a “plurality of voices,”<sup>150</sup> which does not necessarily indicate a condition of limitedness. This research will posit heterogeneous ideas and perspectives as a result of my peculiar positionality.

### *Intersectionality*

The theory of intersectionality is important to this research. Coming from the work of Black feminists, Intersectionality as a methodological praxis enables the opportunity to examine the different ways in which women earn from Jamaican dancehall.<sup>151</sup> It provides an entry point for me to pay attention to a variety of context-specific inquiries, including, for example, analyzing the multiple ways that race and gender interact with class in the labor market<sup>152</sup> locally and globally and through transnational networking from a woman centered framework. This is significant for dancers—who also consist of Dancehall Queens. The fact is, female dancers organize and teach dancehall workshop sessions both in Jamaican and overseas. Some of their most popular sites for dancehall workshops are European countries, Australia and Japan. There is also a small but significant community of Japanese dancers that operates within Jamaica’s dancehall scene. By using intersectionality as a tool to interrogate and intervene this complex social plane,<sup>153</sup> we can begin to discuss women-centered networking between women who participate in Jamaican dancehall and how these women’s action questions notions of nationality, black hypersexuality, and power relations on the ground and through the context of the global market.

## Chapter Three

### Mapping Women in Jamaican Dancehall's Informal Economy.

*Them ha fi bun mi out  
Fi get mi out  
No matter wa dem try  
Mi naa lock mi mout  
Dem waan mi fi resign  
But it's not yet time  
Mi gwy bother dem nerves  
And pressure them mind.*<sup>154</sup>

The above is an excerpt of former dancehall artist Lady Saw, now Minster Hall, song entitled “What is Slackness” from her 1996 Album *Give me a Reason*.<sup>155</sup> Carolyn Cooper acknowledges that in this song Lady Saw shows that she is not consistently slack or sexually provocative in her career as a Dancehall/Reggae artist. Instead, Lady Saw showcases her understanding of the influence she has on her listeners while also refusing to submit to those who hold power and disapprove of her work in Jamaica.<sup>156</sup> Lady Saw used her song to critique the 2004 Jamaica Music Awards committee’s decision not to nominate her because her music was consistently lewd. She also, however, called for safe sex-in Jamaica—while making it clear that “mi naah lack mi mout”<sup>157</sup> with regards to the Jamaican government’s lack of respect and interest in the wellbeing of the poor working class.

In this context, Lady Saw calls into question the concept of decency by highlighting the systematic socio-economic and political marginalization of the Jamaican grass roots people at the hands of the government.<sup>158</sup> In the end, Lady Saw clearly states that “the more dem fight, the more mi get strong,” which reflects her defiance to oppression, despite the structures put in place to facilitate her defeat. As acknowledged by Stanley Niaah, in 2010, dancehall is synonymous with Jamaica<sup>159</sup> and it reflects the class, gender, socio-economic and political cleavages of the island. In response to these overarching cleavages that act to maintain a structure of oppression for the poor, most grassroots people—frequently women—respond by engaging with the informal economy. Like Lady Saw, they refuse to remain invisible and subdued. Lady Saw is a female Jamaican dancehall artist who has been labelled as one who is “robbed of morally agencies” and also accused of internalizing sexist norms”<sup>160</sup> simply because of the overtly sexual content of her music. These narratives are also superimposed on the bodies of average women who participate in Jamaican dancehall and they inform the government and the elite community

in Jamaica how they should interact with women, like Lady Saw, who refuse to remain invisible or controlled in the dancehall community.

Lady Saw's defiance can also be read in the actions of the women who participate in Jamaican dancehall: dancer, models and the auxiliary staff. These women, who are the engine of this cultural phenomenon, participate in dancehall because they are in search of their "dinner in this "noisy" space."<sup>161</sup> Drawing from the previous reading of Lady Saw's song, this essay will examine these women's informal economy as their refusal to be marginalized and ignored by the formal economy and the government. This essay will examine women in Jamaican dancehall's ability to combat systematic social and economic marginalization by establishing and maintaining an informal economy within the context of Jamaican dancehall. There has been a great deal of academic attention that has been placed on informal economy<sup>162</sup> and on women in Jamaican dancehall, but little to none has sought to examine the point at which these two worlds meet. This essay aims to function as a meeting point for these realities.

### Construction of Jamaica's Informal Economy.

The rise of the informal economy is closely linked to the island's colonial history. In 1996, Le Franc acknowledges that the term "informal economy" was first coined by Hart in 1973 to refer to the large collection of social activities and occupational pursuits that fell outside the legal formal economy and are not easily measured and documented.<sup>163</sup> The author also appreciated the fact that this form of petty trading first emerged in the Caribbean during colonization as is the case with Gina Ulysses' 2006 aforementioned work.<sup>164</sup> Mintz et al attributed the origin of petty trade to "the owners and managers of estates faced the problem of feeding their slaves"<sup>165</sup> on the plantation. As a result, lots of land allowed enslaved to feed themselves and save the estate this overhead cost.

The surpluses were then taken to local markets and exchanged for other commodities, or sold for cash.<sup>166</sup> In this colonial context, Le Franc states that enslaved persons—normally women—would engage in the sale of produce acquired through subsistent farming in an attempt to provide income in an environment that did not readily provide such privileges.<sup>167</sup> Some enslaved, she continued, would "accommodate considerable profits" to the point where their freedom could be bought.<sup>168</sup> In contemporary scholarly discourse concerning this type of

informal economy, Le Franc acknowledged that these women are known as “higglers” and that they “dominated”<sup>169170</sup> this informal sector after Jamaica’s emancipation in 1962.

The rise of this informal economy was closely tied to the political landscape in Jamaica, which can be widely understood through the characterization of the conflict between the two main political parties: Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and People’s National Party (PNP).<sup>171</sup> This structure placed those who inherited the wealth and power of colonization in positions of economic and political power. While the plantation society was no longer in existence, the political and economic arm of society acted as its replacement where the elite and middle class enjoyed wealth, power and prestige (which replicated European culture), while the majority of Jamaica’s population, who were black, remained in a state of marginalization and severe oppression.<sup>172</sup> At the time, Jamaica’s economy was mostly dependent on the exportation of bauxite, banana and sugar for foreign exchange. When the political conflict between the JLP and PNP exploded due to the latter’s socialist agenda and the project to “Jamaicanize” the island between 1970s and 1980s, the means and modes of production that were monopolized by the elite and middle class became tools through which an ideological war was waged, causing severe unemployment and food scarcity.<sup>173</sup> In this political climate, the working class was left to deal with the brunt of this conflict—poverty and inaccessibility to basic necessities.

Similarly, in 1988 Faye Harrison examined the structure and significance of women’s role in an informal economy in urban communities in Jamaica.<sup>174</sup> Harrison focused a great deal of importance on the informal economy by contextualizing the construction of power structures in Jamaica during colonization.<sup>175</sup> She examined the “informal economy” of urban Jamaica,<sup>176</sup> specifically the Kingston Metropolitan Area known as Oceanview. She argued for the persistence of those same power structures that were in operation during colonization and that placed Europeans at the top of social, economic and political stratum, their cronies or paid staffs in a small middle section, and the African enslaved persons in the lowest, largest portion of society.

The informal economy also provided services through shopkeepers, domestic helpers, gardeners, dressmakers, hairstylists, higglers, cook shops and construction site workers. The marginalized in these inner city communities needed to provide for their dependence in a political environment where Jamaica’s government was neglecting to provide public goods and employment.<sup>177</sup> Rather than rely solely on the governments and their “polytricks,”<sup>178</sup> these

people established an informal economy by purchasing goods from the formal sector and selling them back into the community on the street-side shops where items such as coal were made available at a cheaper price.<sup>179</sup> According to Claude-Brown, these higglers continued, however, living hand to mouth. Higglers can be divided into two types: traditional and modern.<sup>180</sup> The traditional higglers were women who travelled from the rural regions to Kingston city to sell mostly ground provisions. The modern higglers were the ICIs. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the evolution of the informal sector when the government had to implement laws that served to regulate and document transnational implications of higglering. These actors were called “Informal Commercial Importers” (ICIs) by the Jamaican Revenue Board in 1982,<sup>181</sup> in recognition of their presence both in the formal and informal economy. These higglers—normally women—would buy regionally or internationally manufactured goods and resell locally at lower prices.<sup>182</sup>

While Le Franc attempts to uncover the reasons that higglers were not able to build an empire” even though higglering is an extremely profitable business,<sup>183</sup> Cooper acknowledges the “rise of a new breed of internationally travelled female higglers who have far more power than their earlier domestic counterparts”<sup>184</sup> ever did. It was under these conditions that the informal economy emerged in Jamaica’s marginalized communities, particularly, in Kingston Slums. One important distinction made by Ulysses in *Downton Ladies* is that ICI’s are comprised of young females which make strong distinctions from higglers.<sup>185</sup> Both are members of the formal sector, but the word “higglers indicate market trader or middle person who primarily distributes his or her own agricultural good.”<sup>186</sup>

Interestingly, while the working-class population was being systematically marginalized, women were also being marginalized by men even within these structures. The informal sector grew because of the “ease of entry, family ownership and unregulated market”<sup>187</sup> characteristics. Admittedly, this informal economy was still closely tied to the formal capitalist economy because the purchase and redistribution of goods were acquired for the formal industry.<sup>188</sup> The informal sector did not have access to or control the means of production, and, therefore, sold what they could at a lower price.<sup>189</sup> What is most important is that the patriarchal structure that is embedded in the society also proliferated throughout the informal sector. While both sexes participate in the informal sector and there are different variations of higglering (farmer higglers, rural higglers and town higglers),<sup>190</sup> the consistent feature of higglering is that women dominate



the sector. The informal sector was not, however, the only social-economic tool used by grassroots people to combat their marginalization; alongside it grew the cultural expression known as dancehall.<sup>191</sup>

### The Evolution of Dancehall<sup>192</sup>

Jamaica's polarized vision for nationalism placed women in preconstructed spaces, while dancehall afforded women the freedom to their own space through sexual expression. After decolonization, Jamaica's elite and middle class initial idea for nationalism was heavily invested in "Judeo-Christian values,"<sup>193</sup> which dictated the proper conduct for Jamaicans. In addition, the elites and middle-class Jamaicans wanted European "high arts of literature, sculpture, and classical music" to be entrenched in Jamaica's nationalism.<sup>194</sup> Essentially, Jamaica's racially stratified elites and middle class wanted to perpetuate the "European culture"<sup>195</sup> that persisted after decolonization in 1962.

On the other hand, Rastafarianism wanted Jamaica's nationalism project to be reflective of black consciousness. According to Chavannes, not only were Rastafarians actively resistant to "dominant oppressive" structures, but they were also advocates of Pan-Africans<sup>196</sup> consciousness in Jamaica. The popularity of reggae music provided a space for Rastafarians to express their socio-economic and political frustrations both locally and internationally. The most notorious example of this phenomenon is Bob Marley and the Wailers who critiqued Jamaica's oppressive structure and expressed Pan-African sentiments in songs like *Bac<sup>197</sup>k to Africa*, and *Rasta Waan Go Home*<sup>198</sup> as a means to escape inequality.

Unfortunately, Jamaicans grew increasingly frustrated with the country's socio-economic and political inequality, and began to reject Rastafarian music and its aim to repatriate to a "paradise in Africa."<sup>199</sup> Particularly, the African Jamaican working class community became more invested in "having the best time possible here and now with their chosen space being in the dancehall,"<sup>200</sup> The watershed of Rastafarian consciousness and the prominence of reggae music was marked by the death of Bob Marley and the "stoning of Bunny Wailers,"<sup>201</sup> who was the last living member of the Wailers in the late 1980s. This created a space where dancehall could take form and mature. As Dancehall became prominent, graphic sexual expressions by males became one of its characteristics. What came as a surprise and discontent for some was that the rise of dancehall music also came with the females taking part in the live theatre of dancehall.

While the elites vision of nationalism excluded Jamaica's working-class women, black nationalism and Rastafarianism tended to limit women's voices and bodies to "some kind of revolutionary propriety."<sup>202</sup> This can be seen in the supportive but limited role played by the I-Trees in Bob Marley and the Wailers.<sup>203</sup> Both elitism and Pan Africanism had preconstructed ideas of nationalism; ideas that the working-class women did not create for themselves. In the end, the emergence of dancehall unintentionally achieved a sexual awakening of the black working-class women in an attempt to escape the limits of superimposed ideologies. It is in this context that the working-class women became active in creating their own space through sexual expressions in dancehall with a "power that feared both" Jamaica's elite, middleclass, and Pan Africanist.

## The Rise of Women in Jamaican Dancehall's Informal Economy

Stanley Niaah was one of the first scholars to pay explicit attention to the informal economy and the cultural expression known as dancehall<sup>204</sup> and to establish a conceptual framework that linked the two worlds in 2010. In Stanley-Niaah's view, dancehall was created by the many disenfranchised youths of African descent who continuously sought tomorrow's dinner in a noisy space that had been snubbed by the upper classes.<sup>205</sup> According to Stanley-Niaah, with more than 6,000 people directly unemployed and supporting up to 43,000 others,<sup>206</sup> dancehall and dancehall related events (like recording studios, dance, shows and concerts) in the informal sector are of paramount significance to the outsourcing of income. An estimated revenue of J\$800 to 900 million was recorded in 2008 according to Stanley-Niaah, which is most definitely an attractive reason for entrepreneurs and small informal business owners to establish themselves.<sup>207</sup> Internationally, the revenues acquired through Jamaican music market rose from 60 in 1999 to 100 million US dollars in 2000.<sup>208</sup> Similar to the flows between the formal and the informal sectors, some of the revenue earned overlaps the imaginary constraints of nationality and sovereign borders. Thus, even though these figures represent international activities, they are still beneficial to the domestic market.

In order to understand the significance of the informal economy of dancehall, a better understanding of the cultural expression and its operation is needed. In the chapter, "*Performance Geography*," Stanley-Niaah maps dancehall's complex systems of practice and space of production in Kingston, which she traces back to the contained space on the Slave ships during the triangular passage.<sup>209</sup> Stanley-Niaah's focus was to apply the concept of other Black

performance practice, looking superficially at the history that grounds it as far as the Middle Passage slave ship dance (like the limbo), and its further elaboration in the plantation, city and ghetto.<sup>210</sup> This can be read as the author's attempt to emphasize the fact that these marginalized people refused to be contained or controlled by those in power, and their only means of fighting back was through Dancehall. She shows how localized dancehall practices and experiences also reflect the continued impoverishment and marginalization of Black people across the region.<sup>211</sup> Stanely-Niaah also details the time, venue and name of the most popular dances (at that time) in Kingston city, such as Pasa Pasa Wednesday,<sup>212</sup> BemBe Thursday and British Link-up<sup>213</sup> (where Jamaicans who are living in or passing through Great Britain have a reunion once a year). Stanley identified dancehall and its practices to be of sacred ritual constitutions because there are different codes of conduct—based on convention—that are held in high regard and adhered to in order for the structure to be maintained. From the colonial construction of power, and with dancehall as the focal point, she is alluding to the phenomenon of Caribbean peoples' combatting economic and political oppression through social means.

These proceeding chapters are pertinent to my research project. The third section examines the economic viability of dancehall actors. This chapter is called "Geographies and Embodiment," and examines the role of dancers by interviewing dancehall dancer icon, Bogle (Gerald Levy), and 1999 Dancehall Queen Stacey (Denies Cumberland) in order to find out if there are social and economic benefits to participating in dancehall through these contexts.<sup>214</sup> Stanley-Niaah acknowledges the popularization of dance moves that is achieved through these actors' contributions; particularly, she acknowledges the role of women as the "sixth sense" of dancehall. The forth chapter is entitled "Performing Boundarylessness."<sup>215</sup> Here, she holds the point of view that while dancehall originated within marginalized communities it has since transcended class and nationality.<sup>216</sup> She uses the phenomena of international sound clash competitions where selectors of different nationalities compete for the crown of best selector. She also uses the international tour that sound systems like *Stone Love and Might Crown* are known to host.

These two last chapters have direct relevance to my research project. The role of dancehall actors and the prospect of economic gain that are treated in "Performance and Embodiment" section, and the international reach that dancehall as a culture has cultivated and nurtured in the "*Boundarylessness*" section, will assist in my study's efforts to examine the

importance of women in Dancehall's informal economy. While Harrison treated the informal economy in Kingston city slums and Stanley examined the dynamic of Dancehall as a cultural expression, my research aims to link these two approaches into one and examine the role of women in Dancehall's informal economy

In Bakare-Yusuf's 2006 article examining the significant role aesthetic expression plays as modes of resistance to Jamaica's hegemon, she painted a picture that illustrates the rise of dancehall to be a result of class conflict in post-independent Jamaica<sup>217</sup> and to have given birth to something new: dancehall and its culture.<sup>218</sup> As stated above, European elites inherited the wealth of colonialism and held the island's economic and political power, which contributed to the systematic marginalization of the working-class population, and which has been echoed through this paper. Dancehall emerged as a result of ideological conflict in post-independent Jamaica. Its culture emerged from the rejection of Jamaica's elite and middle class of a notion of nationalism that entailed European religion, culture, and liberal arts in conflict with Rastafarianism.<sup>219</sup> This resulted in a vision to implement a black consciousness paradigm that would challenge "dominant oppressive" colonial structures.<sup>220</sup> In the end, neither ideology achieved universal dominance successfully because the former excluded working-class women, who lacked the resources to maintain such a lifestyle, and the latter limited women's bodies to revolutionary purposes.<sup>221</sup>

Dancehall became appealing to Jamaica's working-class population as their frustration with socio-economic and political inequality directed them "towards having the best time possible in the here and now," and by so doing, rejecting the Rastafarian vision to repatriate to a "paradise in Africa"<sup>222</sup> at approximately the same time Jamaica's informal economy became a noticeable force. In this context, the informal entrepreneurs that would have been most useful were those with "skills and services" such as cooking, hairstyling and dress-making,<sup>223</sup> all of which became necessary for the production of the dancehall persona.<sup>224</sup> They celebrated their power over their own bodies and circumstances through fashion: unique, loud, near nude fashion, that was possible to attain regardless of the lack of economic or political power.

In this context, hair, make-up, and nail technicians have played a complementary role in creating the dancehall look. In Anna Alissa's short documentary on YouTube by the name of "*Street Side Salon*,"<sup>225</sup> she shows women getting the dancehall look at Mathew's Lane, Down Town Kingston, Jamaica. The clip shows hair of several colours being assembled in styles and

glued onto women's heads. In another section, the nail technicians are viewed putting on lavishly decorated nail tips onto customer's fingers while other staff members of the Street Side Salon are fixing up different customers lashes and eyebrows. The natures of these styles scream dancehall and are designed for women who subscribe to the social practices of dancehall. Admittedly, there are salons located where the upper echelons of Jamaicans reside; however, the adornment services that these salons provide tend to be a bit too tame for dancehall, and are more suitable for the club scenes.

As a matter of fact, Bakare-Yusuf noted that the women of dancehall's commitment to fashion may be tied directly to the fact that they are marginalized.<sup>226</sup> This form of fashion made people who were rendered invisible, due to the lack of economic and political power, visible through social agencies, namely fashion. This breakaway from the traditional understanding of moral values was made most visible through women's fashion in dancehall. Their image of beauty stood in complete juxtaposition to those of the elite, the middle class and Rastafarianism. Dancehall woman, normally very fleshy, proudly wore tight revealing clothing.<sup>227</sup> This image was especially lewd for elite and middle-class groups who desired slender physiques and sleeker fashion.<sup>228</sup> Similarly, dancehall posed a problem for Rastafarianism virtues because they typically required women to be fully covered, desexualized and militant. Female dancehall fashion industry cam and turned embedded ideas of Christian and Rastafarian morality on its head.

### Auxiliary Actors: Designers and Beauticians<sup>229</sup>

There are a lot of women who participate in dancehall. Many of them play different roles. For many, a lot of their income generating practices are done directly through the roles they play in dancehall. For others, their income is generated by the services they provide to other women who participate or earn from dancehall. I have categorized this group—that provides goods and or services to other women who participate in dancehall—as the auxiliary workers. Members of the auxiliary group are instrumental to the operation of the dancehall; but more importantly, the women centered fashion industry. This group of women specialize in providing goods and services such as fashion designing, sewing clothes, and beauticians (hairdressing, nail technician, and (a service that emerged prominently in recent years) make-up artists). While these women provide goods and or services to women in Jamaican dancehall, they commonly remain invisible

the dancehall space—though their work is hypervisible. The below section examines the services that both designers and beautician provide dancehall female patrons and actors.

“The [female] body became a site of increasing degrees of adornment. These “donnets” demonstrated their physical and financial “ass-ets” by wearing clothes labeled “batty rider,” which Chester Francis-Jackson defines as “a skirt or pair of shorts which expose more of the buttocks than it conceals” (1995) “Puny printers (pants that showed the outlines of a woman’s genitalia), wigs of all colours, mesh tops, large jewelry (gold bangles, rings, nose rings), and elaborate hairdos all become part of a new fashion assembly.”<sup>230</sup>

While no women became sound system disc jockeys (DJ), women, however, create a fashion industry that catered to women of the dancehall. According to Stolzoff, the celebration of dance and fashion in the dancehall was partly due to the layout of the dancehall venue, which placed the DJ and his sound system on the perimeter and the crowd at the center<sup>231</sup> of the dancehall space. This afforded participants the ability to view the stage in case of a stage show. It also afforded the room to display their fashion and dance moves<sup>232</sup> in a competitive nature. This was the space that women in dancehall soon took and created a space for competing and displaying their erotic dancing and ‘X-rated bare as you dare’<sup>233</sup> fashion, which attracted and maintained the crowd's attention.<sup>234</sup> Clothing is predominantly bought from a female higgler or made by a female dressmaker or designer—the modern version of the latter.

This dancehall ambiance was successfully recreated in the 1997 movie ‘Dancehall Queen’. It was also successful in capturing the independent, strong spirit of Jamaican women<sup>235</sup> in the dancehall scene on an intimate level. Just like many Dancehall Divas, Marcia (the main character) was a single who works as an ‘Igla’ (i.e. street vender). Living in a “poverty stricken risk inner city”<sup>236</sup> community in Kingston, Jamaica, Marcia enters in the Dancehall Queen competition in order to win the prize cash out of necessity. The audience’s introduction to the dressmaker, Ms. Gordon was during Marcia’s first attempt to transform into a Dancehall Diva. Upon showing Ms. Gordon the design she wanted, Ms. Gordon told her “dat nuh cheap, enuh!”<sup>237</sup> meaning the style of clothing she wanted to be make was of the more expensive options. Randomly meeting local business man (whose also engaged in Don *Manism*) Larry while in disguise as a Dancehall Diva, he eventual begin to finance Marcia’s aesthetic transformation because becoming an Dancehall Diva is an expensive undertaking. With the help of dressmaker, Ms. Gordon—for a fee of course—Marcia is able to bring to fruition the designs

she dreamt up in her head and put on paper. With an array of batty riders and belly skin suits made from bright, shiny materials, paired with extravagant colourful wigs, overdone make up and jewellery, Marcia was able to transform in a diva. With practicing dancehall dance moves regularly and attending dancehall parties, tensions eventually brewed between Marcia and the reigning Dancehall Queen, Alove. Both women entered the competition. Marcia was crowned Dancehall Queen with its accompanying bragging rights; but most importantly, she won the cash prize and we assume she was able to better care for her family.

This movie is important. It showcased the fact that any woman who can dance could become a Dancehall Queen. It also showed that the Dancehall Diva image is a persona that can be removed at will and that these women might live normative lives outside of dancehall. It also informs the public of the work (designing clothes, hair, nails, and make up) that goes into creating a “Dancehall Diva.”<sup>238</sup> Creating the Dancehall Queen or Diva persona requires collaborative efforts. Case in point, Jamaica’s first and most memorable Dancehall Queen, Carlene Davis. She rose to dancehall royalty from not so humble beginnings through a series of dancehall competitions between other dancehall divas<sup>239</sup> in the 1990s. A dancehall queen must embody dancehall fashion, dancing, and, most importantly, attitude. In Chaka Demus and Pliers’ 1998 music video for their song “Murder She Wrote,”<sup>240</sup> Dancehall Queen Carlene exhibited all three qualifications.

In the video, Carlene’s entire outfit was gold: wig, oversized jewelry, small bra like blouse with ‘Ali Baba’ like sleeves, batty rider<sup>241</sup> and gold knee high boots to complete the look. When we look at this music video, we do not see the people whose work went into creating Dancehall Queen Carlene (and the other women’s) iconic look. All we see is the finished product. To be clear, what I wish to highlight here is the fact that they had to pay someone—more than likely several females back in those days—to get this look. What this also means is that, by the same logic, several persons earned money from helping to put this look together. There is no doubt in my mind that a dressmaker or designer sewn number and beauticians (perhaps just a nail tech because she is wearing a wig) were involved in Carlene’s final get up and they all received payment to do so.

Modern designers emerged within the last decade to represent the new fashion demands in dancehall. On one hand, modern designers like Melissa Dunkley of MDiz Collection,<sup>242</sup>

Martin ‘White Sky’ Miller, and Dexter “3D” Pottinger<sup>243</sup> has played a pivotal role in redefining dancehall’s fashion from mere nudity to couture nudity. According to The Jamaica Star writer, Tanya C. Ellis, these designer pieces explore the “creations of cliché designer wear, so those like the D&G, the Dior’s and the Prada’s are now featured prominently on the front line at major events”<sup>244</sup> while at the same time maintaining dancehall’s flavour. “[P]encil skirt” she continues, “has become the new best friend of these patrons, as they have come to realize that beautifully tailored fitting skirt allows them...to be utterly 'naked' but entirely covered,”<sup>245</sup> which has allowed them to maintain sex appeal modestly.

Hair, make up and nail technicians have played a complementary role in creating the dancehall look. In Anna Alissa’s short documentary on ‘YouTube’ by the name of “Street Side Salon,”<sup>246</sup> she shows women getting the dancehall at Mathew’s Lane, Down Town Kingston, Jamaica. The clip shows hair of several different colours being assembled in styles and glued on women’s head. In another section, the nail technicians are recorded putting on nail lavishly decorated nail tips on customer’s fingers while other staff members of the Street Side Salon are viewed attaching on lashes and eyebrows on different customers. The nature of these styles scream dancehall and are designed for women who subscribe to the social practices of dancehall. Admittedly, there are salons located in the upper echelons of Jamaica. However, the adornment services that these makeshift salons provide tend to be a bit too expensive for avid dancehall goers, and are more suitable for the club scenes, not dancehall

## Same Dance, Different Roles

In formulating a conceptual framework that will merge the informal economy with the financial liberation of women in Jamaican dancehall, there must be first an understanding that this is a complex and multifaceted informal system. According to Cooper, the dancehall event functions as a hub around which a number of economic activities revolve,<sup>247</sup> specifically in the actual space. The following distinctions have been mentioned by a few scholars in the assessment of the practice of heterosexuality in dancehall. Stolzoff<sup>248</sup> and Hope<sup>249</sup> recognize the earning possibilities, but considered their social and “economic trade-off” to be secondary to the fact that they “remain locked within boundaries of patriarchies”<sup>250</sup> within the dancehall—perhaps, more so in Jamaican. While the aforementioned theory is not without merit, I will present these groups in a disaggregated format with a focal point on how their role informs



earning opportunities. The following is an outline of the different types of roles that women play in dancehall. This will be done by looking at the vendor, the dancer, the dancehall queen and the diva. While there is an overlapping of women in different categories, there is normally a particular role that women identify with.

## Auxiliary: Vendors

The vendor is the other category of workers I have categorized in the auxiliary group. These women sell food, snacks, hot and cold beverages and cigarettes,<sup>251</sup> among other things. Vendors remain, more or less, invisible until you need their services. Vendors in the dancehall are normally women. They rarely participate in dancehall as patrons, but they know more about the complex relationships that exist within dancehall than the actual patrons. They are not overly concerned with fashion, status and the activities that take place in the dancehall—only if it will affect their sale. Regardless of dancehall's seemingly open décor, there is always a distinctive divide between the 'dance' and the vendors, which separates the two worlds—allowing a merger only when one is in need of the other. This fact remains true even though, by nature, dancehall tends to occur in the open street. If the session is being held inside a building, the vendors will set up shop along the entrance. In this context, the vendors are not just symbolically invisible but also quite literally so. The only time their presence is felt is upon leaving the dancehall space in order to utilize their services or when you are going home. In terms of the dancehall sessions that occur in the open streets, one physical marker of this divide is the vendor's stall—actually, the space that exists between the dance and the vendor's stall. The stall is the storefront, and is usually a structure that has been built onto a pushing cart. In true Jamaican fashion, the pushing cart is exclusively called by the shortened version of its name—the cart, or more accurately put in Jamaican vernacular, “cyawt” (cart).

The reason some higgler's stalls are located on a cyawt is that their store front is also their transportation. Similar to some dancehall patrons, vendors can also choose to attend multiple parties for the night. The only difference is that the vendor is following her “bread and butta,” or livelihood, while the others are following dancehall culture. Sometimes you will see her child sleeping in a makeshift bed on the base of the cyawt while she tends to her customers. Not all stalls are created as equal, though. Some stalls are built as permanent structures and these typically belong to vendors who live in the vicinity of the dancehall space. In this context, this location would be the residence of a very popular dancehall session that occurs weekly.<sup>252</sup> One

prime example would be the Whoppins Thursday, or one of my all-time favourites that is no longer in rotation, Bembe,<sup>253</sup> which use to be held on Constant Spring Road, Kingston. The nightly dances tend to get jaded very quickly and lose their luster. Therefore, the popular ones take place one night per week. Sometimes vendors who operate from a stationary post have additional employment or day time obligations like a family.

Most times, there is a male accompanying the female vendor, and most times that man is her partner. The male presence serves two purposes: to ward off potential robbers and to ward off potential suitors. The interesting aspect about this dynamic is the persistence of gender roles. The man can typically be seen sitting, monopolizing the sale of contrabands, drinking a beer, having a smoke or two, even rocking away to the music on the outskirts of the dance while the woman provides service to the customers. A lot of the time these men are Rastafarians, and this is perhaps connected to the fact that official employment is limited to this sect of society. Even though these individuals are normally rendered invisible (or “jus a likkle street venda” (Just a little street vendor), as was the case in the film *Dancehall Queen*<sup>254</sup>) due to the degrading stigma attached to their occupations, they are nonetheless important members of the dancehall community and rely on dancehall to make their living.<sup>255</sup>

## Dancers

Dancehall dancers are the women who create and popularize dancehall moves<sup>256</sup> and identifies themselves as a professional dancer. Most commonly, dance moves are created for women by women, and normally personifies female sexuality in their moves. Female body parts are emphasized, shaken, and jerked. Dancers frequently exhibit their own fashion code. Often, their outfits are chosen to complement their dancing while at the same time allowing them the freedom to move without restraints and without appearing deliberately reveal themselves in the process. This means shorts, batty riders, or leggings with tops that showcase their figures and also allow their dance moves to be perceived as clearly as possible. These include “belly skin blouses” (or crop tops in English translation), mesh, chiffon, see-through materials and even bras with laces, frills and sparkles.<sup>257</sup> They normally wear flat but fashionable shoes that will enable them to look good while dancing. This is why flat knee-high boots are so popular in the dancehall scene even though Jamaica’s tropical climate contradicts this practice.

Unlike the vendors, these women take center stage in the dancehall arena and are quite visible. They compete against other dance groups, showing off their new dance moves or

showing off who can execute the current dance moves the best. Dancers are normally mobilized in groups with crew names.<sup>258</sup> They sometimes match their clothing, and they are the ones who are usually seen in the most outrageously colored hair and hairstyles in order to make a statement. This is also a marker of status, and can prove “how dancehall you really are.” The dancers are available for “bookings,” meaning they can be hired out to a dancehall event for their professional skills and also because they normally come with a large group of followers. Dancers also generate money by putting on their own parties. Moreover, if a dance crew is heard to be in attendance at a party, the prospect of their presence will always attract a crowd. Other dance crews who want to take their status (particularly if this dance crew is popular and considered the best), or just because patrons know the party will be “tun up”<sup>259</sup> or vibrant because this group will be there. If an underdog dance group at a party beats a higher-ranking group at a party with low turnout, it won’t be beneficial for them because not enough people would have been there to endorse, co-sign and circulate their winnings. However, if the underdog group beats a higher-ranking group in a dance that is well attended, they will replace the old regime and become the new target for ambitious groups.

These principles are also applicable outside of the group dynamic on an individual basis. There are always individual dancers that prefer to remain professionally non-aligned. However, even those who claim “Me naa keep friends”<sup>260</sup> due to their lack of trust, are often associated with a set of girls. This is because transportation after hours is very expensive and so women pool together to charter the services of a private taxi service—normally one that they use on the regular. Most of these women do not own their own vehicle, and note that taking the public bus after hours, wearing the clothes they do outside of the dancehall context, may send inaccurate messages. Paying individually for a taxi to and from dancehall is also inconveniently overpriced,<sup>261</sup> and so dancers mobilize together to “through pardna,” a form of pool saving where one person receive the collected amount. These “pardna draws” are normally used for their children’s school supplies, family expenses<sup>262</sup> or to get ready for a “big dance.” These dancers are employed for commercials, music videos and even corporate events. Some dancers like Dancing Expressions, whose members are trained dancers from the nationally renowned Edna Manley school of Arts or Excelsior Community College, and some individual dancers like Mystic Davis, Lotanya Styles, Kimeko Versatile, and Dancehall Queen Latisha, have opened up dance studios where they teach women—normally of the higher echelons—how to dance

dancehall in a safe and private environment. Some of their patrons are even tourist who wants to engage and learn about dancehall culture. Some dancers have regular nine to five employments but identify Dancehall dancing as their professions. Some dancers or groups, if they achieve transnational reputation for their skills, will and have been booked for appearances in the Caribbean diasporic communities, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom. Female dancers are the ones who move on to compete in Dancehall Queen Competitions

#### Dancehall Queen/Divas.

All Dancehall queens are dancers but not all dancers are Dancehall queens. Some dancers move on to compete and win Dancehall Queen competitions which are judged based on the creativity of the costumes, how well the performers can dance and their ability to relate to and excite their audiences. These dancers are normally winners of their parish's Dancehall Queen Competitions and, just like beauty pageants, move on to the national competition. The national Dancehall Queen competition is, however, not just for Jamaicans. This competition is also comprised of the women who won their country's Dancehall Queen Competition. Therefore, the Jamaican Dancehall Queen completion is the "Holy Grail" of Dancehall Queen Competitions globally. This is where dancehall becomes an official bureaucracy. Each dancer typically receives sponsorship from a local or international organization. The winners of the competition are predominantly, but not exclusively, Jamaican, and there have been Jamaican Dancehall Queens who could not speak a word of English, or even patios for that matter. The title depends solely on how well one can personify and represent dancehall for a year.

Once the dancer becomes a Dancehall Queen, the principles of their fashion remain the same but are now of a higher degree because their assets and potential earnings have been upgraded with this new status. In Stanley-Niaah's interview with 1999 Dancehall Queen Stacey, the dancer makes the distinction between a queen and a diva. According to Stacey, a dancehall diva is the dancer everyone tries to be and is ahead of everyone in terms of technique and status.<sup>263</sup> Stacey also stated that she travels more than every other female dancer to overseas shows,<sup>264</sup> which is where she makes most of her income. The truth is, however, every woman who play a role in dancehall sees themselves as a 'diva.' Regardless of this distinction, fashion designers and hair stylists all want to work exclusively for the current Dancehall Queens. This is because through the dancehall queen's ability to popularize their brand and drive traffic to their

business,<sup>265</sup> their own potential earnings are likely to increase. They will probably be able to attract hard-core dancehall fans that subscribe to the hard-core dancehall persona. Additionally, these dancehall queens now have more accessibility to achieve social and economic mobility simply because the spotlight is on them. The potential for wealthy suitors and long-term business opportunities are also highly amplified. For all of these reasons, there is an overlap between dancehall dancers and dancehall queens because they have, more or less, the same origin, but they differ in terms of status and opportunity for mobility. Dancehall Queens and dancers are divas in their own right because each has their own sense of fashion

## Models

The dancehall divas and models are the women who are or were professional models. Their entire purpose in dancehall is fashion, fashion and more fashion. While everyone in the dancehall dances, the diva's purpose is fashion and image. Therefore, even when they do dance, it is never done in a manner that will compromise their image. Most times, depending on the event, while everyone else is dancing these women will play the roles of mannequins—standing there looking good. Models normally get the leading role in music videos, commercials and featured films. dancehall divas are normally women who have nine-to-five employment, sometimes in corporate Jamaica, but who simply love dancehall. Some are self-employed, young teachers or owners of small businesses like clothes store, hair store and beauticians.<sup>266</sup> Therefore, they always keep that in mind when they are in dancehall because while they are a part of that community they remain cognizant of their professional reputations. The more frequent participants of this group, however, are those already in the fashion industry.

The fact that they are either runway and or print (poster etc) models gives them access to runway-worthy fashion and the according designers. They are often used as living commercials for these fashion designers to showcase their versatility and creativity. These women also tend to be more inclined to infuse dancehall with avant-garde fashion, as opposed to strictly conservative dancehall apparel. Their hairstyles tend to be more tamed and polished because they are also a part of another industry. Most often they move in a pack, frequently of two or three members. The 'magla ['modeler']<sup>267</sup> is sometimes referred to as a “social butterfly,” which can have positive and negative implications. It is positive because, like popular dancers and dancehall queens, they normally have access to exclusive parties and receive V.I.P. treatment.

Unlike the dancers and the queens, however, they also have access to the corporate world in their respective locales. This is where the negative implications become applicable. Some models do not have nine-to-five employment and if they are dependent on “sugar daddies”<sup>268</sup> can be rotated whenever they fall out of good grace with their last ‘sponsor’s.’ Therefore, the concept of a social butterfly can be understood as someone who is always at socialite events or just as someone who is popular. Either way, there can be insinuations of sexual promiscuity that are not always explicit.

Admittedly, all of these categories can overlap. The choice of which category each woman falls into will be dependent on her preferences or ambitions. The only person that does not necessarily have a choice in this equation is the vendor, who is almost invisible in dancehall. Also, each category of women has its male counterpart. These categories are not exclusive to women. This paper has veered away from the male angle, however, due to its limited exposure to the male experience. There is one objection to be made regarding Stanley-Niaah’s interpolation of the dancer. While the dancers’ presence is “paramount” in dancehall, Stanley-Niaah’s interpretation of them as being “like gods” and those who do not dance as “lesser beings,”<sup>269</sup> cannot be supported by this paper. The fact of the matter is that the role each woman plays in dancehall should be seen as a complete piece of the mosaic with different sections coming together to form the whole.

## Persistence of Patriarchy

Even though, generically speaking, grassroots individuals are the most marginalized throughout Jamaica, within this sector, women’s experiences are by far the worst. Even within the marginalized community of Ocean View, women have the most limited access to income and capitalization opportunities for socio-economic mobility.<sup>270</sup> One example of this can be seen in the case of a former female group president (who was a member of the redevelopment initiative program for the Ocean View community), who recounted how she was pressured to become “friendly” with higher level party brokers in order to gain access to important information and job opportunities for her local area.<sup>271</sup> Another woman, who never joined a party association, used her acquaintance and intimacy with a party broker and a police officer to acquire favors that were crucial in securing and expanding her ganja trade business.<sup>272</sup> Even as higglers, women hold subordinate roles to men, who typically occupy management roles.<sup>273</sup> Moreover, these

women do most of the work while the men provide only lighter contributions. Men receive higher payments than women for performing the same level of work in the informal industry.

In most informal industries, women rely on kinship and family networks or do business with other women and abstained from politics—which they interpret as and identify as “polytricks.”<sup>274</sup> Women who engage in politics are recorded to have experienced higher frequencies of sexual harassment or are expected to perform sexual favors in order to progress. Despite the fact that women are normally placed in subordinate roles, women in church communities are able to hold positions of authority, they also receive respect from the community as a whole.<sup>275</sup> Even though Jamaica’s marginalized community as a whole experiences economic and political oppression, women are more at risk than men.

## Messages Through the Body

Higglers right across Jamaica face severe stigmatization. Claude-Brown recognizes that delusions of the term “sisterhood” should be avoided when engaging in feminist research.<sup>276</sup> Narratives about lower-class black women as systematically prevented from fulfilling their traditional roles of breadwinners due to the lack of employment and social mobility are written with underlying accusations about their vulgarity and indemnity.<sup>277</sup> The concept of the elites’ privacy is one power achieved through mechanisms and institutions,<sup>278</sup> such as strongly divided stratified living spaces. The elite and middle-class community “demand submission and compliance from street vendors,”<sup>279</sup> who travel from rural areas or inner cities to sell goods in the Constant Spring market—a space that belongs to the elite. The higgler’s very presence in a space that is not historically associated with them creates further conflict between the classes. In their search for economic mobility, higgler’s trespass into safety zones of the elite by selling in the spring market, where they are accused of defacing the aesthetics of the richer community.<sup>280</sup> In this context, not only are higgler’s black (and frequently, voluptuous) bodies and presence devalued, controlled and cursed by the elite (who are frequently light skinned and of European decent) but they are also subjected to “racialized” narratives that place them in inferior positions as outsiders.<sup>281</sup>

When people experience economic and political oppression, they normally call upon social agencies to respond to their conditions by using cultural expressions that reaffirm their presence and significance. Barake-Yusuf’s article showcases women in Jamaican dancehall

dismantling and redefining the meanings associated with their own bodies. Dancehall fashion stands in sharp contrast to the normative understandings of decency and contests the Eurocentric idea of beauty by adopting a more shocking and outrageous style of fashion.<sup>282</sup> The conception of beauty stands in complete juxtaposition to that of the elite, middle class and Rastafarians because these sects require women to be fully covered. In the case of Rastafarianism, they are also required to be completely desexualized and militant due to the ideological connections to Judeo-Christianity.<sup>283</sup>

Women in dancehall celebrate power over their own bodies and circumstances through fashion—unique, loud, nearly nude fashion—regardless of their lack of economic or political power.<sup>284</sup> According to Bakare-Yusuf, the voluptuous black female body came to embody upper-class anxiety over the moral status of the lower class.<sup>285</sup> These women, who are normally very fleshy, proudly wore tight revealing clothing and extremely visible make-up and jewelry.<sup>286</sup> Lower-class black women in particular are derided as vulgar because of their “protruding bell[ies], large dimpled buttocks and thighs squeezed into revealing batty-riders”, which marks these women as unproductive elements in society.<sup>287</sup> This image was considered especially lewd for elite and middle class groups who desired slender and sleek physiques and fashion. Insofar as it related to preconceived notions of the black female body, women in Jamaican dancehall threw heteronormativity out on its head.

The general understanding of the black body was that men are hyper sexualized and animalized while women are either the jezebel or the mammy.<sup>288</sup> While elite and middle class women in Jamaica pride themselves on slender physiques, clean and even light skin tones that need little to no make-up, women in dancehall demonstrate the opposite.<sup>289</sup> Although women in Jamaica generally admire light skin because it is associated with power and prestige, women who participate in dancehall pride their voluptuous physiques and celebrate their fertility and womanhood in overtly sexual dance moves and tight revealing clothing.<sup>290</sup> While some of these women are single mothers they are nonetheless young and confident; there is no distinction that accommodates the European understanding of the mammy and the whore because these women are neither. Moreover, dancehall, by its nature is threatened by socio-economic and political structures of power. The congregation of the lower classes in such magnitudes caused fear and anxiety for the minority, rich elites.<sup>291</sup> Fear was raised in elites and government officials because they thought wherever a multitude of black bodies mobilized there would be the threat of riot in



response to their systematic oppression. Even though those in power attempted to—and continue attempting to—control the medium of self-expression through censorship and banning laws, working-class entertainment continues to prevail and has even expanded its reach.

The practice of poor marginalized people using social agency to rebel against oppression should not be understood as being unique to Jamaica. In Trinidad and Tobago, class struggles were made clear though the conflict between European settlers and the creoles *Jamette* (the lowest sects of the society) after Trinidad's emancipation in 1838.<sup>292</sup> During enslavement, Europeans have masquerades balls where participants imitated the enslaved in mockery. By mimicking enslaved circumstances and wearing masks that exaggerated the African features, not only were Europeans finding humor in a socioeconomic structure where they enjoyed total power,<sup>293</sup> but also their hubris placed enslaved people at the butt of the joke.

After Trinidad's emancipation, in an environment where former slaves faced severe systematic marginalization, both structurally and judicially, the poor working-class creoles who worked in marginal or illegal sectors reversed societal roles during the *Dame Lorraine Mas* through *Piss-en-lit* performances and *Transvestitism*. Similar to European masquerades, they wore costumes and masks, but mimicked Europeans instead in their role-playing and gender-bending cross-dressing.<sup>294</sup> These sessions were made more grotesque to represent their past and present oppression, which commonly involved near nudity, bodily waste (*piss-en-it*) and “mockery of their masters”<sup>295</sup> during the Easter celebrations.

Working class black men dressed in costumes as gross women with symbols smudged on clothing to represent their menstrual cycles (*transvestism*), while *Jamette* women crossed dressed in ways that were overtly sexual.<sup>296</sup> These activities were done with the intent to agitate those in power. Through *Dame Lorraine Mass*, the poor working classes were able to carve out a space for themselves where they were visible—economically and politically—where they were both seen and heard. They needed to display power over their own bodies in a society where they were powerless.<sup>297</sup> They needed to have power, however temporary, over the European elites—through the reversal of societal roles. In modern Trinidad and Tobago, these carnivals are no longer grotesque.

Jamaican dancehall and Trinidad and Tobago's carnival threatened the socio-economic and political structure of power in the Caribbean through self-expression. In the mobilization for both carnival and dancehall, the lower class threatens the status quo. Their presence in such a

magnitude causes fear and anxiety for the minority, rich elites.<sup>298</sup> Fear was raised in elites and government officials because they thought wherever a multitude of black bodies mobilized there would be a threat of riot in response to their systematic oppression. Even though those in power attempted to—and continue to in the case of Jamaican dancehall—control the medium of self-expression through censorship and banning laws,<sup>299</sup> the working-class entertainment continues to prevail and has even expanded its reach. Trinidadian elites have, in the past, banned the carnival in an attempt to reclaim power, but this proved unsuccessful. Now it is a national cultural marker due to the working class's perseverance. Jamaican elites and government officials have tried to censor dancehall by using moral rhetoric but have not yet tried the legal route.

While marginalized people lack economic and political influence, they will continue to avoid oppression by utilizing the only place their power will always remain intact, and that is the social realm. Therefore, 'palancing' is not just 'palancing,' and 'wining is not just wining'; when marginalized people in the Caribbean participate in these forms of cultural expressions, they are wining out of oppression. These were the conditions under which Trinidad's carnival emerged: in response to the stringent socioeconomic and political stratification that existed, which placed Creole working class at a dispossession. While there have been many economic and political measures that were implemented by those in power in order to curtail and control the marginalized by attacking their cultural expressions (carnival and dancehall), marginalized people have always counteracted these measures through the social realm.

The beginning of this essay showcased an excerpt of Lady Saw's song *Condom* where she states her determination not to conform to the wishes of the state. Her refusal to "shut mi mout"<sup>300</sup> and remain invisible like the majority of the working-class population is seen in her critique of the government's nonchalant attitude toward creating opportunities of social, economic and political mobilization for the masses. Lady Saw's refusal to be contained is not unique. It is a consistent characteristic of the working-class population—even during enslavement.<sup>301</sup> Economic invisibility was addressed by the first versions of higglers, not only in Jamaica but also across the Caribbean region as a whole. According to Claude-Brown, Afro-Jamaican higglers are part of the larger trend throughout the Caribbean and developing world.<sup>302</sup> Unfortunately, higglers have been regarded as particularly deviant in Jamaican society. In an environment where they were neglected and lacking opportunities, these women have created an

informal industry for themselves that is tied directly to the formal sector<sup>303</sup>—which makes it safe to assume that the formal economy is benefiting from the women’s entrepreneurial spirit.<sup>304</sup>

Even though these women continuously experience forms of “subordination and oppression characterizing their position by taking into account the pervasive impact of racism,”<sup>305</sup> they are still able to provide their children with a better life than they had.<sup>306</sup> The same can be said for the informal economy that women in Jamaica have created for themselves. Since the informal economy and dancehall grew alongside each other during the severe political and class-based ideological conflict in Jamaica, it is surprising that the amalgamation of these two conditions was not approached intellectually as deserving interdisciplinary focus. The emergence of dancehall within the same time frame as the re-emergence of the ICIs provided buyers and sellers of manufactured goods that would facilitate the fashion needs of female dancers, queens and models.<sup>307</sup> The informal sector of dancehall economy that relies on particular skill sets, as seen in Anna Alissa’s Street Side Salon YouTube clip, is also essential to the creation of what Cooper calls “bum style,”<sup>308</sup> but what I prefer to call “Tun Up” style. As Cooper stated, “there are competing value systems in Jamaica today that need to be ruinously analyzed.”<sup>309</sup> This paper believes the informal economy in dancehall is one such system.

Another aim of this paper has been to highlight the fact that the concept of women in Jamaican dancehall is one of complexity. The hope is that, after reading this paper, critics who are apt to devalue and demoralize these women will see the inaccuracies in clumping these women into one category. In the context of the informal economy, these women are involved in the “multi-layered way in which the notion of development” is contested.<sup>310</sup> The “skills and services” these women provide, such as cooking, hairstyling, dress-making, dancing, and modeling are all established sources of income.<sup>311</sup> Just like Lady Saw, the more the system tries to contain them, the more resilient working-class women become in the fight against systematic marginalization and oppression. When speaking about women in Jamaican dancehall or if ever you are fortunate enough to engage with these women, remember these words from Lady Saw:

*Dem ha fi bun mi out  
Fi get mi out  
No matter wa dem try  
Mi naa lock mi mout  
Dem waan mi fi resign  
But it's not yet time*

*Mi gwy bother dem nerves  
And pressure them mind.<sup>312</sup>*

## Chapter Four

### Mapping Dancehall's Informal Economy Space: Black and White Edition

*Ah two monts now mi Claudia, an Marsha a plan, fi Black an White. Wi tink bout how wi aguh duh wi hair an wah kina design wi aguh gi Meleissa fi mek. Decemba ah one ah di bisyes mont fi dancehall an Meleissa aguh busy. Suh di tree ah wi buy wi material, gih it an wi design to Meleissa, an pay dung pan wi outfit from di second week inna di month. Dah way deh, wi dun know seh owa clothes already deh pan di top a di list and aguh ready fi Decemba 31. Black an White ova La Roose, Portmore naah miss wi dis year. 2005 ah Meleissa year. Har ting teck off pan a different level an ah bear star shi ah sew fah. Artists like Etana, Queen Ifrica, Spice, an Pamputtae—shi did just a bus out real big dem time deh. Meleissa did even stawt get a bag a contract wid magnum, an shi did all a werk wid Romeich Designs (dat aroun di time wen him did a design fi Rodney (Bount Killer) Price long before him branch out inna Romeich entertainment). Suh because wi know seh wi cud'n guh to Meleissa las minute like one time, wi mek sure put een wi awda long before suh wi wih get wi clothes wen wi ready. (See appendix 3 for translation)*

*Claudia an Marsha collek dem clothes from Meleissa from di miggie ah di week, buy dem hair a Sassy's, an shoes, purse an accessories suh dat dem nuh affi ah duh las minute shop'n. Claudia did ave locks dem time deh suh shi use to jus style har natral hair or pull it up inna one Mohawk extension. Mi cud'n pick up mi clothes wid dem. Mi did still a werk St. Catherine Credit Union an di Chrismus rush did heavy. Mi did haffi guh shop afta werk ah evenin time. Mi wuda jus guh HWT, Pavilion, Constant Spring Road, Constant Spring Mall or eve'n Cross Road fi fine sup'm weh mi like—mi neva guh dungtown cause mi nuh know dung deh like dat ah mi did fraid ah dung deh. Tamara, magla an video vixon weh inna di leopard print dress inna Shaggy Church Heathen music video,<sup>313</sup> did just cum from farrin an ave Remy Yaki hair ah sell fi JA \$12,000 (CAD \$235.00)<sup>314</sup> (Please see Currency Converter Chart: appendix 4). Mi did buy tree pack from har suh mi neva haffi worry bout dat. Dem time Brazilian an Peruvian air neva papila inna Jamaica like now. A Remy did a run tingz. One day, mi fine a silva strap-up aigh heel fi JA \$5000 (CAD \$98.00) an di day before di pawty, di Frideh, mi fine di silva purse inna Spanish Town HiLo fi JA \$3,800 (CAD\$74.00). Once mi get mi dress from Meleissa an duh mi*

*hair, mi wih ready. If ah did one regila weekly pawty mi wuda wear weh mi ave, but yuh haffi guh out inna full fowce fi Black an White.*

*Mi did get schedule fi werk di Satdeh shift di day ah di pawty from 9:30am to 1:30pm. As werk dun an mi check off, mi jump pan a bus from Portmore an head strait a Meleissa yawd fi guh siddung pan har an mek sure seh mi get mi dress—shi neva ave har shop yet. Wen mi reach a Meleissa yawd, mi hawt drop! Cyar pawk outta har gate an custama deh pan har varanda a wait pan dem clothes. “Lawd Geesas, Chrise! Mi nah leff yahsuh tonite?” mi tink to miself. As mi step pan di varanda an Meleissa sih mi shi jus greet mi wid, “Mona, yuh haffi guh wait, enuh! Cause yuh dress nuh ev’n cut yet.” God know, mi mout dry up like chalk di way how mi vex. Mi cud’n even seh a word. Mi jus guh inna di house an guh chill wid Nicole, Flames, and har sista, Simone an baby Brianna. Ah dem trell mi seh Meleissa back up because shi get a lass minute contract from Gary fi new Magnum uniform fi di Magnum promotional gerls dem. All mi cуда duh ah wait till shi ready fi mi. Mi cudn’t ev’n cuss. Mi, Claudia, Marsha an Meleissa ah good good fren. Shi ah neva jus mi designa. Plus, wen mi wah ah outfit an nuh ave enuff money shi wuda fix mi up, suh mi haffi gih an tek sumtime.*

*Claudia an Marsha tex mi bout 6:45pm ah tell mi dem hair dun duh an dem deh ah duh dem nails a Serita nail shop now. Is a good ting seh mi nails dem weh duh from weh Christmas still look good (ish) cause dem seh di salon stop tek hair and nail clients. Meleissa dun mi dress bout 8pm. Fi tell yuh di chute, mi not even get di dress weh mi design. Shi just bil a dress fi mi outta a piece a white stretchy lace material weh shi did ave in stock. Even dough mi neva get di dress weh mi did wah, di dress weh shi en up mek “bad like yawz.”<sup>315</sup> Shi mek a long flowy dress weh suck on pan mi hip dem wid di top half ave di same design like di swimsuit weh mi describe inna di My Location section. Wen mi look pan di time an traffic mi just head strait a mi yawd. Mi ave a few wig weh mi can choose from an mi did aready buy mi shoes an bag, suh mi good. All tings consida, mi outfit sell off. Plus, mi manage fi save sum money: Mi end up pay JA\$5000.00 fi di dress cause Meleissa gih mi a JA\$3500 discount cause mi wait so long an mi nah guh get fi duh mi air. Gih tanks fi small blessins.*

*Mi reach home bout 10pm. Mi try on mi outfit fi mommy. Di firs ting shi seh was, “den Mona, dah dress deh nuh see chru?” Mi laugh an seh, “yeah, but di material a thick lace; nat chiffon. Suh it naah guh really show up nut’n, mommy.” Shi seh it look nice but shi nuh*

*undastand “how di dress long dung to mi ankle but mi still naked.” Mi just laugh an tell har, “fashion ova style.” Mi decide fi get sum sleep before mi stawt get ready. Is just 10:30pm, suh it stil early. Mi cyah get bout tree howa sleep before mi guh dance. An all dough a bear clappas a bus up inna Dela, di man dem outside a run boat, play domino inna di lane, an a mek up woleheap a nize cause dem a celebrate di new year, mi aguh try get sum sleep before dah party yeah cause a daylight before it ago dun.*

*Bout 1:30am, Marsha tex me seh shi an Claudia ago stawt get ready and a taxi dem ago tek cause dem neva badda rent a cyar. Even dough it aguh tek longa fi dem reach La Roose dan mi cause Deal closa to Portmore dan Kingston, mi decide fi get up suh mi cyah get rid a mi sleepy face dat wen time cum fi put on mi make-up. By 2:30am mi ready an call a cab an tell Claudia an Marsha fi tell dem mi a leave out now. Wen mi guh outta di lane mout fi wait pan di cab, mi sih Michelle and Shelly ah di top a di avenue inna dress up inna dem Sunday bess and mi know she a Black and White dem a guh cause dem guh every year. Mi reach a La Roose bout 2:45, an di way how di cyar dem line up bumpa-to-bumba inna traffic, ah try fi get een, mi jus cum out an walk it.*

*Di taxi drive pan back road fi get to La Roose from Dela-vega. Back road dawkn an lonely an ah pan da strip a road yah di prostitute dem inna Spanish Town an Portmore mosly werk. inna Spanish town an Portmore. Mi know mi soon reach wen mi stawt ear music from ah distance. Di closa di taxi get di lowda di music get, too. Mi stawt get excited inna back ah di cyah di taxi pas wi drive inna dawknis. Di music get lowda an lowda and mi stawt fi sih di street light inna di distance. Closa an closa, bita an brita. At last, mi reach.*

*Di taxi cud’n let mi off close cause a di all ah di cyar dem weh line up ah try get inna La Roose. Bumpa to bumba, ah suh di cyar dem line off. Di taxi stop bout 200 meeta away from di entrance. Still kina inna likkle dawknis. Mi cum outta di cyar: dawknis behina mi, walkin towawds di light. Mi cum outta di cyar pan pan di leff hand side ah di road, pan di sowf sholda. Ah bear bush an abandon / unfinshin buidin deh da side deh, an La Roose deh an sum hotel deh pan di right. Dats why backroad always full wid prostitute, but tonite a cris cyar an people line off pan di street. Everybody cum out tonite: pawty gowa, stall ownna, jerk man, soup oman, bike, cyar an even dawg. Name bran cyar ah blas dem music like dem a compete wid di music from di pawty. Bike rida wid dem oman passenga an sum man pan di bike back a revv up dem engine*

*an a spin dem tya mek it a smoke up di road suh til a dawg kech him cowad an run guh hidin backa one stall. Mi a pass di line a cyar as mi walk towards La Roose pan di opposite side. Di line fi guh een long an luk miserable an mi nuh ready fi push mi way inna di line like hag an goat. As mi walk pass one cyar, two, cyar, tree car, four, mi stawt feel di excitement stawt grow as mi get closa to di big crowd.*

*Mi can sih, smell, an ear di dance. Di string a jerk pan weh line off pan di side ah di road. Di smoke weh a cum outta di top long spout ah di pan. Di smell ah di meat weh a jerk, lawd eh smell gud!! In all, is bout six jerk pan line off pan di two side a di road. Between dem yuh ave di lady dem weh a sell soup: one mite ave chicken foot soup, one vegetable or cawn soup, di odda wih ave beef soup, but ah nuh everybody h sell di same soup. Anada oman venda deh a sell roast fish wrap up inna aluminum file. Den yuh ave vendas line off pan each side a di road between di jerk man an soup oman, nuh real auda to di ting. Everybody just fine a spot an set up shop. Ev'n from far mi can smell di sess. As mi pass one stall a venda a call out askin: "Nice girl, yuh nuh wah sup'm fi buy?" Wen yuh pass anedda one a di same question. Mi ear a loud anawyin whitsle an wen mi look roun fi sih a wah a mek dah soun deh, mi sih ah peanut man a sell roas nuts from him handcyawt over pan La Roose side. As mi wanda "who aguh buy penuts fi smell up dem mout before dis big dance?" man dress inna white pants suit wid black inside shirt, black tie wid white pintid toe boot buy a pawcel of peanut weh wrap up inna ah cone shape brown paypah. "I guess a mi alone a tink dah way deh," mi tink to myself. Di road pave off smood, but di side walk rocky rocky an full a white mall. I sih one girl in front a mi black heels sink dung inna di white mall and cum up back scrape up. Mi feel miself a struggle likkle bit fi walk inna di new boot pan da bad sidewalk yah, suh mi decide fi watch mi step, an fine somweh stan up while mi wait pan Claudia and Marsha.*

*Mi pass di jerk stan up weh mi fren dem wih sih mi once dem drive up. It kina hawd cause di place pack to di brim. Di man dem look nice, yeah, but di gyal dem really represent tonight! A bear hot gyal deh yah; dem air, shoes, an clothes up deh. "Dem gyal deh neva get di memo?" mi tink to miself as mi sih a group a gerls dress up like she ah regila dance dem a guh among the crowd a people weh dress as elegant as one can inna a dance. Mi ketch myself ah tink maybe dem nuh have no money fi guh all out like sum ah wih, but all a wi aguh inna di same dance, ah ear di same music and dance to di same song dem. Mi end up stan up right a di edge*



*a di entrance fi di pawking lot, which is really ah open space weh everybody use fi pawk dem cyar. Beside mi is a oman sellin soup an nex to shi a jerk man. Mi notice a pattern: di oman venda dem ah sell soup while di man venda dem ah jerk. One Rasta man pass mi wid a big bouquet of ganja stalk a advatize fi sale, shouting: “High grade! High Grade!” An even dough yuh one an two police aroun, him nuh really seem fi care. Di smell a di jerk meat and cawn soup mek mi realize mi neva eat, ah bear rumble mi belly stawt rumble. Mi stop one lady weh a walk pass mi wid nicknacks (appendix 5) pan har head and inna har hand ah sell and get one Wrigley’s from har, but shi nuh ave nuh change fi a nanny (JA\$500). So mi just get a dalla fifty (JA\$150.00) an kill two bird wid one stone: get likkle soup suh mi nuh drop dung inna di dance lata inna di mawnin, and fi get di change suh dat mi cyah get di pack a gum. Mi cud’n even fine nuh weh fi siddung and drink di soup. Mi haffi stan up pan di road side wid people a pass pass and bunks up pan mi like dem wah mi drop soup pan mi good-up good-up dress an mi not even reach inna di dance yet.*

*“Oh Gyal! Ah Who look suh smekchy?”<sup>316</sup> bawl out Claudia from har taxi. Tank yuh Geesas, dem rem reach. “Mi fren dem look good nuh ....claat!” Mi shout back at dem once dem cum ouuta di cyar. Firs of all, mi nuh know how Claudia get alla har locks so flat dat shi cuda install a full house extension widout it look funny. Claudia ave on a long tight sheer black dress wid small shinny shiny flowas weh spread out scanty. One side ave a sleeve long dung to har wrist and di odda side nuh ave none. Di side wid di sleeve cut diagonally from har left sholda to har right hip ah di back an di front suh dat only di right side ah har chest and back cova up. Meleissa mek a bikini top outta di same material—odawise, Claudia right breast wud be out. A silva broach connek di back an front a di dress pan har leff hip, an a long front split flow from di broach dung har ankle. Shi match it wid a silva shinny heel weh ave one stop ova har toe an aneda strap likkle above har ankle weh guh chru a loop inna di back strap weh connect to the sole ah di shoes and heel. Shi pair it wid a silva an black clutch and french tips. Marsha look like a likkle dolly, an shi use to always dress dah way deh, to. Marsha ave on a shawt blond twenty-nine-piece hair weh cut cut show ah di side and curly ah di top. Shi pair it wid a long chandelier silva easring. Di top half a di dress meck outta black stretchy chiffon like material. Di neck pawt ave a broad, tick ban a di front weh mek it look like turkle neck and it tie inna one bow ah di back. One cylinda shape hole cut out from di bottom pawt ah di neck ban to bout di miggles ah har ches. Di sleeve end bout midway between har sholda an elbuh, an shape*

like a likkle pumpkin wid di same kina tick ban ah di end. Wen shi turn har back, di only ting yuh can see is di bow ah di back ah har neck, har nakid back, and di two dimple dem weh deh above har buttocks (Venusian dimples): di whole ah di back cut out. From front view, di top half a di dress weh mek outta di chiffon material guh dung to har hip weh connect to a roun, fluffy, shine pumpkin shape shawt skirt, but is a dress. Shi wear a silva clutch, black and silva mix-up bracelet, an black nails. Har shoes ah one black pintid pumps an she wear it wid ah silva anklet. Wen wi finish complement each adda, wi turn towawds La Roose entrance an mek up wi mind fi teck on di task ah getting in chu alla di crowd, gate security, paying patrons, man weh a beg “boss man” fi allow him fi cum een pan a discount or free. “If yuh cyah fine tousan dalla JA\$1000) fi cum een, tan a yuh yawd!” mi hear di voice inna mi head a say. But den, agan, annuh eveybady ave di money an everybody wah fuljoy demself.

Wi finally get een,. Evrybady an dem mada deh deh. Di artist dem out in full fowce an lock off a cawna wid dem antarage ah mek wat look like a protective circle round di table. Wen yuh look way ova di turn table it look like ah all a di selecta dem deh deh: ah Big Belly Sky Juice set, an him a play him “One More Night by Phill Collins,”<sup>317</sup> Tony Matterhorn, Fire Links an many more. Mi sih lucky British an him British crew mix up wid oman an man dancehall patrons. As yuh look pan demy uh tell dem a farina. Di danca dem roll out: mi sih Sample Six an fi him people, Shady Squad, Ding Dong an di Clavas, Sadiki, Keiva di dancing Diva, Mad Michelle, Dancehall Queen Latesha, an Mystic Davis. Mi even sih Tamara and sum other models. Mi sih a few pack a Japanese: man and oman. More whitie deh yah dan usual. Mi naah lie, La Roose pack. Anyways, wi walk until wi fine a nice spot fi stan up inna di crowd and gwan bill. Afta ah while, Nick from Nickfotoworks fine wi an teck wi picha, and keep it movin. Wi not ev’n badda worry bout di picha cause wi know wi wih see him ah Weddy Weddy one next time wen wih cyah pay fi di pic dem an colleck it. Marsha and me (duo name Mosha) decide fi guh a di bar fi buy sum drinks an wih cuda barely fine place fi walk. As wi shuffle chu di crowd towawds di bar mi sih Michelle and Shelly from Dela. Wi hail up each oda an keep it moving. Wi shuffle pass videoman scrappy ah video ova which pawt Lucky British an him fren den, an a mek sure him ketch everybody clothes from head to toe. Den wih pass videoman two Gran ah video inna di direction ah sum popila artist. Reaching di bar is one ting! Getting a chance fi owda is anada. Wi fight an push till wih reach a di front, place wid owda an head back to wi spot. Wen wi reach wi spot an ole a vibes.

Bout 4:30am or suh di dance stawt get hot. Ah bare man song a play an di man danca dem mek a dancing stage inna di miggles an ah duh di lates dance dem. Yu have one an two female dancas up deh wid dem a duh move fi move an naw miss a beat, but chu a man segment yuh can sih seh dem haffi mek dem presence known inna di miggles a di man dem. Dem currel di videoman and di spot light dem pan dem. Yuh ave one an two oada likkle pocket a danca a duh dem ting inna oda pawt a di dance, but mi cyah really sih a which crew a create so much excitement. Mi can only sih di one dem near mi. Wi deh deh ah wait pan di gyal chune. Mi glad bag bus wen Tony Matterhorn switch up di ting an stawt dash weh mawnn an stawt play Vybz Kartel Beyonce Wine<sup>318</sup> fi di gyal dem. Wi bruk out. Who did all prim an propah inna dem hot dress ben ova an a bruk outinna dem good up, good up dress. If yuh did deh deh an stan up an luk round is ah sea a oman back yuh wuda sih. Di camara man dem leff di man and an stawt feature di oman danca. Di oman danca dem stawt showcase dem talent an ah bus dem signicha move or a reveal ah new move weh dem create. Every gyal stawt dash out. Jamaican danca dem roll out. Japanese danca dem roll out. Mi ev'n suhprise wen mi sih sum ah di whitie dem role out an stawt bruk out cause dem did luk like dem cyah mash ants. Oman an man danca and pawty goers sawt dance togeda. Who naah get jump pan ah get fling dagga. Gal chune afta gyal chune, yuh can always count pan Tony Matterhorn fi represent fi di gyal dem weh wah dance to gyal chune (wen him naah chat out him segment). An di videoman dem was right dear fi ketch everytin. People a farrin aguh buy up dem video yah inna no time. Wi dance till sun stawt cum up. An wen di police dem cum inna dem unifwm an big gun bout 7:am, di selcta sawt play Assasin "Cyah Lack off Di Dance"<sup>319</sup> and everybody satwt sing di song lowd pan di top a dem chout afta di police. I guess dem can lock off di dance cause everybody stawt head to di gate.

Outside get busy. People ah chat an a laaf as dem a leave. Sum people stan up inside same way an ah chat an dance, just a way pan di firs wave ah people fi leave. Mi, Claudia an Masha stawt head to di gate. Di security dem fly open di two gate dem suh dat people can leave easia. Sum people a deh pan dem phone a call dem ride. Cyar a drive outta di pawkin lot. Bike a ride out. Sum girl ave dem shoes inna dem han an ah walk bearfoot casue dem boot a bun dem or dem foot just tiyad from di long standin. Peeple a buy food from di vendas dem. Di taxi dem pawk up outside now more dan earlia fi ketch di people dem who wah guh home. Claudia buy a piece a jerk chicken an di tree a wi share it. It did too early fi each one a wi eat one olla servin by wiself. Mi did stawt feel kina sick suh mi buy one Gina bear. Den wi tell each odda lata and

*di two a dem get a taxi goin to Town an mi get one to Dela. Wi really fuljoy wiself. Last night wen mi dida cum dance di road di dark. Now mi a leave a bright sun hot. As mi sidung inna di back ah di taxi, mi realize ah di frist mi foot a get likkle ress inna four howa. As mi mine drif weh, mi memba seh Meleissa did she shi did ago cum Black an White. A guess shi did too tiyad afta shi dun sow. "Poor, soul," mi tink to myself, but den again, shi muss mek a killin.*

This section presents the findings of the field research I conducted in Jamaica during the summer of 2014. Using interview material, this chapter will outline the ways in which women are able to earn from dancehall in direct and indirect ways. It will also highlight the different ways in which women make a living from dancehall to support themselves and their families—despite operating in a male dominated and heterosexual space. This chapter will showcase the diverse population that encompass women in Jamaican dancehall, and how through dancehall many have been able to make a living not only for themselves, but also for their families.

### Additional Resources

I have included two additional resources in conjunction with the recorded interviews. In 2015, I did a presentation on Women in Jamaican Dancehall's Informal Economy: Practices of Accommodation and Resistance, in my Black Feminist Thought course, which was taught by Prof. Kamari Clarke.<sup>320</sup> I hosted an open discussion with friend and designer, Meleissa Dunkley-Hamilton of MDiz Fashion. I asked her to speak on the relationship she has had with dancehall's informal economy and its implications. I recorded the discussion, and have decided to include it in this discussion section because in one sitting, Meleissa was able to express a major concept of my research: That women have experienced substantial economic and social mobility as a result of participating in Jamaican in dancehall's informal economy.

Another additional resource I have chosen to include is an interview that was lost along with my recording device in Montego Bay. Four interviews were lost when my recording device was lost/stolen. I ended up having to re-interview those who were willing and replace those who were not. I have decided to include a particular dancer's interview that I began to transcribe but remained unfinished. I have decided to include an unfinished transcript of our interview because her account of the difficulties she experienced trying to break into the industry is valuable. Her pseudonym is Excavated Voice.

## Findings

In total, I collected interviews with nineteen women. I completed my field work with fifteen saved recorded interviews because the first four were lost when my recording device was stolen or lost. What follows is material from fifteen interviews: five dancers, three models, and seven auxiliaries. The women ranged between twenty-five years old and fifty-nine. One woman was married, one was engaged, eight were single, two were in common law relationships, and two had visiting partners. Thirteen women were the main breadwinner for their families. Two women had four children, two had three, one had two and one on the way, two had two, three women had one child, and three had none. Of the fifteen women interviewed, four women were not mothers. I interviewed one designer, one higgler, one hairdresser, two nail technicians, two vendors, two Dancehall Queens, three dancers, and three models. While all of these women earn from participating in dancehall, five of them did not generate all their income directly from dancehall. These findings strongly support one of the main argument of this research: that women in Jamaican dancehall is not a monolithic category and is a lot more nuanced than has previously been argued. The empirical evidence in this research predominantly suggests that there is an informal economy that is women centered within the subculture of dancehall. Below, the women I interview will assist in the broadening of your understanding about what it means for them to be making a living and making a life in and from dancehall.

“To me, dancehall is colour. It’s my culture being mixed into people from overseas coming here and depositing their culture and adopting it into our own. So, to me, dancehall is like a mixed pot of everything-like a port. So, I can’t really describe it as a dance; it’s just colorful.”

One major phenomenon this research project revealed was the impact socialization had on the formation of some of these women’s career. When asked to “tell me a bit about dancehall,” each interviewee response reflected their relationship with dancehall and its informal economy. Not only is dancehall a place of cultural mixing for Nature Girl, but what I found really interested was her understanding of dancehall being a colourful “mixing pot” where it is not an exclusively Jamaican phenomenon. For her, it’s a multicultural experience where Jamaican dancehall acts like a “port” where both locals and international dancehall patrons receive and “deposits” cultural practices. Nature Girl’s nuanced understanding of dancehall

through cultural lens might be a result of her background Jamaican dance forms such as Zella<sup>321</sup> and Dinki Mini<sup>322</sup> as a child. It was not until her relocation from a rural Jamaica to Kingston that “I got introduced to dancehall, and popular dancehall places like Lime Light and Half-Way Tree Skate land,” which were once central dancehall hubs in Kingston metropolitan area that no longer exist. Like myself and Tattooed Goddess, Nature Girl’s relationship with dancehall’s informal economy started out as a model then she transitioned into a dancer. Since then, dancehall has been her main source of income for over thirteen years and has traveled extensively doing so. Nature Girl’s ability to read dancehall as a space that cultivates culture mixing as opposed to a being strictly Jamaican problematizes ideas of authentic Jamaican dancehall.

When asked how they got involved in their respective professions, the dancers and hair stylists I interviewed traced their origin to childhood memories. In Jamaica, dancing is a part of our socialization process which involves childhood ring games like Queen Elizabeth Dead Last Night,<sup>323</sup> and even learning traditional folk dances like Dinki Mini and Zella as was the case with Nature Girl. *Mi memeba avin dancin competition between children inna odda lane in Dela-Vega City wid winna avin bragging rites as di lane wid di bes danca dem in di community.*<sup>324</sup> Dancing is so deeply embedded too rooted the socialization process that remembering how and when you first started dancing is difficult. You just can (or you cannot). However, not many people end up earning a living from dancing, and even less doing so in the dancehall. Like dancing, we learn how to cornrow and braid each other’s hair while playing house as children, or as a part of our grooming practices. Apart from dancers, Summer was the only woman I interviewed who traced her skill to childhood memories stating she that “loved doing hair” as a child. As a hairstylist who works on the Street Side Salon in downtown, Kingston, Good Gyal admitted with much that “mi nuh ave no cerfitikit fi do it [hair], but mi brains good like dat,”<sup>325</sup> which is why she has had clients since she was a young teen. Particularly, dancers and hair stylist were the only one who traced their current profession to childhood memories and the process of socialization.

## Earning (Benefiting) from Dancehall?

### Economic Benefit

“Wah me do inn a dancehall? Sell. Sometimes me mek money, sometimes me no mek none.

Ques: A you a di breadwinner fi di yuh family, right?

Ans: Yeah, man. A me a di breadwinna. Mi fawda deh a England, enuh.

Ques: Wah role dancehall play inna yuh life?

Ans: It play a big role. Cyah right now, a mostly dancehall di ting deh...It send mi kids guh school. It pay mi rent. It... a nuff tings it duh fi mi. It all help mi wid mi madda[mother] more time...she is a sickly lady enuh. Suh mi help har out. It mek mi nuh hungry! A it mek mi play di independent role. Nobody cyah walk pan mi”

Tib Tib is a single mother with four children and a high school dropout. She sells a variety of goods including alcohol, chewing gum, condoms, cigarette, snacks and juices outside of dancehall parties. Her goods are in a stall that is permanently attached on the four wheels: a hand cart. She lives relatively close to the dance where I first met her, and she pushes her stall from her home to the party. This is the nears location where she sells, and this party occurs once a week. She pushes her cart to other dancehall parties, which are much more “furdah [further]” away. This might seem difficult to a lot of women, but when you are the “breadwinner” for your family with a “sick mother” the act of pushing the cart is not an “option” for her. Even though she doesn’t always make money, selling outside of dancehall parties “four nights every week” generates the income she needs to “send my kids to school, pay rent” and provide the independents she need in order to ensure “no one walk” on her. She has dreams of one day opening a wholesale and stop pushing cart, but as of right now she is happy for the opportunity to generate an income from dancehall.

“If dance nuh keep clothes no sell. Especially di kind a clothes weh mi sell if dance no keep clothes no sell and nobody nawh go cum buy dem. Di whole ting slow-up.”<sup>326</sup>

Goodie is a higgler who sells predominantly female dancehall “X-rated” clothes in Montego Bay, St. James. She is a prime example of a member of the auxiliary group



who does not earn directly from the dancehall space, but from the women who participate in it. While she does not earn from dancehall in the typical way—meaning being in the space and providing goods or service for sale—a major source of income is generated as a result of dancehall events. When asked how important dancehall is to her, her response was that if dancehall parties are not kept, her business will become “slow-up” because most of the clothes she sells target women who attend dancehall. Therefore, without dancehall events, the forty-odd year old higgler will have no buyers. Goodie has customers who buy clothing for dancehall event on a weekly basis, and will spend at least JA\$5000 (CAD \$52.08)<sup>327</sup> on each visit. Goodie said the regular female shoppers will buy “cheap n clean” (meaning an inexpensive and simple item of clothing) instead of the more pricier items. The female shopper who is buying for dancehall parties will search for the most unique pieces and will pay the price in order to stand out from the crowd at a party. Being a higgler is her only source of income with “dancehall girls” being her main customers. As the breadwinner in her family, women shopping for dancehall provides a frequent and substantial market base. Goodie observed that if dancehall parties are not held it would be like “a dead mi dead rite deh suh”<sup>328</sup> since no only dancehall girls will buy her products.

“Mi beg a di dance, like buy mi a drink an stuff like dat. Like, go to mi friend dem and seh, “buy mi a drink, nuh?” And dem buy mi, yuh sih mi? An wen dem buy mi di licka an mi feel nice, mi nuh stand up inna dance mek the people dem feel like wi nah work. Wi just start keep wiself move up antil wih sih scrappy come een now, and we get the whole ting togeda an stawt mash up the place.”<sup>329</sup>

Two dancers from Montego Bay earned a living from dancehall through a direct interaction with patrons. For Mad Ting, the way in which they “hustle” or earned a living in dancehall was by way of begging. When asked how she made money in dancehall, Mad Ting said she “hustle.” When I pressed for clarification she declared she “beg” to hustle money in dancehall. She would “beg” or ask her friends or people she knew was of means for money to buy alcohol. The thing is though when they ask someone to “buy me a drink,” it is customary for the person to honour that request by giving the money to the recipient so they can buy

themselves the drink –or not. When I asked if she considered what she did in dancehall as work, she said: “yes, ah dis ah mi werk! Ah dis mi duh an buy up mi furnicha ina mi house, tek care ah mi family, an put money inna mi bank book.”<sup>330</sup> She would start to “work” by dancing and “mash up di place”<sup>331 332</sup> which in Jamaican vernacular means exhibiting dance move or giving a performance that is pleasing to the audience. Each woman would have earned approximately fifty-five hundred dollars each night from dancehall by hustling. The weekly minimum wage in Jamaica is currently fifty-six hundred dollars. Mad Ting and Good Gyal hustle at parties from “Sunday to Sunday” because “a work mi a go”<sup>333</sup> and she is committed to this work schedule. While Mad Ting identified herself as a dancer who was crowned a parishioner Dancehall Queen over ten years ago, Good Gyal classified herself as a hustler, stating “mi go dancehall fi hustle”<sup>334</sup> despite having the reputation of a dancer.

In 2014 when I conducted this field research, I did not see a visible informal economy for dancehall dancers in Montego Bay. Unlike Kingston city, I did not experience dancehall workshops that were led by dancehall dancers, neither did I see a lot of Montego Bay dancers in music videos. Therefore, as observed by Original Diva, “dancehall is a business place where everybody trying to make money,” and since there are many ways to make money in dancehall hustling was the method employed by Mad Ting and Good Gyal—since they did not give dancehall workshops, or danced in music videos. As I am currently engaged in online research on dancehall dancer’s social media accounts, I am constantly viewing more and more Montego Bay dancers in social media posts that showcases a more active relationship with the earning opportunities in the dancehall both locally and internally. One theory for the reemergence of an active dancehall presence in Montego Bay could be associated with the establishing of a romantic relationship between the Montego Bay based male dancer by the name of Marvin (Di World Star Beast) and female dancer Nikeisha who is originally based in Kingston, but now lives in Montego Bay with her partner. Also, 2014 International Dancehall Queen, Tall Up and her crew have also been hypervisible on social media in clips of dancehall parties in that region and sharing videos of her dance workshops with what appears to be non-Jamaican students. I would have loved to have been able to interview other female dancers in Montego Bay to see how they are creating earning opportunities for themselves through dancehall—since I interviewed two female dancers from that region who worked together and hustle in similar ways. It would have

been useful to have the opportunity to interview other female dancers who hustled in different ways than both Mad Ting and Good Gyal.

## Social Capital

“It was just fun. We were just young and enjoying life and having fun. Doing modelling and dancing in videos was just fun. Nothing else to it.”

Income generation is not the only impetus for women to participate in the dancehall informal economy. Social capital is another viable resource that has the possibility to create access to resources that once was inaccessible; but what do I really mean by social capital? In an examination of social capital and how it impacts a person’s relationship with their environment, borrowing from Bourdieu, Oztok et al defines it as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249).<sup>335</sup> Oztock et al continue, social capital “refers to...social engagements among individuals and the norms of reciprocity that arise from such engagements (Putnam, 2001).<sup>336</sup> In the context of dancehall, the acquisition of social capital is directly predicated on their established networks, their popularity, and access to resources that now acts to open doors that were once shut. This or some variation of this concept might be what Hope referred to as “social power.”<sup>337</sup> For Tattooed Goddess, fashion shows and music videos were “just fun” for her and not for economic benefits but more so for the social capital/social power it afforded. She explained that at that time she was an accountant at a small firm and earning a sustainable income. As much as I knew her and thought she modeled in dancehall for economic reasons, I was surprised when she told me that it-modelling-- “only help me to prove myself more...and it helped my pride,” popularity, and self-confidence.

Tattooed Goddess prided herself for playing “leading roles “in music videos and reportedly received between “twenty-one to twenty-eight thousand Jamaican dollars” for dancing in music videos because she was not a “regular’ girl who was in a lot of music videos. Even though she danced in music videos she was a model, not a dancer. When deceased dancehall dancer and icon, Gerald “Bogle” Levy said: “everybody can dance but anuh everybody a danca,”<sup>338</sup> I imagine Tattooed Goddess and other people who can dance dancehall but do not do dance as a profession to fit in Bogle’s category. Tattooed Goddess valued popularity, fun, and the boost in confidence she experienced as a result of modeling in dancehall and occupying the

spotlight. Appearing in music videos and modeling T.V was valued more by her because of the markings of popularity, exposure and self-confidence it provided. Financial capital took second place. The power of social capital in dancehall should not be overlooked. An increase in popularity, building networks, and experiencing exposure are just as important of the act of earning money. In fact, the more popular you are the more likely it will be for you to be hired locally and internationally. This is why the video man plays such an important role in the dancehall. As stated by Nature Girl, the video man helps you to “get exposure and go overseas” because they are sold internationally and creat a demand for you by the persons who are watching the video. This is the reason why the cameraman/video man is so important to dancehall culture—especially in the case of dancers and models.

Every woman I interviewed agreed that the camera man is important. According to Black Barbie, a lot of the shows and workshops contract she receive overseas came to her as a result of the video man capturing “me performing at the events” and distributing it widely for a fee. However, with the rise of social media applications, particularly Facebook, Instagram, and Snapshot, dancers and models are no longer dependent on the videoman to capture their moves. They now have the ability to post what they want, when they want, and how many times they want on their accounts. These accounts also provide an easy way for a promoter (or prospect of hire) to get in touch with dancers/models. Names being mentioned in dancehall songs, video man capturing dancer’s dance moves, and making connections with people who they can collaborate with to improve their circumstances, are all methods that can lead to an improvement of life. Social capital is therefore a very important aspect of dancehall’s informal economy. It provides people from marginalized communities—via dancehall— with access to resources and networks they probably would not have had otherwise.

## Hierarchy and Earning Possibilities

### Gender Relations

“In everything you do you get fight. I use to work up di street (pointing up the street with her mouth), and a lady stop and ask how much I would charge to do hair? Mi tell har 2gran (JA\$2000.00) but I would do it for JA\$1800. By di time mi get up to talk to di women, one ah di stylist long time she up deh, wink to di woman an tell har mi nuh know nothing bout hair. Next ting, ah di woman siddung [it down] in front a har ah do har hair. But chu mi nuh use oil an powda

fi mek mi custama stay wid mi, mi nuh ave as much as dem.”

There is a power relation that exists between women in each of the following sections. These power relations can affect their earning capabilities. Summer is a mother of three, and works as a hair dresser on the streets of downtown, Kingston at the Street Side Salon. While she has clients from various backgrounds, she explains that a “big chunk” of her clients are dancehall girls. In the above quote, she explains that she has been getting a “fight” from the senior stylist. The most prevailing problem she experiences manifests itself in the power relations between herself and other women who have been working on the street years before her. She explains that some of these popular stylists have sabotaged her by telling prospective clients “mi nuh know nuttin bout hair,”<sup>339</sup> which means she does not know how to do hair, and then offering their services as a viable option (Summer spoke standard English until she began narrating how the woman stole her client.) Prospective clients frequently believe these women because Summer is the new stylist who is trying to establish herself and her skills (and might be the reason why she agreed to in interview with me because she is less suspicious of others). Summer even believes that these more established beauticians frequently use “oil and powdah”<sup>340</sup> to ensure they maintain their client base while simultaneously blocking clients from coming to her. She believes that because she is the most recent stylist to begin working on this street, the older more established stylists are actively trying to prevent women from becoming her customers. She admits that in everything you do you get a fight” so she just keeps positive and continues to promote herself.

There is also a system of hierarchy between models and dancers in dancehall. Ideas of morality can affect the ways some women earn in Jamaican dancehall informal economy. More frequently than not, models are made aware of auditions or possible castings through other models. Tattooed Goddess was fervently adamant about highlighting the fact that “some models was bitch...and you know its true, Mona [referring to me]” and will “sleep wid artists”<sup>341</sup> to ensure they secure a role in music videos. If models suspect other models of being a “bitch” they will withhold information from who they believe employ these persuasive tactics. Therefore, if a model is perceived to be immoral, she will be excluded from opportunities that are sheared between the general model community. Also, popular models are booked more frequently than the model who is yet to be established.

A similar practice applies with dancers. For Black Barbie, “dancin is wen yuh can really showcase yuh talent and skills, but...sum a dem [dancer] jus a put on a show like all suck off bokkle,”<sup>342</sup> which is a head movement that simulates or suggest the performance of oral sex. Black Barbie believes women who act that these women are “not dancing” and are not dancers. Black Barbie believes this is entertaining, but not necessarily dancing. Most of the dancers I interviewed and researched online who earn from dancehall and enjoy a certain level of notoriety by both male and female colleagues actually performed noticeable dance moves. Female dancers like DhQ Latesha, Mystic Davis, Latonya Styles, Kimiko Versatile, Dance X-Pressionz ladies, Renae Six-thirty, DhQ Sher, Headtop Anika, Keiva the Diva, DhQ Nikeisha, and Dancing Rebel are just a few female dancers who have been able to earn a living from dancehall and secure international contracts for dancehall related events. Based on my research, these women have predominantly been those who do not only perform “skin-out”<sup>343</sup> dance moves, but are also versed in male orientated dances and are able to create and teach these dance moves. Additionally, none of the dancers I interviewed shared concerns of tension between other dancers even if tensions do exist. Some women obviously work more frequently with a particular set of women more than they do others. Outside of the dancers’ aversion towards women who perform sexually suggestive body movements—specifically sucking on a bottle as if they are giving oral sex—in the dancehall, no mention of tension between female dancers were expressed. Dancehall dancing is sexually suggestive by nature. However, I genuinely found it interesting that the sucking of the bottle is the most rejected and critiqued dance move a female could perform, while lying on the ground while a male fly from the heavens and land on you only to begin simulating the act of sex is acceptable.

There is also a hierarchy at play here. The names I have mentioned above are but a few of the most popular and successful female dancers in Jamaica. Being popular is a form of social capital that might be just as valuable as monetary gain since the former can inherently produce the latter. At the beginning of her career, Black Barbie noted to that she had to be determined and force her way in among the male dancers to ensure she received video light from the video man so that the audience can:

“si mi too cause mi can duh di man move dem, too...mi a sell my career an sell my profession, too. Because mi ave da skill deh weh can teach dancing.

Ah nuh jus who a skin out, who deh pan dem head, and who a roll pan grung mek up dancehall, nooooo! Ah everybody.”<sup>344</sup>

As someone who was trying to make a name for herself in the dancehall community as a professional dancer, in order to “sell” her skill of being able to perform and “teach” diverse dance moves, not just female dance moves like dancing on your “head top” she had to compete with other dancing for the video light. Once they become established they no longer have to chase the video light. The video man begins to seek them out, and like Nature Girl, they might become selective, not wanting to jeopardize their “brand” by being easily accessible and becoming regular. One theory I have in the assessment of some of the extreme sexual performances that by women I have seen on YouTube or dancehall videos is that because they have yet to be established and want to attract the attention of the videographer in order to gain popularity they perform in extraordinarily sexual ways to attract the videographer. That way, they will begin to build a relationship with the videographer so that they no longer have to do the chasing because their performances will be desired and chased by the video man. In order to remain on top, someone has to be beneath. Dancers who are popular have to work on maintaining their status while the upcoming dancers is working hard at gaining status. There is always a tension as it relates to power relations between established female dancers and those aspiring to become established. So even if it is not spoken, the tension does and will continue to exist simply because of the premise through which the concept of hierarchy is predicated.

Objectively, dancehall audiences locally and internationally are able to decipher between a female dancer who is able to showcase technical dance moves from dancers who are known to be entertaining. Female dancers who are seen as entertaining, amusing, and not necessarily viewed as “professional”<sup>345</sup> or technical (much like dancer Logo Logo) tend to be relegated to earning directly from dancehall audiences through practices such as “money-pull”<sup>346</sup> and hustling—in the context of Mad Ting and Good Gyal. Dancers who are able to perform complicated dance maneuvers and who appear to be in control of the way they interact with their male counterparts and who do not treat their skill like a “patty-shop”<sup>347</sup> instead of a viable business are the ones who tend to be able to make a substantial income from dancehall. Even though I went into this research thinking I would stay away from the politics of respectability imposed on female dancers by exogenous actors, I learned that a lot of the power relations

between women who earn from dancehall are ground in morality, which has implications for their access to economic opportunities.

## Classism.

A few of the women also identified classism as an influential factor that affects the way they operate in the dancehall informal economy. In a group discussion, Black Barbie and Goodie expressed their grievances with how the coupling of classism and the idea of morality contribute to the devaluation of women in dancehall and how derogatively these women are perceived. As Black Barbie observes:

“Ah di end a di day, jus becauh mi wear a showt shawts yuh feel like mi nuh live no weh, or mi morals nuh ave no meaning, or mi nuh ave no weh a go. Maybe if yuh did sih mi pan di T.V. or if yuh did know seh mi ah Bill Gates a fren or di president know mi madda, you would a say: “Oh, but har showt shawts look good, man!” Mi wudn’t be a problem to yuh den because dem wah put yuh in a status. Dem wah class yuh. People like to judge because a yuh status.”<sup>348</sup>

By highlighting the role that “class” and “status” play in the way she is perceived, Black Barbie illustrates that she has the capacity to process and analyze the relationship between the fragile dimensions of wealth and perception. She observes the possibility of receiving support from people who currently criticize her for wearing revealing clothing if they knew she was friends with millionaire Bill Gates and the President of the United States because of their status. Pointing to this double standard, she is aware that the rejection of her revealing clothing and notions of morality that have been the base of her critiques are simply a matter of her economic class and status. Goodie also makes a similar observation where one of her regular customers was insulted by a “police officer” while shopping only to retract his statement after realizing she was a person of means. These women understand that classism plays a role in the way in which women in Jamaica and in the subculture, are treated. They understand that that “people like to judge” and “put yuh in class” they think you belong and that your class will determine whether your actions are acceptable or not.

“Di mayor, di mayor ah St. Mary, yuh know she right now dung ah fi him place him a seh dance can keep right back till mawnin as long as no violence.”

Another aspect of systemic oppression that is directly linked to classism is the Noise Act. In a group discussion, the phenomenon of the police shutting off dancehall, the then forty-year-old higgler, Goodie, suggested that the government should do what



the Mayor of St. Mary has done: to allow dance to continue until the “morning” without interruption from the police. She continues to share that the mayor offered this freeway to his constituents under the condition that there will be no “violence” and that people will clean up the venue after the event is over. While classism and systemic oppression are issues are not necessarily a gendered nuisance that affects women only, especially in the case of dancehall being forced to end by police, Goodies’ contribution is nonetheless significant. The more dancehall parties are left to operate freely the more opportunity those who earn from the informal industry will be able to make a living. The Noise Act and its implications will be addressed in the discussion section.

### Difficulties:

On the heels of a discussion on foreign relations in Jamaican dancehall, I will now unpack the difficulties female Japanese dancers has experienced several in her attempts to break into the industry. Her pseudonym is Tiny. These excerpts will not be presented in a sequential manner. While Tiny understands and speak Patois, she was finding it difficult to locate the words that would best convey her desired message at the time. Therefore, I will plug in the difficulties she experienced at the time in the order in which they appear in the transcript, then I will expand.

\*Ans: “in Japan almos all promotars ah man. I ask one promoter why he neva use female danca? He said he don’t know how to care female dancer.

\*Ques: “What’s the difference between Jamaican and Japanese promoter”

Ans: “Ummm, in Jamaica, promoter try to get mi”

\*Ques: “What do you mean “get you”? Sleep with you?

Ans: “I think so, sometimes.

\*Ans: “Mi stop guh pawty nuff. It expensive, too. Promota sumtimes charge foreigner, dem not chawge everbody.

\*Ques: “Is it hard to get pay when you work?”

Ans: “Me nuh tink so. Sometimes dey don’t want to pay. Just one-piece ah chicken an juice. I want pay, but I’m foreigna so party don’t want pay for foreigna. I donno”

\*Ques: “Because you are a foreigner?”

Ans: “No only foreigna Jamaican dancer, too.”

Here, Tiny’s responses show that she has experienced difficulties in both Japanese and Jamaican dancehall. Tiny got introduced to dancehall through a friend who wanted to go to a dancehall party, which is referred to as Reggae Dance ten years ago. Since then she has been in love with the “dance and culture.” She then began to “watch DVDs an go Japanese dancehall, and afta tree years, first time coming Jamaica” for a firsthand experience of the culture. And just dance. She eventually became a dancer in Japan. However, after realizing male dancers got booked for more job raggae dance jobs and asking a promoter why this was the case, she was told that “promoters don’t know how to treat women.” When she came to Jamaica to establish her dance career, she had the opposite experience with male relations where the “promota try get me” as in sleep with her instead of taking her and her career serious. She has had to be vigilant in the ways in which she negotiates both dancehall work space especially since she is a foreigna” (foreigner). The other difficulty she observes is the “promoters charging foreigners” an entrance fee for dancehall parties while not charging local. As a result, she had to stop going to parties every night because it got “too expensive” for her. The bookings Tiny has secured in Jamaica as a dancer was mostly done while at a “dance, dem [promoter] like mi dancing an book mi,” not being able to attend parties regularly do to the expense has proliferated the difficulties she experiences while trying to establish herself as a dancer in Jamaica. Getting pay for the jobs like music videos, “stage performance” is another issue. She expressed her frustration with getting “one piece a chicken and juice” for payment while she “want pay” for her services. When I asked if she thinks this happens because she is a foreigner she said, “not jus foreigna, Jamaican’s, too.” Her clarification is important.

While many established dancers are able to make a living from dancehall in various ways, those who are trying to break in the industry are frequently exposed to exploitative practices under the guise of gaining exposure. While on the set of one of my first music video, I was told that as an extra I wouldn’t get paid and that this being featured in this video would give me exposure and should be consider as self-promotion.

While this was my reality, other women who played leading roles like those celebrated by Tattooed Goddess were actually getting reasonable or substantial pay. While Tiny has secured overseas booking for dancehall events in places like China, Taiwa, Miami, Kingston, and Spanish Town, she maintains a resident dancer in Jamaican dancehall, only returning to Japan for a few months out of the year. When asked what could be done to improve the dancehall, she responded with “pay and more gyal chune”<sup>349</sup> in dancehall parties.

“How much pawty miuse to guh (she laughs before answering)? All nine pawty seven nite a week! Cause mi wih all guh tree ar four pawty ina one ah nite. Mi all guh pawty an nu have money fi cum owme, but mi know sey from mi reach mi wih get a ride owme. Yow, all police mi bum ride wid fi cum owme from dance. A nuff night mi leff mi yawd widout money, but mi know mi haffi guh out deh an get mi name out deer.... peeplesih yuh pan TV ar stage show ao wadeva, but dem nuh sih wen yuh did a bakkle fi mek yuh name inna dancehall. Dem neva sih wen yuh shoes dem ah mash up from all ah di dancing an how yuh dance till yuh chest plate feel like it ago drop out. Dem look pan yuh inna di glits and glam, but dem nuh know how yuh struggle fi reach weh yuh deh.”

The above is an excerpt from the pseudonym Excavated Voice. Her interview was one of the most revealing and uncensored interviews that expressed how difficult it was to get in and maintain a presence in dancehall. Excavated Voice made an effort to go out every night, multiple parties per night. She shared that she would leave her house to go to party “without money,” knowing once she is there she could “get a ride home” from someone at the party. Excavated Voice confessed that it was “nuff” (a lot of) nights that she would leave the house with no guaranteed way of returning home because she needed to get her name out there in the public. She even remembers one incident where a “police car” drove her home after they saw her walking along in on the road after a dance; why? She had no money to get home. As she analyses the irony of people looking at on the “TV or stage show” and look at where she is in her career now without knowing about all the “struggles” she endured while in order to make it in dancehall. People don’t know about when her “shoes” were being “mash up” (destroyed) as a result of all the wear and tear of dancing. All this rich data/evidence of the effort, work, and dedication to

achieving her goal to establish herself as a legitimate dancer in dance hall that came from asking the question, “how many nights per week she attends parties.

I conducted the interview with Excavated Voice the day before I took the bus with them to Montego Bay. Excavated Voice was on her way to her European Tour with her manager. and I was about to start my field research in the Montego bay leg. The interview was actually conducted after a dance class she taught at one of the popular dancehall studios in Kingston. After our interview, she smoked a joint, drank some water, and went back in the studio to go through the kind of dances the European audience would most likely want to learn with two other female dancer who previously went on their European tour. I got there about mid-day on the day of the interview. I called the taxi to go home about 9:30.pm. After being invited to partake in a dance workshop, I was spent when I got home. I took a bath, started to transcribe the interviews I conducted during the day. I ended up transcribing a portion of Excavated Voice’s interview before I had to start getting ready to go to Weddy Weddy Wednesday party. The next morning, I was on my way to Montego Bay, where my recording device was lost/stolen. I am happy I was able to transcribe as much as I was able to the night before.

“I am a dancehall dancer who lives outside of Kingston, which is [omit]...so six miles out of Kingston. And I dance very late at night. I am half naked half the times and gyrating...its just a rough thing, so you just haffi keep safe.

Interviewer:

Like in terms of sexual predators and...

Ans:

I mean, yeah. And just being open to the fact that you are putting yourself at risk to that s well. I mean because that’s what you are opening up yourself to as well. I mean, you can’t stand on the hooker corner and complain when someone calls you a whore, I mean... You don’t really expect someone to be like, “Hey nurse.” So, it just understanding the environment I was putting myself in and just keep safe, is the best way I can describe it.”

One of Nature Girl’s biggest concerns regarding the risk factor is her safety. She does not have a car, and she lives outside of Kingston. Most of the parties are held in Kingston and she takes public transportation. Understanding that she dresses “half naked half the times” and attends dance “very late at night,” she is aware of the” that involves commuting back and forth as a lone woman. In order to get to the dancehall, sh gets

ready and then leave her house to catch a taxi. Understanding that her revealing clothing might give the wrong impression if she “stands at the hooker corner” she remains aware of her surroundings and that her actions might be “putting [her]self at risk” of sexual predators. Nature Girl know she is involved in a” rough ting,” which is dancehall. maintain her presences in the must she but knows that she must also go to work—dancehall—and make her presences fee felt. Understanding her environment and keeping safe is the best resolution she can find to this problem.

## Fashion

Fashion is a very important aspect of dancehall; however, the type of fashion and how much you are willing to spend depends on the role you play in dancehall. Dancers tend to, but not exclusively, have signature looks. For instance, Dancehall Queen Latesha is known for always wearing a belt, even multiple belts in the past (appendix 6) while dancer Latonya Style’s signature look is having colourful braids done in a variety of styles and colourful and clothing (appendix 7). The original is an essential component of dancehall dancers. It is one of the ways they set themselves apart in dancehall. For Mad Ting, her style of fashion is primarily composed of being “original and do mi own ting”<sup>350</sup> when comes to fashion. She prefers to create her own style by “cutting-up” and applying “spray paint” to garments rather than conforming to popular fashion trends. Nature Girl prefers comfort over style and because she “love to wine” she will wear a “tube top and a likkle panty and probably a big chain” that will make her dance moves more visible. She also prefers flat shoes when at a street dance and reserves high “heels fi di club”<sup>351</sup> as it is “not cute” when women are unable to maintain control or “manage” themselves in heels while dancing.

Well, dancehall in Jamaica right now in 2014 has changed a lot from when I was younga girl. Dancehall has become like a business place. Everybody is trying to make money inside of dancehall right now. So, you can classify it as just another business where artist do their thing, the person keeping the party would do their thing, the designer would do their thing, and the ladies would do their thing. Everybody would be doing their thing.”

Original Diva instantly made the connection between dancehall culture and the informal economy. <sup>352</sup>Original Diva understands dancehall as “just another business” where people can make money. The then fifty-year-old designer noted that she was involved in dancehall in

“stages,” which began at about the age of sixteen years old. She transitioned from being a “regular” attendee of the “cawna dance”<sup>353</sup> in the 1980s to “hustling” by sewing for people—mainly women—in the dance. At nineteen years old, Original Diva was sewing female dancehall clothing “even before I could sew good” and that was how she became independent. Over the years, she has organized “parties to make some money” from dancehall. She has even worked with the OUCH Crew,<sup>354</sup> one of the first notable female dancehall groups that personified the elements of fashion and dance in the dancehall culture. She shared that working with such an iconic dancehall group like OUCH gave her the publicity she needed to have a career as a dancehall designer, and later as a designer. At one point, she even had international clients as a result of dancehall party videos being sold globally. Original Diva now has a wide range of clientele from places such as church, school uniform and even swim wear. She admits that women in dancehall were her first client base and this is where her career as a designer started

## Original Diva’s Price List

Original Diva tallied up the cost of outfit for a big dance. The most affordable price outfit she offers is what she called the “draw and chap out.” This roughly cost about JA\$2500-\$3500). This is a simple design that only requires her [draw[ing]] out the pattern, chap (cut) it out and sew into a finished product. This, she says, is a very “basic” and the most affordable outfit. However, for something intricate where you have to “get like accessories and beads and all ah di <sup>355</sup>shIbang,” the starting price for those stand at a mighty JA\$15,000. She explained that the reason why the prices differ base on the design is because the design informs the cost of labour, material, and accessories. She also added that the type of design is also conditional. A basic outfit will be appropriate for a everyday weekly dance. However, for a major party like Black and White, that would require an outfit costing JA\$15,000 and up. While Original Diva no longer has an exclusive dancehall audience, she does admit to experiencing a noticeable increase in project during major dancehall events.

## Street Side Ah Mi Base

“ for every Friday, every Friday weekend dance, you know dat not no big dance, a girl will come fi a likkle dumpling with baby hair and eyelash. A dumpling is like a five bill. But if is a big dance now, like Red Carpet and dem ting deh, I wulda charge a two or a three grand [JA\$2000 or JA\$3000]. If a customer come an say they don’t have it, i would even charge JA\$1500 or JA\$1800.... Member, wi not paying rent nor nothing... So anything wi get w just work with it. I also do eyelash fi JA\$500.”

Summer specializes in doing hair at the street side salon. When I asked Summer what her prices she charged for her work, she also had a varied list. If the client is just coming for a weekend dance hair style, then she would do a “dumplin with baby hair” for JA\$500. A dumpling hair style is basically a hair pulled in a high or low ponytail with an exaggerated bun made with extension. That is normally paired with the installment of eye lash extensions, which also cost the same price. This is a “simple beat [hairdo],” according to Summer. However, if this is a “big dance” like a “Read Carpet” event, then the price range will differ. For the installment of lace front wigs, the cost can range between JA\$2000-JA\$3000. If the clients do not have the asking price, these street stylists are willing to drop the price since they do not pay rent nor have substantial overhead cost. This is why many women prefer to go downtown because they can negotiate the price of a hairdo, which is a practice that is rejected by salons in Half-Way Tree and other central areas in the Greater Kingston Area. Summer is a mother of three, and while she has a common law “boyfriend” who also runs a grocery shop, the family is able to “survive” as a result of her hairstylist job. She also shared that this “business is almost seasonal.” When it is holidays and “a lot of parties” are keeping, she “make more money” from the “dancehall girls” who are preparing for events.

“Alright, now. Like fi French nails, mi charge \$1500 up.

Ques:

Why? Because its more classy or sophisticated?

Ans:

An it tak up too much time JA\$ 1500 up. Normally, me no really watch di price, If you come with JA\$1300 and say you want your nails fi do we will talk to you but me nah say we not going to do it. Me nah say we ago put on long nails but we will work with you.

Manicurists are also essential actors in the business of creating that perfect image in dancehall. I decided to give the woman I interviewed the pseudonym: Christian. During transcribing her interview, I realized how many times she had said the words, “I’m a Christian now” (ten times) because she had recently baptized and was excited about her new journey. While the mother of two (and one on the way) did not provide the full pedicure treatment, she did however provide the service of installing artificial nails on both fingers and toes. Like Summer, Christian also reported to see an increase in sales during holidays. She has a lot of clients from various background, and dancehall women are a major source of income for her as

well. To install a regular pattern tips cost about JA\$1200. For “French nails,” Christian charges JA\$1500, “but if you come wid JA\$1300., she will do it. Christian also shared the fact that she was arrested and charged by the police “three times you and [had to] go a court” and had to go to court because I was doing nails on the street side. Like Summer, she too works and the Street Side salon and can provide her clients with discounts easier than someone who has a salon can and will.

These women are prime examples of women who do not earn directly from dancehall, but instead earn indirectly from the women who attend the dancehall. None of these women takes day offs. And of these auxiliary workers, two are the main bread winner for their family.

## Travelling for Work

There are various ways that female entrepreneurs can generate income from dancehall’s informal economy. Some travel locally while others travel both locally and internationally. Mama P is a well-known street vendor who specializes in soup sales, but not exclusively. She has a portable stove, stand, and a huge cooking pot that my mother and many older Jamaicans would refer to as a bellagut pot (appendix 8). She places the pot on the portable stand and cooks soup outside of dancehall events. However, Mama P did not start out selling soup in dancehall. Neither did she only operate in Kingston. Mama P reminisces of times gone by where she would:

“...leave Town, jump pan ah bus, an start sell box donut. Guh Mobay, guh a Ochos, anyweh ah at all tings a keep. Mi guh “A St. Mary Mi Come From” guh sell, and wen mi tings done mi nuh badda guh home, mi jus buy tings inna dat area ah guh sell a dancehall still. A just dat mi continue goin until wen mi guh back a foreign. Wen mi cum back home mi stawt di sellin again.”<sup>356</sup>

Here, Mama P shares how she first began to earn from dancehall. She would follow the high-profile dancehall parties and sell her products: water, juice, donuts, snacks, sweets, gum, cigarettes, etc. The event Mama P mentioned by the name of “A St. Mary Mi Come From” is a stage show that is organized by reggae artist Capleton annually. She would take the bus from Kingston to St. Mary and start selling her goods on the bus to fellow passengers. She would find a wholesale store and restock her goods to sell at the event. Mama P would not go straight home after the event has ended. She would restock again and stop at dancehall parties on her route home. She would continue the cycle of restocking and selling until she returned to Kingston—essentially, selling her



way home. She stated that she would not “sih mi yawd fi all ah week cause mi deh pan di road a sell.”<sup>357</sup> Mama P was able to finance her two daughters (who are now adults) education selling in dancehall parties. With pride gleaming from her eyes paired with a bright smile, she tells me one of her daughter is an accountant at a “big company” and doing very well while the other daughter has migrated. Mama P’s husband drives the van carrying the equipment and goods they sell at dance and stayed with her during the night, but she identified herself as the main breadwinner.

Mama P no longer travels locally to sell in dancehall due to a motor vehicle accident that has affected her mobility. Before the accident, Mama P used to travel to “foreign” where she engaged in ICI industry: buy internationally and sell locally. While she did not buy and sell dancehall products to a dancehall audience, the funds she used to invest in ICI project was generated from vending in the dancehall. After being injured, Mama P began to specialize in selling soup and other items outside dancehall parties, and she only sold at popular weekly parties in Kingston. For the last ten years for three or four nights out of the week she has been a soup lady, among many, in dancehall.

Below is an excerpt of an interview with Empress (psudonym). The unpacking of this interview and what we can learn about women in Jamaican dancehall travelling for work could have been easily positioned in the analysis on social capital section above because of the way this woman leverages her social power<sup>358</sup> and its implications. It could have also been placed in an upcoming section treating women who earn from dancehall in multiple ways—since she also organized dancehall parties. In part, her success in the dancehall informal economy can be credited to her social capital in the dancehall—which she activley and deliberatley created in an attempt to acheive the result. However, because not many dancehall fashion model are the opportunity to secure modeling jobs overseas, I felt the need to frame this model’s experience through the lens of a woman in Jamaica dancehall who has also traveled overseas to work at dancehall events.

Ques: Have you ever traveled for dancehall related work?

Ans: “I’ve been to like Negril, Montego Bay, you name it. The fourteen parishes, I’ve been there to do runway show and promotion. As for leaving the country for work, I went to New York to do shows... I had like three agents at

one point... and I use to keep my annual birthday party...more like ah annual summer party kin. It was more of a annual summer thing. End of summer thing.

Ques: Does it pay to have your own sessions?

Ans: To be honest, you can break even. Put it that way. Some people can make a lot of money but you have to spend a lot of money to make money. And for me, it was more of a breaking even than making money. [By the end,]everybody knows your name. So its more of a promotion than anything else. So, I got overseas seas shows cause I had three agents working with for me at the time and everyone knew me.”

Models tend to be seen as a ‘dime a dozen.’ Globally, there is an overwhelming number of aspiring model than there are actual modeling jobs. In the context of dancehall, unlike dancers, models do not necessarily offer a desired skillset that would intregue people to pay a fee to learn. Neither are dancehall models scouted the ways models at Plus International and Saint. Internationals are. Therefore, it is very unlikely for a dancehall “fashion model”<sup>359</sup> from Jamaica to land a contract for a fashion show overseas. Well Empress did. She is the only dancehall model I know of—who earned an income predominantly from dancehall—to have done so. While she has traveled the “fourteen parishes” in Jamaica for either fashion shows or product pomotions, she alsotraveled to “New York” for a job as a result of he role she played in dancehall. Empress was able to secure modelling contacts in New York because she had three agents and popularity in the dancehall. She reported to have had “three agents at one point” and hosted annual birthday/summer parties as a way to ensure her popularity is increased and sustaned. While Empress shares that “breaking even” and not expeiriencing a loss as a result of hosting these annual dances was more a concern of hers than actually making a profit. However, I am awre of models who earned from the dancehall who also secured contracts for modelling jobs once they were overseas, and the job was not necessarily dancehall related.

Ques: Can you name a few:

Ans: Japan, dat was ma best shows. Europe, England, Canada, Costa Rica, Antigua

Ques: What is the most recent one:

Ans: Well, di most recent one would be the European tour where I was in: Paris, Sweden, Finland, and I was also in Italy.

Ques: Do you think that without being involved in dancehall you would still have these opportunities?

Ans: No, definitely not. I didn’t think I would be. Growing up as a child in school an everybody gone fi di summer, and wen you cum back to school dem ask yuh

where yuh guh and I was like, OK: Mi go supermarket, mi guh town wid mommy. I haven't been anywhere. So, to be honest, I kinda neva nvea really even tink, yuh know? My family is not really rich, but wi not really poor...Being dat me find dat loophole here inna entertainment, and I am a great dancer and I love what I do, so me jus tek advantage a it and ju mek it happen. It's taken me places and I love it."

There are several ways women can benefit from dancehall's informal economy. Black Barbie is one of the many crowned International Dancehall Queen. All her income is generated from dancehall, dancehall related events, and or income contracts earned as a result of her role in dancehall. She recalls earning her "first dalla fi dancin" for an audience at an early age. Her introduction to the dancehall informal economy came in the form of a model with local model agency. However, after winning the dancehall competition she became a "professional dancer" and has been earning from dancehall for over the last ten years. Black Barbie has had to figure out ways to earn in dancehall by taking on roles such as dance instructor, choreographer, entertainer, and performer. Becoming dancehall Queen and establishing herself as a dancer has enabled her to travel to places like "Japan, Europe, England, Canada, Costa Rica, Antigua" to teach dancehall workshops and for dancehall related events. In a moment of nostalgia, she recalls moments in her childhood when her peers bragged about spending summer holidays abroad while she was only able to travel "to town wid [with] mommy" knowing she didn't have the same level of mobility. Now, she finds humour in the fact that she travels extensively as a result of this "loophole" she found within dancehall. Black Barbie has been able to earn a living from dancehall and has experienced an increase in accessibility to resources that has helped to improve her life. She openly admits she would not have had these opportunity had it not been for dancehall. When asked if she considered what she do in dancehall to be work, she unhesitantly responded with: "Well, I am a professional dancer. This is what I do. This is my job!" with a noticeable difference in her tone and language choice. While Black Barbie earns from dancehall in many ways, she does so under the legitabate banner of an Internationall Dancehall Queen.

Being able to travel to the Global North holds great significance in the Caribbean; not just in Jamaica, or the dancehall. In Carla Freeman's book,<sup>360</sup> she examines the "transnational experience of women in Barbados working in a data processing center."<sup>361</sup> One of the main issues Freeman takes up in this work is transnationalization, and its relationship these women have with

the “globeconomy” and their self making practices.<sup>362</sup> The abundance of high heels, brightly “coloured poulazzo skirt suites and latest of styles of weaves in fashion and jewelry”<sup>363</sup> in the office is not only a sign of the lack of male presence. Freeman suggests that transnational companies’ awareness of the “natural source of low wage workers” that exist in the Global South<sup>364</sup> create a fertile place for their growth and the reason for the office’s demographic. Even though these women are “paid low wages,”<sup>365</sup> they enjoy being able to “travel,” to gain “exposure to difference and experience once imagined only for the privilege”<sup>366</sup> but now accessible to them. For them, this is a marker of the shift from traditional island reality to one of modernity. The “pride” these women feel in working for a foreign company, being able to travel<sup>367</sup> only to go shopping elicits the feeling of the modern woman. Similarly, women who earn from Jamaican dancehall’s ability to travel overseas and shop (frequently while on tour) also signals the presence of a privilege some did not have access to before. In this case, Freeman suggest that “transnationalization of growth closely ties production and technology to consumption and image making” in these women’s lives.<sup>368</sup>

Some women might just want to experience dancehall’s subculture by attending parties and being in the crowd. Other women might very well want to participate it. You might be able to go to a popular dancehall party that occurs on a weekly basis and find a diverse racial and national make up in the crowd. Frequently, you will find white and Japanese women in the dancehall. However, Japanese women have been actively participating in Jamaican dancehall for some time now at a significantly larger number than European women. One noteworthy Japanese female dancer was the unlikely 2002 Dancehall Queen Junko<sup>369</sup> (appendix 9) from Japan. During her set on stage, the dancer executed dance moves that were popular during that time like 'Log On', 'Zip it Up', 'Angel Dance', 'On Line', 'Screechy', and 'Drive By'<sup>370</sup> with style and ease. Since then, Japanese female dancers such as Kiss Kiss, Hot Manami and many more have established themselves as members of the dancehall community. Many of the women live in Jamaica for lengthy periods of time so they can become established as members of the dancehall community, and be distinguished from the category of a tourist. Over the years, Japanese dancers has managed to cement themselves as legitimate members of the dancehall community. A group of them can even be seen in female dancehall artist, McKay Diamond’s, Dye Dye music video.<sup>371</sup>

Women also travel from overseas to Jamaica for dancehall. Frequently, when you see a recording of dancer's overseas workshop on social media, the tutorials are predominantly populated by non-black students. While dancers might prefer to travel internally on a workshop tour, students also travel to Jamaica to participate in and learn dancehall. During my field work, I learned that most of the women who attend dancehall workshops in Jamaica are not necessarily Jamaicans. I was allowed to participate in two workshops that were hosted by Latonya Styles of Dance J.A. and Dance X-pressions studios. I also observed one taught by Dancehall Queen Latesha. All three workshops were predominantly attended by European and Japanese women. I noticed a group of four European women who sounded like they were from Eastern Europe at Dance JA and Dance X-pressions workshops. In two days, two different dance studios were able to earn from the same group of women. I sat in on Dancehall Queen Latesha's tutorial, all her students were Japanese women.

Dancehall dancers also generate income by giving foreigners (mostly women) dancehall workshops. A quick search through any popular female dancehall dancer's various social media accounts, who also teach dancehall tutorials, will show mostly non-Jamaican students in these workshops. Though I do not know for sure, it is my belief that while dancers welcome and accept everyone in their workshop, there is a possibility that international students might be appreciated in a different way than a local because of their (greater) ability to pay the asking price. This theory is grounded in my lived experience in Jamaica as a Jamaican where it is almost a given for natives to try and get the lowest price for service and or product they are buying. Colloquially, we refer to this as "bawlin down di price," others would refer to this as negotiating. While this is a customary purchasing practice for Jamaicans, I assume it would be less likely for a foreigner to "bawl down di price" for a dancer's workshop. Foreigners might also be more able and willing to pay for a lesson in dancehall dancing than a Jamaican. My tenets expressed in the analysis on socialization might be useful here.

### **Generating Multiple Streams of Income from Dancehall.**

"I now live in Florida, and I have a clothing store where I design, make, and alter clothing for mainly women, sometimes men. I started out sewing dancehall clothes in Jamaica and managing La Crème Model and Talent. When I started, no one knew who I was and my technique was really rough. Over the years, doing fashion shows in Asylum with you girls and slowly building my client base, I became a prominent designer in Jamaica. Then I started to make clothes for

popular female dancehall artist, getting contract with promotional companies to make the girls outfit, and eventually opened my own store on Molyne's Road. Then I applied for and got a US work visa and started to sew for a clothing company in the states. Now I live in Florida with my own store. I don't believe I would have achieved all of this without dancehall."

In 2015, I did a presentation on Women in Jamaican Dancehall's Informal Economy: Practices of Accommodation and Resistance, in my Black Feminist Thought course, which was taught by Prof. Kamari Clarke.<sup>372</sup> The interview was conducted through Skype and was designed and executed as an interactive session between lecture and Meleissa. I met Meleissa when I started modelling at La Crème Model and Talent. At the time, not only was she designing and sewing the pieces we modeled in Asylum Night Club and other venues in Kingston, Meleissa was also managing the model agency where she secured contracts for models to perform in music videos, promotional contracts, and even commercials. She even models on stage and did music videos. The above quote could not be clearer. Here, the designer acknowledges that in the beginning stages of her career, not only was her technique less than refined, she was also virtually unknown to the dancehall and fashion world. With frequent fashion shows in Asylum and models like myself, Claudia, and Marsha wearing her designs in dancehall parties her client base eventually grew.

That client base also increased her income and generated awareness of Meleissa's skills, which then resulted in her evolving into a sought-after designer. Meleissa began designing for female dancehall artists such as Etana, Queen Ifrica, Spice and Pamputtate and many more. While she admitted that her technique was less than refined in the initial stages of her career, her technique improved overtime. In 2007, MDiz was invited to showcase her line at Jamaican based fashion house, Saint International's Style Week 2007, Saint International's Fashion Face of the Caribbean in 2007, and Touch of France Expo/Fashion at the Hilton Kingston hotel 2008.<sup>373</sup> Since migrating to the United States of America, MDiz Collection has established itself in the fashion industry. She was invited to showcase a more tamed and contemporary line at Orlando International Fashion week in 2014<sup>374</sup> and have entered a few competitions. While Meleissa no longer designs or sews dancehall apparel in Florida and experienced a shift in clientele

demographic, she acknowledges that her accomplishments would not have been possible “without dancehall” and the role she played in it.

“I’m a nail tech and a promoter. I promote my nail business, advertise my business through dancehall. I’ve been doing nails for ten years now, but I’ve been promoting parties from like in 2012—2011-2012. I believe in *Support fi Support*. I will go to four parties a week. But it’s like several different people keeping several different parties. It’s not like a weekly event like a BemBe or Weddy Weddy or Whoppings Thursdays or Bunty Sunday. I’ll support people’s party who supported be by coming to mine.”

Sassy is a nail technician by profession but is also a party promoter. Sassy has been a nail tech for the last ten years, who works in one of the most popular salons in Halfway Tree in Kingston. She is also a promoter of dancehall parties and she has been doing this since roughly 2011. She uses the dancehall parties she organizes as a platform to “advertise” her nail tech business. While she says she promotes parties for the “fun” of it and “for the popularity,” I imagine the supplemental income that it generates also comes in handy since she is the main breadwinner for her two sons and family. While she believes in the concept of “Support fi [for] Support,” which is a popular principle in dancehall. Support for Support principle means attending only the parties organized by people who supported yours. Even with this yardstick, Sassy still has to be mindful. Parties are expensive. She observed that you “can’t go to everybody’s party because you’ll end up spending” all you have made from your own parties. While her main job is as a nail technician, Sassy does earn from dancehall in two ways. Firstly, she advertises her nail tech business to women in the dancehall of which many women became her client. Secondly, she is able to generate additional earning opportunities by organizing and hosting dancehall parties which “most times get a good turnout” from dancehall patrons.

“What role do I play in dancehall? In dancehall, I play a role where I am the face of a brand, which would be Boom Energy Drink. And I do bartending on Sundays at Wet Wet.... Oh, and in dancehall I don’t only do promotional work. I

forgot to tell you. I also manage a dance crew.” .... Also, I don’t only work for Boom. I work for Ruff Rider Condom....[and]...I am also a teacher in training”

Teacher is a promotional girl who earns from dancehall in a plethora of ways. As the above excerpt illustrates, Teacher is the face of a popular drink in Jamaica, a bartender at Wet Wet (which is where I met her), a manager for a very successful dance group, and a student at Teacher’s College in Jamaica. When I asked how important dancehall is to her, she said “it is my bread and butter” (her main source of income). As a student, it is difficult to find a job that will enable her to care for herself with the flexibility to study and with the financial yields working multiple jobs in dancehall has afforded her. She is able to earn from each of the jobs while enjoying her “exposure...to meet a lot of different persons...I have a lot of Japanese and Chinese friends now because of it.” While many people are earning in dancehall from just one way, these women are earning a lot more than financial gains as a result of operating in such a multifaceted way in Jamaican dancehall’s informal economy.

Quest:

So you made a distinction between your performance and you, do you think there’s a difference between performing and....

interrupts

...who I am?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

Yes. Definitely. Because performance is basically an act, and I am not an act! I do Act, so...

“I am not an act!” When I asked Nature Girl if she is able to distinguish between herself and her performance, her answer was simple, clear, and concise, but so profound! She answered with conviction that a: “performance is basically an act, and I am not an act!” These women understand the difference between who they are and what their jobs are. I interviewed nineteen women in total, including the lost files, and without fail all understood that what they were doing in dancehall was their job--their profession! They understood that what they did in dancehall’s informal economy was what they chose to do to earn an income for themselves and for their families. Even women who did not earn



directly from dancehall appreciated the fact that a substantial number of women from dancehall are their clients. Moreover, their income experiences an increase whenever a lot of parties are being held.

Over the last thirty years or so, women in Jamaican dancehall have been examined through the framework of morality. How different might dancehall and the women who earn a living and make a life from the subculture look when a sick mother, or single mother's children is able to eat because of it? What might we learn from dancehall about transnationalism and women's collective mobilization that transcends race and nationality? These are just some of the questions that I was asking after reading Lake's <sup>375</sup> critique knowing that I was able to supplement my income, help my mother with groceries and utility bills because I was modelling in dancehall's informal economy.

# Chapter Five

## Boom Bye-Bye: Battyman Fi Dead!

This chapter addresses gender relations in dancehall through tropes of homoeroticism. Masculinity and, its deviant cousin, homoeroticism are topics that have become synonymous with the idea of dancehall in the academia. Specifically, dancehall's overt rejection of actions that contradict heteronormative heterosexuality and hypermasculinity in dancehall. This rejection is predominantly personified through lyrical content that promotes violence against members of the LGBT community, and even more succinctly, men who practice homosexuality. For example, using Mark (Buju Banton) Myrie's famous hit single "Boom Bye-Bye," Cooper suggests that there might be "multiple" readings to the song's sentiment purporting the "extermination of homosexuals," one of which is understanding the use of the "lyrical gun" being a feature of dancehall.<sup>376</sup> Donna Hope's area of interest rests in the examination of the nuances of masculinity and its relationship to violence and homoeroticism.<sup>377</sup> Most recently, Nadia Ellis provided a rich analysis which supports the idea of dancehall being a space where queerness can be manifested, performed, and even encouraged with a certain degree of safety that might not be easily replicated elsewhere in Jamaica.<sup>378</sup>

Below is my contribution to this conversation, drawing heavily from my lived experience of non-binary gender relations in dancehall to further complicate the understanding of gender relations in this space. More specifically, my contribution examines the role that access to wealth plays in Jamaican society and dancehall's ability to be more accepting of someone perceived to be nonconforming male. Following this discussion, I will also argue for a deeper reading of the dancehall's relationship with gay men and women and ways they have also been able to earn from dancehall's informal economy. This is important. Previous contributions made to this conversation regarding homosexuality in dancehall have bypassed the reality of the existence of dancehall parties organized and attended by the LGBT communities while also earning or benefiting financially from it. This phenomenon has yet to be explored. This is my contribution.

In Jamaica and in the dancehall, the terms "Batty Man," "Batty Bwoy," "Fish," and "Chi Chi (man)" all refer, in a derogatory manner, to a man who practices homosexuality. Outside of the negative prevailing argument which purports that women who participate in Jamaican dancehall do so because they have "internalized sexist norms"<sup>379</sup> in dancehall, the other major

narrative, not without merit, is that of hypermasculinity. Donna Hope's 2006 article understands the concept of hypermasculinity as a tool that "serves to encode and represent traditional Jamaican masculine discourse"<sup>380</sup> both in Jamaica and dancehall. Embedded within this idea of masculinity is a deep homophobic impulse. Unfortunately, this trope has become one of dancehall culture's infamous markers — particularly in the context of Jamaica

The song "Boom Bye-Bye,"<sup>381</sup> performed by dancehall deejay artist Mark (Buju Banton) Myrie, stands as one of the most anti-gay and violent songs in the dancehall and, perhaps, is his most renowned work. It was released in 1992 and is not only popular in Jamaica and Jamaican dancehall. It is also the artist's most controversial song of his career due to its violent anti-homosexual rhetoric. As cited by Cooper, Buju Banton's "infamous anti-homosexual"<sup>382</sup> hit single *Boom-Bye-Bye* which promoted the shooting dead of gay men<sup>383</sup> served as an anthem in Jamaican dancehall. This song has been seen as echoing the dancehall fraternity's, and Jamaica's attitude towards gay men. This is because "dancehall regulates the reproduction of compulsory heterosexuality as key signifier of postcolonial Blackness"<sup>384</sup> and positions homosexuality as a "white, farin someting."<sup>385 386</sup> In 1990, White's essay critiqued Black nationalistic narratives, which presupposes the practice of homosexuality to be authentically aligned contextually with Western culture. Cited by White is the revealing excerpt of Larry Coleman's nationalistic stance which "remains openly hostile to any feminist agenda"<sup>387</sup> and on the matter of homosexuality:

"The hypersexual liberated black woman is in fact so much a man that she has no need for men...and the hyper-emasculated black men is so much a woman that he has no need for woman...May each of these hyper-distorted persons find homosexual heaven among the whites, for the black race would be better served without them."<sup>388</sup>

The above quote highlights the tendency of the black community to attempt to create distance between themselves and queer orientations. This is particularly evident and manifested in Jamaica and the dancehall culture. Here, the idea of an authentic African identity is being positioned against and distanced from African (diaspora) who supposedly subscribes to the Global North's ideology and normativity. This is being done by associating what seems to be gender borrowing and traditional gender bending activities, with what Coleman attributes to their "distortion" as a result of being socialized "among the whites"<sup>389</sup>.

Within the context of Jamaica and the Caribbean, homophobia is not just a simple matter of opinion, it is also, more importantly, a legislative matter. The Sexual Offence Act in Jamaica, I believe, dictates the society's relationship with LGBT persons in Jamaica, a group that is marginalized, yet hypervisible. Jamaica's Offences Against the Person Act was originally passed in 1884 and was amended in 2010.<sup>390</sup> Under the section Unnatural Crimes, articles 76 through to 79<sup>391</sup> addresses laws that serve to prohibit sexual relations between male persons.<sup>392</sup> While article 76 states: "[w]hosoever shall be convicted of the abominable crime of buggery" with "man or animal" shall be liable to imprisonment for a maximum of "ten years," article 77 addresses those who attempt to perform buggery, article 78 states "carnal knowledge" must be proven, and article 79 deals with the punishment one will receive for (male) parties involved in prostitution. There are several striking elements regarding these laws: Firstly, they fall under the category of "Unnatural Crimes" which feeds into Jamaica's Euro-Christian beliefs which view homoeroticism as sinful.<sup>393</sup> Secondly, relationships between gay men is categorized and penalized along parallel lines of human having sex with an animal; and thirdly, none of the articles under this section addresses relations between two women.<sup>394</sup> In dancehall, most of the chastisement of same sex relations are directed towards homosexual men while sexual relations between women are often condoned and even encouraged.

## Masculinity and Dancehall Culture

In the dancehall, a lesbian is perceived to be less of a threat than gay men because "in the absence of the penis, she can only stimulate the anus or the vagina or vulva,"<sup>395</sup> which does not threaten the—fragile but—hypermasculine structure of patriarchy. As far as masculinity is concerned, Hope's 2013 article defined it as a "method of ranking maleness...as a dominant variant of masculinity to which women and other young, effeminate, or homosexual men are subordinated"<sup>396</sup> in Jamaica. However, masculinity takes on a particular role within marginalized communities in Jamaican and dancehall. According to Hope, dancehall reflects the reality of the ghetto reality<sup>397</sup> where young men grow up idolizing the Dons. A Don in the Jamaican context "draws significantly from the distinctive label given to Mafia overlords of the kind immortalized in the Movie Godfather and the Jamaican Gun Man who performs outside the lines of the law,"<sup>398</sup> and in marginalized communities where violence is prevalent, and the implications are intensified. As such, the 'Don' is an image or persona that is not only a feature in marginalized communities, it also represents "members of a selected cadre that is linked to the

promulgation and romantization of violence”<sup>399</sup> in dancehall culture as well. This interlocking ideology between poor communities, dancehall, and ghetto overlords, are then manifested, proliferated, and maintained through the lyrical content dancehall artists produce which glorifies violence. The lives lived by inner city individuals then become inspiration for dancehall artists’ lyrical content.<sup>400</sup>

As such, in the dancehall and poor communities, significant masculine power is bestowed on men who are reputedly engaged in narco- and gun cultures<sup>401</sup> because they symbolize the ideal representation of a man’s ultimate power. Consequently, the dancehall is known as a space that not only exhibits, but is predicated on “extreme male bravado” that inherently produces the condition where anything that in the slightest of ways contradict this fact gets ‘bun out’ (expelled or exterminated).<sup>402</sup> In this respect, these communities and the according subculture, do not appear to provide or entertain a “space”<sup>403</sup> for “effeminate, homosexual males” because they do not fit neatly within the tropes of a Don. Not only is there little to no space particularly for gay men, but their very presence signals a threat to the idea of hypermasculinity in dancehall and must be controlled and – possibly - eradicated.<sup>404</sup> The fact that the idea of masculinity is a “social and cultural construct”<sup>405</sup> that earns its validity from unstable gender and cultural cleavages, means that it must remain in a state of duality; a state where it reifies and edifies itself by simultaneously silencing and rendering its culpable offenders hypervisible.

This dichotomized reality is significant to its survival which explains the intense way in which “male bravado”<sup>406</sup> is manifested. To live a life outside of hypersexualized normativity is be considered rebellious and a “dangerous business of patriarchy;”<sup>407</sup> particularly in the context of Jamaica, and even more so in the context of dancehall. This danger created by patriarchy is essentially grounded the power of “hegemonic masculinity/ies [which] are positioned as the standard”<sup>408</sup> of Jamaican manliness.

## Social/Financial Capital and (De)Masculinity

In Jamaica if you are a poor gay, you are a *Batty Bwoy*, but if you have access to resources, then you are more likely to be —more or less—dismissed, accepted even, as eccentric. There are many YouTube<sup>409</sup> videos of gay men in Jamaica being beaten, even killed, under the accusation of theft. One only needs to type in “Gay Men Beaten in Jamaica” on the social media site YouTube<sup>410</sup> and a plethora of videos will pop-up in the feed. I will not feature or examine

any particular videos in my work. I cannot in good conscience give life to content like these in the work I produce. However, there is a useful intervention to me made regarding the relationship between class and homophobia in Jamaica.

## On Shebada

“Questions about gender and imputed notions of sexual identity/ self-identification were answered best by Shebada when, in a scene from *Basement Granny* an irritated policeman asks “Yuh ah man or yuh ah woman?” Shebada’s bold response “mi deh pon di borderline,” accompanied by a pronounced swish of his hips, was indeed a staged response within the confines of the *Basement Granny* roots play.<sup>411 412</sup>

The above excerpt was taken from Hope’s 2013 article which examines the gender boundaries that can be observed in Jamaica roots theatre, and in particular the significance of Shebada’s role within this context. Hope examines the “embodied performance and representation of gender identity within this popular cultural space” within dancehall culture<sup>413</sup> by looking at the ways in which actor Keith “Shebada” Ramsey blurs and problematizes the borders of masculinity. The character of Shebada entered the world of popular Jamaican theatre in the 2006 Stages Production, *Basement Granny*,<sup>414</sup> which catapulted him to the heights of popularity to the point where he became a household name. The comedic actor, Keith Ramsey, played a character by the name of Shebada, where his “androgynous”<sup>415</sup>(appendix 10) costuming and his on-stage performance personify the gendered stereotype of a “ghetto female”<sup>416</sup> who played both the voice of reason and the notorious gossip. Both his aesthetic and mannerism elicit a “genderlessness”<sup>417</sup> that Hope read as “an identity that is unbounded by social and gendered strictures. Through the presentation of a borderline identity”<sup>418</sup> Shebada straddles the strongly demarcated lines of masculinity and femininity in Jamaican dancehall culture. Shebada’s character also appears to perform a balancing act between his character and what I would associate with a dancehall diva due to his exhibition of dancehall dance moves that are predominantly performed by female dancers.<sup>419</sup> Shebada’s character blurs the lines between performance theater and life events.

Both in theatre and life,<sup>420</sup> Shebada has responded to questions of his sexuality through the use of his famous line in the play: “Mi deh pan di borderline!”<sup>421 422</sup> As a result of his roles, Shebada has been the go-to person for dancehall artists when spewing homophobic lyrics in their

songs. While many believe he is a gay man in his offstage persona, I was unable to locate documentation of him explicitly revealing his sexual orientation. What complicates Shebada's sexually ambiguous status is his December 13, 2013 Onstage interview with Winford Williams on CVM T.V.<sup>423</sup> where he was seen to be wearing makeup, which is normally reserved for women or transgendered women. What further muddies the water regarding his sexual orientation was another interview on the said program on November 30, 2014 where Shebada announced his soon-to-be parental status with a woman who was allegedly a male dancehall artist's girlfriend during conception.<sup>424</sup> In line with Hope's observation that there seems to be "no clear boundary between the on-stage and off-stage persona that incarnates the male/not-male liminal identity,"<sup>425</sup> I must note that Shebada has not suffered the same fate as many of the other men who exhibit similar "gender bending"<sup>426</sup> practices. While Shebada has been "denounced and sometimes confronted with hostility, primarily from males"<sup>427</sup> in the dancehall arena and by the population in general, I have never heard reports of him being physically attacked. While I do find solace in knowing he has not suffer the same fate as many males who were simply suspected to be gay, a class based analysis is necessary, here. While I am tempted to read Sheba's assumed safety as a signifier of Jamaica's welcomed cognitive change with regards to its relationship with homophobia, I am instead inclined to read Shabada's sexual ambiguity and flexibility in relation to the social capital he is able to access through popularity and assumed wealth.

To be poor and gay in Jamaica is even more dangerous than being simply gay. Dwayne Jones was a transgendered teen who was killed in Montego Bay, St. James at a dancehall party in 2013.<sup>428</sup> Dwayne Jones "was beaten, stabbed, shot and run over by a car"<sup>429</sup> after dancehall patrons learned of his identity. He lived in an abandoned house with his two friends, also transgender, after being discarded by his family.<sup>430</sup> This is not unique. There is a sizeable community of homeless youths and adults, many of whom are gay males who live in gullies and sewage drains in Kingston's metropolitan area, and who are known as the Gully Queens.<sup>431</sup> Like Dwayne Jones, the Gully Queens were forced "to [live in] the gully [after] people started finding out that [they are] gay in [their] communit[ies]"<sup>432</sup> due to (possible) harm they would/have faced. The relationship between economic status and security, particularly in Jamaica, is an intervention that is not adequately addressed in the examination of homophobic practices in Jamaica

## Retrospect/Introspect

*It kina hawd fi be pawt ah a di fashion industry inna Jamaican an a farrin an nuh develop relationship wid people weh a memba ah di LGBT community. Dem nawmally play a important role inna di production ah di di runway or print (photoshoot) look, wehda dem a desinga ar beautician. A year ar suh before mi cum a farrin, mi did stawt magle wid a new fashion label weh neva brand demself as a dancehall magle agency — unlike La Crème. Dis organization, mi prefah nuh fi name dem — di wah fi be a competitive force in Jamaican fashion industry by providing high fashion magla to dem client. Is ere suh mi turn frends wid people from di LGBT community who did a mek money fram di industry. Rich Kid (not his correct name) a did one a dem.*

*Mi loose contact wid nuff people wen mi move cum a Canada in 2009. Rich Kid a did one ah dem. Wi eventually reunites via Facebook.<sup>433</sup> Ah chru him Facebook picha dem mi learn seh him a traveling nuff. Dis reunion cum wid nuff surprise. Di Rich Kid weh me did know neva rich at all. Mek mi put it dah way yah: di pseudonym “Rich Kid” weh mi give inna da research yah wud’n be di case before mi left a cum ah farrin. Back dem time deh him livin situation did complicated, which is not’n strange fi youtes — especially di bwoy dem — weh people discova seh gay. Mi ev’n memba dem did attack and beat him up one-time kause smaddy accuse him ah bein gay. Wen mi leff Jamaica, him a did one at-risk youte who did well vulnerable because a him sexuality. Dis was no langa di case.<sup>434</sup>*

In 2015, I did a presentation on Women in Jamaican Dancehall’s Informal Economy: Practices of Accommodation and Resistance, in my Black Feminist Thought course, which was taught by Prof. Kamari Clarke.<sup>435</sup> I interviewed two persons: Melissa Dunkley-Hamptons of MDiz Fashion House<sup>436</sup> who started her design career in Jamaican dancehall — and also had clients who were transgendered women — and is now based in Florida; and Rich Kid. The former was chosen to reflect on her experience in dancehall in relation to how she made a living while the latter was chosen to speak on his experience as a non-heterosexual male. The presentation consisted of two sections: theoretical and empirical, which played out through an interactive skype interview where members of the class were allowed to ask questions of the interviewees. When Rich Kid was asked about his relationship with Jamaican society and his sexuality, his response was:



Now dat mi ave money mi can go anyweh, even inna di dancehall an nobody nuh trouble mi. Dem wih look pan mi clothes an shoes an how mi dress but nobody nuh rush mi. Girls wih even look pan mi shoes an ask mi weh mi get dat from cause it bad. As long as yuh nuh loud up di ting, and as lang as yuh ave money yuh wih safe inna dancehall.”<sup>437</sup>

Rich Kid’s interview brought to the forefront the reality of Jamaica’s hypocrisy when it comes to the relationship that exists between tolerance of homosexuality and classism. When I was still living in Jamaica, I remember being at Melissa’s clothing store on Molyne’s Road, near Half-Way Tree, and seeing Rich Kid for the first in a long while only to hear he was recently attacked violently by a mob after accusations about his homosexual status were made. At that time, he was marginalized and worked odd jobs including helping Melissa with sewing projects. He was an at-risk youth who lived on the margins of society and outside of his family home. For me, his observation speaks directly to Jamaica’s level of tolerance to homosexuality and the assumed class/economic location in a very nuanced way.

The island where Rich Kid was once attacked and beaten under the presumption of being gay, is also the same island where he is now able to not only freely attend dancehall parties but also feel safe doing so because of his “bling ling”<sup>438 439</sup> that he frequently brandishes. His assumed financial status is quite visible and provides him with a level of safety he did not have experience of before. Rich Kid’s luxury car and “flashy jewelry [acts] as an indication of wealth” which produces license for him to perform the stereotypical ritual of “Jamaican manhood”<sup>440</sup> in Jamaica and the dancehall without chastisement. He even reported that he is more likely to be complimented for his style of dressing than be harmed for assumed heterosexual treachery.

While Rich Kid reported to have been experiencing a level of safety he wasn’t able to access while he was economically marginalized, he, however, remains vulnerable. His statement that: “Once yuh ave money and yuh nuh loud up di ting, yuh wih arite”<sup>441</sup> reveals how fragile his safety really is. To make something *loud* in the context of dancehall culture has several meanings which is predicated on the context. In addition, the terms loud, lap weh, shell dung, and sell off are just a few adjectives that signals the success of a dancehall party. Loud can also be understood in the context of making something hypervisible. According to the online website, Patois and Slang Dictionary, loud in Jamaica Patwa is an “expression for gossiping/exposing someone’s business.”<sup>442</sup> This essentially means Rich Kid is able to perform a

type of “Jamaican manhood”<sup>443</sup> in dancehall despite his contradictory sexual orientation because of his bling as long as he does not “loud up di ting” or make his sexuality visible to fellow citizens and patrons.

This might be one of the reasons why the LGBT community host their own dancehall events in isolation. My first knowledge of the existence of private gay parties in Jamaica was during the Peter King murder investigation in 2006. Peter King was a Jamaican Trade Ambassador who hosted private parties in his home in upper St. Andrew, for people of shared sexual orientation, and who was killed in his home after one of these parties.<sup>444</sup> Since then, there has been many discoveries of gay parties in Jamaica as a result of leaked video footage.<sup>445</sup> In 2007, I was invited to a gay Dancehall Queen Competition in Jamaica (As a side note, mi know mi ago get bun out by sum fool fool people cawz mi seh mi admit seh mi go gay pawty but I care zero. Yuh luddy!)<sup>446</sup> The venue was an undisclosed location in the hills of upper St. Andrew, Kingston. It was an unfinished mansion overlooking the hills with the Kingston city lights dancing below. There was an admission fee which was waived for me at the behest of my companions that evening.

We arrived early while the competitors were in the midst of their preparation process. There was a make-up artist in one of the room transforming these women into the potential Dancehall Queen — for a fee. I also recognized an outfit that was made by Melissa Dunkley which I saw on a recent visit to her shop. There was a make-shift bar on one side of the open space which was designated as the stage for the competitor. The alcohol was for sale. Another room was designated for the changing while other competitors chose to change in other private spaces instead of utilizing a shared space. I overheard one conversation between two transwomen where one told the other who made her wig. Later that evening I met the creator of the wig who was also a transwoman. That service was also for a fee. There were between eight and ten competitors. The format of the competition was a replica of the original International Dancehall Queen Competition that takes place annually in Montego Bay, St. James. At the end of the night the winner was announced along with the second and third place. The winner took home the monetary grand prize and the other two competitors also received their awards.

Back then all I saw was an incredibly entertaining showcase of talent and my first ever witness of a transwoman Dancehall Queen Competition. These contestants could have rivaled any of the current female Dancehall Queens I have seen. However, as a researcher looking back,

the informal economy that existed in the midst of the event is strikingly similar to that of the women I interviewed in 2014. In all honesty, all I saw that night were female dancers who were vying for the bragging right that only a Dancehall Queen has: The Queen of the dancehall. In 2013, I suggested that another way to view women who participate in dancehall is by appreciating the fact that through dancehall, women transformed themselves from occupying peripheral positions in both Jamaican society and Jamaican dancehall by creating spaces of “affirmation and power”<sup>447</sup> through sexual expressions.<sup>448</sup> I have since focused on understanding the ways in which these women make money in Jamaican dancehall despite operating in spaces that are so hypermasculine, “heterosexual, even,”<sup>449</sup> in an attempt to secure a livelihood and obtain a degree of self-satisfaction. In the context of Jamaican transwomen, I make the same claim. Despite dancehall’s notable reputation of being a space that consistently “condemn[s] male homosexuality,”<sup>450</sup> transwomen achieve “affirmation of power”<sup>451</sup> in a subversive manner by creating a space for themselves within this framework, even if these spaces are segregated from the general population.

## Dancehall as a Queer Space?

Nadia Ellis’s 2011 essay, *Out and Bad*,<sup>452</sup> provides a queer reading of the shifting “modalities of masculinity in Jamaican dancehall through tropes of aesthetic effeminacies, and performances. The term “Out” in the traditional context refers to the “US-style gay politics” in the form of one’s “declaration of sexual identity”<sup>453</sup> used to signal homoeroticism. Observed by Ellis, and suggested throughout this chapter, is the idea of “badness” used to refer to “male power and prowess in Jamaica”<sup>454</sup> and dancehall culture. The phrase “Out and Bad” originated in Jamaican dancehall during the new millennium and is “designated to someone who is unabashed about his skills and looks.... confidence” and who enjoys the center of the spotlight.<sup>455</sup> Linking the dancehall phrase “Out and Bad” to a queer analysis does not, for Ellis, necessarily or exclusively signal sexual orientation<sup>456</sup> in this context. For Ellis, the connection between dancehall and queer analysis, specifically the term “Out and Bad,” functions as a signifier of “sexual and gender normativity” that provides a “break in the line of gender” scripts, but which is not limited to homoeroticism.<sup>457</sup> By tying this phrase to a queer analysis, Ellis enacts a play on words and attitudes that problematizes notions of masculinity.

“Out and bad,” then becomes a phrase of “possibility”<sup>458</sup> for Ellis. It offers the opportunity to exercise “fluidity” and unbounded freedom to be different, act outside the frame of heterosexual norms while still perhaps operating within the framework of hypermasculinity in dancehall. Dancehall as a queer subculture should be understood as a queer space that evolves over time. It acts to challenge the “unstable and shifting” notions of hegemonic (hyper)masculinity. Ellis provides space to analyze male dancehall artists, Elephant Man (appendix 11), male dance groups, and Lee Scratch Perry’s<sup>459</sup> colourful, “tight clothes, hair extensions”<sup>460</sup> and performances in a notoriously homophobic space like dancehall. By doing so, Ellis introduces the idea of a nuanced analysis about dancehall and Caribbean culture. By focusing on their “curly hair, tight pants, bleached hair, and funniness”<sup>461</sup> Ellis can use a new methodology to offer a useful approach to the reading and critique of dancehall culture and the ways masculinity is manifested in an attempt to find “another way to understand dancehall culture,”<sup>462</sup> especially in the academy.

Ellis understands dancehall’s cadre of “Out and bad” actors as operating in a space of difference that is laced with possibilities of growth and sense of freedom from heteronormative rigidities<sup>463</sup> and from systemic heterosexism. This methodology might be able to provide an alternative or additional theory that can help us understand how Rich Kid and Shebada can operate in dancehall with the sense of freedom they now enjoy. This queer dancehall theory might also be able to explain why Shizzle Sherlock, a former member of the popular group, is able to wear a dress to dancehall parties with little impunity (Appendix 12). I am in agreement with her claim that dancehall is one of the few spaces in Jamaica where masculinity can be contested and contradicted in a seemingly seamless way.

## My life and the Informal Economy.

*Mi grow up wid inna family weh ah green leafy vegetable name Callaloo (appendix13) feed, clothes, an school mi. Mi grow up ah see mi madda ah cyarry fifty an hundred poun a callaloo load pan har head from Lakes Pen to Dela, an wen shi reach inna di lane ah pickney dem, neighba, or random youte wuda sih an help wid di load. Mi memba wen shi use to guh as far as Kitson Town fi get Callaloo fi sell, an she wuda cyarry it pan har head from di taxi stan up inna Spanish Town to Dela. If shi did ave di money, she wuda pay ah hand cyawt man fi drop it off by the house fi har. Mi memba one time wen mi use to guh Spanish Town Primary, wen mi ave on mi unifowm an litarally a wait fi somebody cum buy a bungle a callaloo suh dat mi cyan get JA\$3.50 fi school. Mi still hate bun and milk.<sup>464</sup> Mi memba mi childhood fren dem, Nicky and Shelly, use to call mi “nyam an guweh” cause mi wuda guh dem house just fi eat a dinna weh neva mek wid Calallo. Mi grow up inna house weh selling calallalou in di scheme an mawkit bring een income fi di family an callaloo also feed yuh ah night time.*

*Mi did stawt magle wid La Crème because mi fren, Raqcuel, did invite me. However, Wen St. Catherine Cooperate Credit Union neva renew mi contract afta tree years, mi cuda look go look a anoda cooperate job, dancehall was alla mi source ah income. Pawt a mi feel like di Credit Union neva renew cause dem fine out mi did ah du dancehall video. All dough mi always try disguise myself.<sup>465</sup> Di chute is dem neva did a pay enuff. Mi did need additional income. Dem neva did ave no problem wid my modeling runway. Dem did even sponsor mi fi enta di Pulse International model search competition in 2005.*

*Mi use to only duh runway (fashion show). Mi duh nuff wid Natalie Paraboosigh.<sup>466</sup> I even duh one ah British High Commission wid Tessanne Chin did perform har hit song “Hide Away”<sup>467</sup> magling with then, PoshStyle Designs, now Poshstyle Image Consulting.<sup>468</sup> But yuh cuda mek more money inna dancehall. While managing La Ceme, Melesisa use to mek the outfit dem fi di video shoot, provide magle and wardrobe, manage wi, and sum time she did inna di video dem too. After Meleissa decided she shei did aguh stop work wid la Crème fi focus more pan har sowing, Freddie ask mi fi tink managing La Crème. Mi teck him up pan him offer. Dat was in 2006. Up*

*until 2009 summa, a dancehall mi mek mi living from: Tursdeh an Frideh night fashion show inna Asylum, alcohol promotions inna QUAD an adda clubs and venues, and extras inna music video. Mi memba one night mi duh a fashion show pan a boat ride. Mi did see sick the whole night but mi did haffi guh work. Mi use stan up inna heels until di balls ah mi foot full up callous. One ah di time dem it stawt get difficult fi mi walk inna flat shoes because mi foot get use to heels. Night after night, mi and di girls work at events. If yuh nuh guh out dere, yuh naah get pay. If yuh ave menstrual cramp, yuh haffi work. If yuh ave headache, yuh haffi work inna di noisy ah dancehall. And just like any oda job, if yuh feel vex bout sum kin ah work environment, yuh affi guh werk or else yuh nuh get nuh pay.*

*Two ah di biggest contract mi eva get was wid Magnum Tonic Wine of the Lacselles Limited Group weh, Claudia and L.A. Lewis posed for the “Cash Een” promotional campaign in 2007. Unfortunately, mi nuh have ah copy nobody from Magnum nuh response to mi request fi one. Dah Posta deh did get circilate all ova Jamaica. Mi did get dat contract because marketing manager, Gary Dixon, did sih wah pich weh Nick did teck ah mi, Claudia an Marsha and contract mi an Claudia fi di posta. Di odda big contack weh mi get was chu Natalie Paraboosingh weh mi secure a contract fi meslf an most a di female magla dem fi open di show fi Magnum Kings and Queens of Dancehall every night fi di whole a 2008 season (appendix 14). Every Satdeh night my family use to mek sure dem watch di openin show suh dem cyah sih mi pan T.V. Dat was also a good financial “trade-off”<sup>469</sup> weh di more profitable dan two monts salalry a di Credit Union. Mi did also move inna Kingston because mi cud’n tek di commute nuh more, especially wen mi dun werk all 4am an 5am inna di mawning. A dancehall mi use fi earn a livin, feed mi s<sup>470</sup>elf, and pay mi rent.*

*Mi meet mi husband inna 2007. Mi fren, Phylisia, who mi meet wen mi just start magle a La Crème. In 2014, mi seventy-year-old mada get har first trip to Canada fi mi undergraduate convocation ah University of Toronto. If mi neva magle inna dancehall, meet Phylisia, needa would mi husband. mommy wud’n a jump up an ah mek bear nize up pan di second floor, anna shout out: Mona! Mona! while shi clap wid pride an joy. Den, wen shi dead last year, all a mi frend dem a tell mi she mi “don’t cry,” an “God*

*knows best,” an wen ah only Rodney (Bounty killer) Price, cuda mek mi feel likkle betta cause him know wah mi did a chu; mi wud’s ave dat! And, now, mi sidung round dis desk ah write dis thesis in response to limited undastanding to woman in Jamaica dancehall if mi neva did participate inna dancehall. My life is ah example of how dancehall can be used as a tool through which empowerment is achieved.*

## Concluding Comments

My life has been shaped by the informal economy as a child, an adult, and now a scholar. I believe this is the reason I am able not to relegate an entire social phenomenon and the women who earn from it to singular questions of morality. While I appreciate Hope's examination of women in Jamaican dancehall who "earn directly from" it, the examination remains an overarching analysis of earning gender relations<sup>471</sup> and women performing to appease the male gaze<sup>472</sup>. While these analyses are not without merit, this is not the only contribution that can be made regarding this group of women.

Pretend, for a moment, that you are me. Knowing you have earned from dancehall in many ways for years. Knowing that dancehall provided a main source of your income for at least two years. Knowing that dancers, models, soup lady, the hairdresser, and the nail technician all earn from dancehall in significant ways. Pretend you are me and read the following, what would your response be?

"Given Jamaica's patriarchal climate, one would expect sexist lyrics emanating from men. Unfortunately, women who have internalized sexist norms add to these negative images. Lady Saw is one such songstress who plays herself and, by association, all other women."<sup>473</sup>

This excerpt was taken from American Anthropologist, Obiagele Lake's 1988 book.<sup>474</sup> In this work, Lake examines the heterosexual and highly patriarchal nature of the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica during the 1990s and its implications for gender relations. Of the book's one hundred and ninety-three pages, Lake dedicated two and a half pages to a section called *Women and Dancehall*<sup>475</sup> where she critiques the said group. The author makes several claims in this section regarding the subjectivity of these women that I find erroneously linear at best. By focusing on former female dancehall artist, Lady Saw, now Minister Marion Hall, Lake concluded that: "Lady Saw plays herself and, by association, all other women"<sup>476</sup> in Jamaican dancehall who subscribe to these "internalize sexist" lyrical content.<sup>477</sup> Lake rejected the claim of empowerment because the artist and women like her are "empowering themselves based on the presumed desirability of their sexual parts" as they are not in control and the prevalence of physical violence<sup>478</sup> is proof of their vulnerability. I find Lake's reading of "Lady Saw and all



other women” who participate in Jamaican dancehall to be limited to the narrative of “sexual objects”<sup>479</sup>.

Lake's work highlights the callous attitudes that are commonly afforded by scholars who critique ideas of empowerment of women in Jamaican dancehall. In fact, Lake's discussion of dancehall occupies less than three pages of her entire book. Of the over two-hundred and fifty pages in this work, only roughly three pages were set aside to examine the complex cultural phenomenon and her actors. Lake's critique of Lady Saw, who is known for her sexually expressive lyrics and stage performance,<sup>480</sup> is then extended to “all the other women”<sup>481</sup> who take part in dancehall—whether as patrons, workers, or artists. This is problematic.

Women in Jamaican dancehall have been treated as a side note undeserving of serious academic interrogation outside the framework of morality. Such analysis leaves little room to appreciate the distinct roles women play in dancehall, especially within the informal economy (street vendor, dancers, models hair-stylist fashion and beauticians). As I have illustrated in this research paper, there are several types of women who participate in Jamaican dancehall in many ways.

By paying attention to questions of morality, popular discourses such as these miss out on a valuable opportunity to examine the complexities that make up the fiber of the dancehall subculture and, more specifically, the informal economy that provides opportunities for financial empowerment. The material presented in this thesis provides the basis for an unequivocal rejection of the claim that empowerment is nothing but a figment of the imagination of the women who are variously located in the informal economy of dancehall.<sup>482</sup>

## All Other Women

By this point in this research, I hope it is clear why all-encompassing phrases such as “all women”<sup>483</sup> is problematic. Extending a critique that is designed for the analyses of an individual to an entire group might be an oversight, as shown by Hope<sup>484</sup> and supported by my lived experience and the Dancehall Queens, dancers, models, designers, hair dressers and nail technicians. While it is a high probability that dancers and models are the usual suspects in mind in the examination of gender relations and inquiries for the presence of morality, they are not the only group of women who enter this space. Tib Tib admitted that she will go to a party “fi look fi myself” what’s going on, it is highly unlikely that she will rendered visible. The night I met

MaMa P, she was outside the periphery of the dancehall selling her goods and services and “enjoying di music” even though she doesn’t “bruk out cause” she is a married woman. What would we say about the vendor whose picture I took ? The mere fact that a woman is sharing, perhaps working, in a space where Lady Saw, is asking for her male counterpart to “Stab Up” her “meat” does not mean everyone in the same is also requiring this treatment. She just might be in the dancehall trying to make a sale.

Even in the case where dancers on the dance floor are performing their most extreme dance moves, fused with elements of gymnastic ability and eroticism, in the words of Nature Girl, she “do act,” she is “not an act.” Most dancers and models are able to identify the difference between their work and who they are. For many, including myself, once the make-up and scantily clad garments were removed, that dancehall divas, queens, dancers, model’s persona<sup>485</sup> that Cooper speaks about is also stripped and retired until needed in the future. Teacher does this on a regular basis. She understands that being a promotional girl, a model, and bartender in dancehall will required her to dance and perform in hypersexual ways. While she enjoys dancing, and enjoys the freedom she experiences in the dancehall space, she performs very differently when she is at school. Also, when teacher is performing her role as a manager, I am sure she takes on a third element of expressing herself. For many women, dancehall is their place of employment, and they treat it as such.

## Creating Modalities of Empowerment

“derogatory lyrics that points to women’s physical attributes undermined the integrity of women and make good investments for capitalists in the music industry while doing little to enhance the images or socioeconomic conditions of women.”<sup>486</sup>

In general, while it would be highly appreciated, women in Jamaica and woman in dancehall are really not waiting for anyone to “enhance their image or economic conditions.”<sup>487</sup> That is to say, they are not waiting for anyone to do anything for them. Appendix 15 is a picture of me posing on the veranda of my childhood home as a child. The shadow behind me belongs to the imprint of my father’s silhouette where he sat

daily. While my older siblings have memories of him going to work in the morning. I remember him sitting. The table beside me is where my mother prepared and presented bundles of callaloo for sale while my father sat. Mother operated within an economy that did “little”<sup>488</sup> for her and was involved in a relationship where there were obvious “power relations”<sup>489</sup> in society and within her home. While she would have appreciated more financial help than she received, she created income generating practices through the sale of callaloo in order to provide for her family. The principle is similar for women in dancehall.

Dancehall Queens, dancers, and models operate in a highly patriarchal space—one that is also very capitalistic. While they would probably have appreciated their male counterparts – where they existed - doing more for them, they are generally not waiting around. Dancers like Mystic Davis and Dancehall Queen Latesha are very active on social media, promoting their skills and talents, and have landed overseas tour to various parts of the world. They have also “break”<sup>490</sup> the world of a dancehall artist where Mystic has seen major successful results.<sup>491</sup> Latonya Styles founded and operates Dance JA which acts as a central dancehall location in Jamaica.<sup>492</sup> She also holds dance workshops at these locations and travels regularly to teach workshops over the world.

Recent break out star, Dancing Rebel told Winford Williams during an Onstage interview that though she is a Team Spice dancer who tours with Spice regularly, her first overseas workshop was acquired because she created a dance move and popularized it on her Instagram page.<sup>493</sup> Most of the women who work as dancers in in dancehall are taking their roles very seriously. Black Barbie proudly identified her role as a “professional dancers, choreographers, teacher” among other accolades. I am not going to ignore the fact that there are chauvinistic and hypermasculine practices in dancehall. What I am trying to say is that topics of this sort are overrepresented. What I want to highlight is the material results of women’s financial empowerment which they have created through the medium of dancehall.

What can dancehall teach us about transnational mobilization? While the dancehall scene in the Kingston metropolis is generally highly attended by locals and foreigners, they not only party together, they form lasting relationships. Teacher was

happy to declare she now has “Japanese and Chinese” friends (appendix 16); you can also find female dance groups with mixed Jamaican and Japanese members. Local female dancers and teachers enjoy the frequency with which their classes are attended by foreigners. Also, Tiny also provided data that will assist in learning to understand how earning opportunities in Jamaica are played out for foreigners in the dancehall community. These students might have the possibility to yield a higher profit in terms of referring future students or collaborating on future internal initiatives.

Additionally, the connections that are forged with dancers once they have traveled overseas are maintained or used multiple times to generate income opportunities. In this research, I learned specifically that Sassy and Mama P have used income they have earned from the dancehall—directly or indirectly—to finance trips overseas where they also purchase products for sale. Therefore, the concept of transnationalism in dancehall and by dancehall actors are plays itself out in nuanced and multilayered ways.

I have learned tremendously from this research. I did not realize that my affinity to seek ways of earning was directly related to my upbringing. This is ironic. While I learned through Nature Girl and Summer how their socialization informed their current career path, I have also learned along the way how my ability to focus on the financial benefit of income generating practices in dancehall has brought me to this point.

Discussions of gender relations are not without merit, and will consistently be a topic of serious examination because gender equality remains an essential component in this configuration of a socioeconomic matrix that reflect equity. However, while working towards this goal, understanding how women are able to earn in an hyperpatriarchal space like dancehall from a women-centered economy might be useful.

# Appendix 1

## My Location

Jesus Christ! I'm going to be late for work again! I didn't remember to set the alarm when I got in this morning about 4:45a.m. I jumped out of bed and tried to get ready for work quickly. I am a Member Service representative at St. Catherine Cooperative Credit Union at the Portmore Pines branch. It normally takes me about an hour to get ready, but this morning, thirty minutes will have to do. I jumped in the bathroom, washed my necessities, brushed my teeth, put on my clothes, and pull my hair in one with a clip in pony tail. I stepped out the house about 8:05 a.m. It takes me about fifteen minutes to walk from Dela-vega City to the Railway market, which is where the Portmore taxis are parked. I caught one of the fast taxi drivers who doesn't sit in traffic. Thank God! I made it to work in the nick-of-time.

Counting down the minutes until 5p.m. I am tired and sleepy. I am just going to go home and spread out in the bed. I couldn't have been happier when I saw Mr. Levermore, the security guard, closing the door. It was only by the grace of God that my transactions for the day is balanced and I am not short the way how I was nodding off to sleep over the cash register. By 6:45, I am home. I didn't even have a bath, to tell you the truth. I just changed my clothes, wash my face, and jumped in the bed with the aim to catch up on some sleep. My Motorola Razor notification woke me up at about 9:30p.m. It's Claudia texting me asking: "Girl, where are you? You not coming over?" As I got up, I noticed how the little three hours of sleep revived me—I am ready for the road again. I got up, packed a bag with clothes and shoes, took a shower and headed out. I told mommy I am going into Kingston for a show and I am going to be coming in late so not to wait up. She said: "Again? You no live nowhere?" I laughed, gave her a hug, rubbed up myself on her, and told her, "later."

This is my second trip into Spanish Town for the day. This time, I am going to do something I love—molding. I jumped on a half-Way Tree (HWT) taxi that's parked in the Texaco gas station and arrived in twenty minutes. As I reached HWT, I jumped on a Three Miles robot<sup>494</sup> and ask for a stop off Omara Road on East Street. By 10p.m. I am at Claudia's. Marsha is already there, and, as usual, thank God she cooked some food: curry chicken ad white rice. If it had been left up to Claudia, no food would've been cooked.

We chilled and chit-chat for a little after we were finished eating. We made sure not to eat too much to make our belly's get big cause we have a fashion show in Asylum later, especially since we will be modeling swim suites. By 10:45p.m., we start to fresh'n up: tweeze eyebrows, and get rid of any unwanted hair because MDiz fashion and Freddie James swim wear (aka, Freddie's dental floss them) don't leave anything to the imagination. The three of us arrived at Asylum by 11:30p.m. and Freddie is already outside the club waiting on La' Crème girls to give us our arm band to get in the club. We got the arm band and as soon as we started to chit-chat, Freddie chased us in to Melissa because she is waiting on us to do make-up and a final run through of the show.

We walked in the changing room at the back of the club and most of the girls have already reached and has received their clothing. Some of the girls are getting their make-up done by Melissa and Phylicia—another model who is also a make-up artist. Some are catching up with each other, and some are either on their phones, just chilling, or wining up themselves to the music the club is playing. As Mel saw Me, Marsha, and Claudia she says: “Oh, I thought you guys would be late again!” She gave us two sets of clothing and the swim wear Freddie suggested for us. Once all the girls arrived, Freddie came to the changing room to see if he was satisfied with who was wearing which swim suite. He switched swim wear with some of us who he felt like would wear the suites best. It's his design, he knows how he wants it to look so nobody complains. At the end of the day, we are getting paid to model whatever we get so we kept our mouths shut.

It is Thursdays night, and Ladies Night free before 11p.m. I Asylum. By 12:30/1p.m., the club is pack like a tin of Sardine. Kevin, di DJ, is playing all the hype songs and the club a “go-on with pure things.”<sup>495</sup> Mel told us to get in line. Everybody knows their position because we have rehearsals every Saturday and Sunday evenings in asylum. Kevin is our DJ during rehearsals too, so he has our playlist and knows all the ques.

I always get nervous once I am in the line-up. I'll be alright while in the clothes and everything, but once I get in the line-up, I get nervous. We know the stage, we know the music ques, and we know the routine inside out and from front to back, but I still get nervous. We know that if we fall while on the stage the audience will laugh us to scorn. If the crowd feels like we don't know how to model properly, they will throw paper, bottle cover, and straw up on the

stage at us. Not to mention the “booing” they will give us if they don’t like the designs or routine. The MC announces to the audience that the show is about to begin: once, twice, and on the third time, Kevin begins our playlist. This is it! Not turning back. The show has begun.

One by one the models go up and the crowd goes wild. The stage is being banged, people are shooting blanks in the air,<sup>496</sup> and a lot of uproar is heard. The moment I hear these things, I know the show is a success. Have finished modeling MDiz first and second design, and everyone loves it. Its now time for the third and final run—swim suite time. Marsha has already gone up and told us there is a man at the front of the stage with his camera phone that is taking a lot of Pum Pum<sup>497</sup> pictures. You always have one of those perverted men who takes up front row because they want to take pictures of our vaginas with their camera phone for personal use. The only person that Freddie allows to take to take picture of us is a professional photographer by the name of Nick from *Nickfotoworks*<sup>498</sup>

Freddie heard what Marsha said and told one of the security guards to handle it. It’s now Kerro’s turn, and after that will be my turn. Kerro always gets good responses, especially when modeling swim wear. She can walk good, and her body is thick. She has the perfect dancehall model body. I can hear my heart beating faster and faster as Kerro makes her last turn and walk towards the designated spot at the back of the stage beside the stairs.

It’s now my turn. I hear no music, no crowd, no MC—everything is just quiet. The only thing I can hear now is my beating heart. Once Kerro reaches the que with her back still turned to the crowd and about to turn to the crowd, I step up on stage. I count: One, two, three, enough time for the crowd to realize that a new girl has entered the stage, me. As I begin to walk onto the stage, Kerro is going down the stairs as smooth as when we do it in rehearsal. Not itch, now bounce up on one another. Just smooth.

The suite I am modeling is a one-piece thong leopard print. It is cut in a V-shape with the base just big enough to hide my unmentionables. The two strings on either side has just enough material to hide my nipples. One string in the middle of my chest (vertically) attaches together the two pieces of materials that is connected to the base and cover my breasts. Then, two smaller strings are sown on to either side that is tied in the middle of my back for support. Then, the pieces that are over my breasts are go up to my neck and turns in a halter-back. This piece—swim suite—does not leave nothing to the imagination. For a girl who grew up in a Christian,

Seventh Day Adventist home, who attended a Seventh Day Adventist preparatory and high school, this is one of the few places where I feel the most free and happy.

My senses are back, and the crowd is going wild. The big bright spotlight is on me, and as I start to strut to the front of the stage I feel a rush and tingle all over my body. “Work, Mona! Work,” and don’t you dear fall on the stage!” I hear my voice telling myself. As I walk close to the front of the stage I look to see if the perv is still there. I don’t see him. It looks as if the security guards kicked him out or something. Even though the pervert is gone, I still cannot stand wide when I get to the front of the stage. Freddie’s dental floss swim suite don’t give a lot of coverage for my private parts. All I can do is to lean and pose with my hand on my hips on the left hand side, cave in my right thigh in order to close the my thigh gap, kick out my right leg a little so it almost look like the letter K, and make my right hand fall in front of my pubic area so that I don’t expose myself too much. There is no way in hell I could’ve done a Super Girl, shero pose at the front of the stage without making everyone look up in my brain while wearing that swim suite.

As I make my way across the T-shaped stage, di crowd haven’t really gotten a good glimpse of the back so they don’t know that it’s a thong or G-string as of yet. When I turned my back to the crowd while walking to the bottom of the runway, Father-Jesus, that’s when they began to make a lot ot noise. Who is not shooting blanks in the air is beating down the bar, or is jumping up with their hands in the air. It is lady’s night as I previously said, so there are more women in the club than men, and their voices are overpowering those of the men. I have finished my run, and I am standing at the side of the stair and Claudia steps up. Man, or man! The crowd loves their Sexy Ras, which is the name she is popularly referred to. Everyone got a good response from the crowd.

Two more girls went up after Claudia, and the MC calls up all of us for the last run with the designer, Melissa Dunkley or MDiz collection. Mel gets a few orders for some of the pieces we modeled tonight, and gave out her number to some possible new clients. The club swung back from fashion show mode to club vide again. We received our pay from Freddie, and partied in the club for the rest of the night in the club. The club starts to turn on the light on about 3:30 a.m., and we head out. March, Claudia, and I walk across the road in front of Asylum parking lot to buy something to eat at the jerk man or the soup lady—I bought soup and Marsha



and Claudia share a jerk chicken. With the night still being young, we still want to party, so we try to decide if we should go downstairs Asylum to Taboo to watch some exotic dancers, or go to Fire Links Thursday night party. By the time we were finished eating it 4a.m. so I decided to go back to Spanish Town because I have work tomorrow morning. Freddie gets parrot to take me home so I just leave my things by Claudia. I might come back into Kingston later after work or just wait until Saturday when I come for rehearsal.

Parrot drops me off about 4:30a.m., and I am under the covers by 4:45a.m. This week was a good week. This is the second show I have done since this week—that's eight thousand dollars I have made on the side. I can give mommy some money for the light bill and extra money to go the wholesale for groceries without touch in my pay cheque. As I lay down in my bed I think to myself how much money the girls that can do three and four jobs a week can make. Like Claudia, she has made more than I have because she has done two jobs I have done this week plus she is a Magnum Girl and she has worked with them for one night this week. With less than two hours sleep before I have to get up for work later, I make sure to set the alarm on my phone before I doze off and can't wake up to go to the people's work tomorrow.

As I close my eyes, I feels mommy slapping my foot in an effort to wake me up. "You not going to wake up to go to work? You sleep through the alarm now you are going to rush like a headless chicken. If you can't manage night life and work, keep your work at the Credit Union and ease up off the dancehall thing!" But, it's a pity she doesn't know that I would pic dancehall every time if I had to choose. And when that day eventually came, dancehall got the preference. By that time, it had become clear to me that "*Dancehall a me Everything!*"<sup>499</sup> A few year later, I met my husband through Phylicia, the same model who was helping Melissa do make-up for the fashion show. She was dating Paul, my husband's brother. She was the one who introduced me to Paul's brother who lived in Canada. Now, both of us are married to the brothers, and I am sitting in Robarts Library writing about our story in dancehall. What a way life funny, eh? Had it not been for dancehall, I wouldn't have met hubs, wouldn't be in Canada, neither would I be doing this research.

Three months after I migrated to Canada I was enrolled in the Academic Bridging Program at the University of Toronto. A year or so later, I found the Caribbean Studies department, and it was in Prof. Melanie Newton's Caribbean Pop-Culture<sup>500</sup> class I read Carolyn

Cooper's *Lady Saw Cuts Loose*.<sup>501</sup> I couldn't believe how people, women, in the academe looked at women like my friends and I, and writing that "all other women" "play" ourselves it we believe we are empowered because we participate in dancehall.<sup>502</sup> That's when I realized that they don't know about the aspect of making money in dancehall that people like myself and my friends experienced.

## Appendix 2

### QUESTIONS: DANCEHALL PARTICIPANTS

- (1) Tell me a bit about dancehall. How long have you been involved? How did you get involved (probe – through friends etc.)
- (2) What do you do in dancehall? How would you describe it?
- (3) Is it very difficult to get into the industry? In what ways?
- (4) How often do you participate – say how many nights a week, for example?
- (5) Which dancehall sessions do you go to most often?
- (6) Have you ever been out of Kingston, out of Jamaica, for dancehall sessions? When and where? What role did you play and how did you manage to get these invitations /connections?
- (7) Do you keep your own dancehall sessions? How often do you do this? How did you get into this and does it pay to hold your own sessions?
- (8) Are the sessions organized mainly by men or women?
- (9) Walk me through everything you do to prepare for a dancehall session (PROBE: Outfit, who makes it, how you decide on style, fabric, colour, is it very expensive; where you get your shoes etc.; hair, makeup and nails; do you wear over your clothes, if so how often – do you lend clothes to each other or borrow from each other?)
- (10) Do you go to dancehall with a crew or do you go by yourself? Are there well-known crews, can you name some of them, are any of the crews known for a particular look or dance or controlling of a particular area (probe as well for non-Jamaican participants)?
- (11) How did you link up with your crew?
- (12) Is your crew women only or are there men in your crew?
- (13) Do you get booked for events with your crew or mostly on your own?
- (14) Do you have a manager or do you freelance?
- (15) Who do you get jobs from (men or women)? If men, why you think it is mostly men who doing the bookings?
- (16) Walk me through the dancehall session – do you dance on your own, with the crew, do you start dancing right away or do you wait until the cameraman comes?
- (17) How important is dancehall to you? Why?
- (18) Are you able to make a living from dancehall, can it help you get ahead in life and how?
- (19) Do you think men and women get the same treatment in dancehall?
- (20) Do you think men and women make the same amount of money in dancehall for the same kinds of jobs?
- (21) Thinking back to everything you do in dancehall, from finding money for clothes to getting booked to getting transportation, would you say it is a lot of work? Did you ever see this as work? Do you think the pay you get is equal to the amount of work you put in?
- (22) What would you change about dancehall to make your involvement better?

- (23) Do you find the crews work together or do they fight each other down?
- (24) Thinking back, do you feel that women support and hold up other women in dancehall (probe to see if they can give any examples)?
- (25) Do you think if women came together, things might be improve in dancehall? Why?



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
NEW COLLEGE

June 10, 2014

Information Letter for WOMEN IN JAMAICAN DANCEHALL:

Examining the Complexities of the Informal Economy of Women's Dancehall Culture.

Dear Madam,

I am an undergraduate Humanities student at the University of Toronto. The purpose of this study is to complete an ongoing undergraduate research project on the role of women in Jamaican dancehall's informal economy. I am specifically interested in three categories of women who participate in dancehall: women who sell goods related to the dancehall industry, the dancer and the model.

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview. We can meet at a time and place convenient for you. The interview will take approximately one hour to complete. If you consent, I would like to tape and take notes during the interview for analysis afterwards.

Some questions that I would like to ask you during the interview are:

- What role do you play in dancehall
- What role does dancehall play in your life?
- What economic role does dancehall play in your life?
- What are the economic benefits of participating in dancehall?
- What are the overall benefits of participating in dancehall?"
- Do you see your involvement in dancehall as a form of employment? In what ways are you able to make a living from dancehall?
- Can you make a living from dancehall?
- Do you feel that dancehall can help you get ahead in life (if yes, in what way)?



- Do you feel that men benefit economically from dancehall? The same as women, or more than women?
- Do you believe that women and men get the same opportunities in dancehall?
- Do women support other women in dancehall? Can you give any examples?
- Are you a member of a group of women in this industry?
- How long have you participated in dancehall?

All information from this project will be kept confidential. Neither your name nor your identity will be used in the final write up of my report. The tapes of the interview will be kept for one year after the project and then destroyed. Any notes and transcript will be kept up to 3 years after the study for any further research I will do. However, all information will remain confidential. All identifiable electronic information outside of a secure environment will be encrypted, consistent with UT's data security and encryption standard detailed in the UTprotect guideline. You will be free to raise questions or concerns with me throughout this project, and may withdraw at any time up to three weeks after the interview has been completed. If you decide to withdraw for any reason, I will not use any of your information, and it will be immediately destroyed. Please be assured that you are not obliged to participate in an interview.

Although the findings of this interview will not benefit you directly, through your participation in this research study, you will be contributing to the production of new and possibly illuminating knowledge about the experiences of women in Jamaican dancehall's informal economy. In addition, upon the completion of the final write up, you will receive a summary of the findings from this project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via phone or email. You may also directly contact my supervisor, Dr. Alissa Trotz at the Women and Gender Studies Institute, who can be reached at [da.trotz@utoronto.ca](mailto:da.trotz@utoronto.ca) and by telephone at (416) 978-8286.

You can also directly contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto [ethics.review@utoronto.ca](mailto:ethics.review@utoronto.ca), (416-946-3273), if you have any further questions about this project or your participation in it.

Yours Sincerely,

Leslie-Ann Fullerton  
University of Toronto,  
Woodsworth College  
119 George St  
Toronto, ON  
M5A 2N4



**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
NEW COLLEGE**

**June 10, 2014.**

**CONSENT FORM FOR WOMEN IN JAMAICAN DANCEHALL'S INFORMAL  
ECONOMY**

Date:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in a study of the experiences of women who participate in Jamaican informal economy.

I understand that, as a participant in the study, I will be asked to respond to a set of interview questions. I understand that participation in the study may involve answering questions such as:

- What role do you play in dancehall
- What role does dancehall play in your life?
- What economic role does dancehall play in your life?
- What are the economic benefits of participating in dancehall?
- What are the overall benefits of participating in dancehall?
- Do you see your involvement in dancehall as a form of employment? In what ways are you able to make a living from dancehall?
- Can you make a living from dancehall?
- Do you feel that dancehall can help you get ahead in life (if yes, in what way)?
- Do you feel that men benefit economically from dancehall? The same as women, or more than women?
- Do you believe that women and men get the same opportunities in dancehall?
- Do women support other women in dancehall? Can you give any examples?
- Are you a member of a group of women in this industry?
- How long have you participated in dancehall?

I understand that the interview will take about 60 minutes and will occur at a time and place that is convenient for me.

I understand that I am under no obligation to agree to participate in an interview.

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I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions, to stop the interview at any time or withdraw from the study up to three weeks after the interview has been completed. If I do participate, and there are issues that come up during our interview that I would rather not talk about, I will say so. If at some point I decide that I would like not to continue the interview, I can just let you know of that and we will stop—in that case you will not use any of the information I have provided.

I understand that my specific answer and comments will be kept confidential. I understand that neither my name nor address will be identified in any report or presentation which may arise from this study.

I understand that only the investigator (Leslie-Ann Fullerton) and her supervisor (Dr. Alissa Trotz) will have access to the information collected during the study. Tapes will be retained for a period of 3 years after the completion of the study. They will then be erased. Transcripts (with no names attached to them) may be retained in both paper and disk form for a longer period (in case a follow up study after 5 or 10 years would be useful). If I am not comfortable with taping the interview, I will just ask you to take notes during the interview. All identifiable electronic information outside of a secure environment will be encrypted, consistent with UT's data security and encryption standard detailed in the UTprotect guideline.

I understand that while I may not benefit directly from this study, the information gained may assist both researchers and education professionals to better understand the experiences of women who participate in the Jamaican informal economy, the Caribbean and worldwide.

I understand that a summary of the findings of this study will be sent to me.

I understand what this study involves and agree to participate. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

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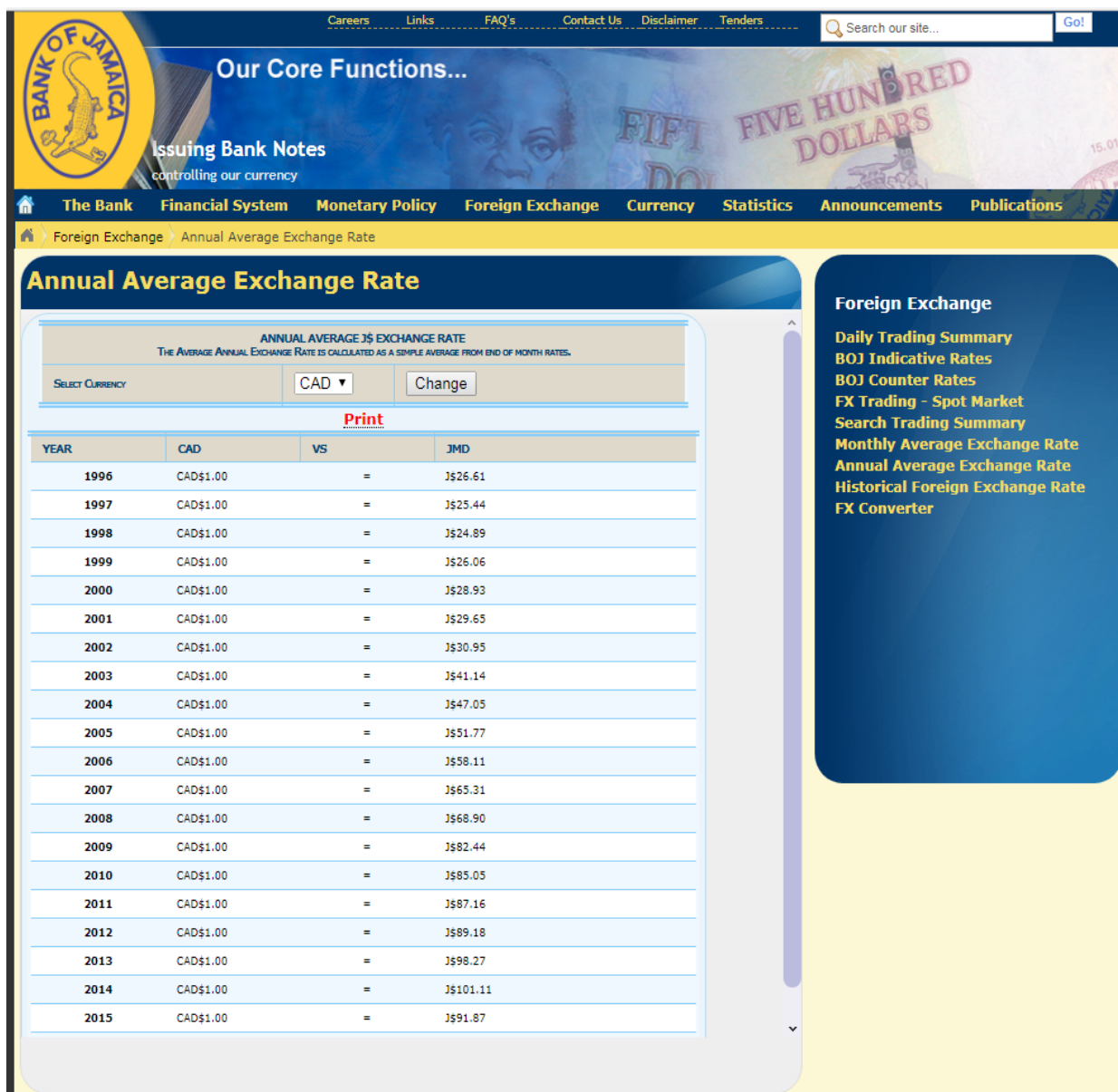
Signature

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Date



## Appendix 3



Jamaican – Canadian Annual Average Exchange Rate between 1996 and 2015.<sup>503</sup>

## Appendix 4

### Chapter Four

#### Mapping the Dancehall's Informal Economy Space: Black and White Edition.

It's been two months now me, Claudia, and Marsha a [has been] planning for Black and White. We thought about how we will do our hair and what kind of design we are going to give Meleissa to make. December is one of the busiest month for [Jamaican] dancehall and Meleissa is going to be busy. So, the three of us buy our material, give our design to Meleissa, and paid down on our outfit from the second in the month [of December]. This way, we know say [that] our clothes will be on the top of the list and will be ready for December 31. Black and White by La Roose is not going to miss us this year. 2005 is Melissa's year. Her thing [career] take off [catapulted to heights of success] on a different level, and is pure (predominantly) star she is sewing for. Artist like Etana, Queen Ifrica, Spice, and Pamputtate (she was just about to break out [as an artist] real big then. Meleissa even started to get contracts with Magnum, and she was even working with Romeich Designs (that was during the time when she was designing for Rodney (bounty Killer) Price long before he branched out his company into Romeich Entertainment). So, because we knew say [that] we couldn't go to Meleissa last minute like before, we made sure to put in our order long before so we will get our clothes when we are ready.

Claudia and Marsha collected their clothes from Meleissa from the middle of the week and bought their hair at Sassy's, and shoes, purse and other accessories so that they don't have to do last minute shopping. Claudia had locked (hair) then, so she used to just style her natural hair or pull it in a mohawk with extensions. I couldn't pick up my clothes with them (when they did). I was still working at St. Catherine Cooperative Credit Union and the Christmas rush was heavy [intense]. I had to go shopping after work in the evenings. I would just go to Half-Way Tree, Pavilion Mall, Constant Spring Road, Constant Spring Mall, and even Cross Road to find something I liked—I never went downtown because I don't know there and I was afraid to of down there. Tamara, model and video vixen who <sup>504</sup>is in the leopard print dress in Shaggy's, Church Heathen music video, just came back from abroad and was selling Remy Yacki hair for

JA \$12,000 (CAD \$235.00) (Please see Currency Converter Chart: appendix 3). I bought three packs from her so I didn't have to worry about that (hair). Back then, Brazilian and Peruvian hair was not popular in Jamaica as it is now. Remy was running things (in high circulation). One day, I found a silver strapped high heel or (JA\$5000 (CAD\$98.00) and the day before the party I found a silver purse in Spanish Town, HiLo, for JA\$3,800 (CAD\$74.00). Once I get my dress from Meleissa and do my hair, I will be ready. If it (this party) was a regular weekly dance I would wear what I have (in my wardrobe), but you have to go out in full force for Black and White (party).

I got scheduled to work the Saturday shift the day of the party from 9:30am to 1:30pm. As work was over and I checked off, I jumped on a bus from Portmore and headed straight to Meleissa's house to go and sit (at her house) and make sure I got my dress—she did not have her shop as yet. When I got to Meleissa's house, my heart dropped (fell)! Cars were parked outside her gate and people are on her veranda waiting on their clothes. “Lord Jesus, Christ! I am not leaving here tonight?” I thought to myself! As I stepped on the veranda and Meleissa saw me she greeted me with: “Mona, you are going to have to wait, you know! Because your dress has not even been cut as yet.” God know, my mouth got dry like a chalk immediately because of how vexed I was. I couldn't even say a word. I just went inside the house and chilled with Nicole, Flames, and her sister, Simone and baby Brianna. They then told me that Meleissa is backed up because she got a last-minute contract from Gary for new Magnum uniforms for the Magnum girls. All I could do is wait until she was ready for me. I couldn't even argue. Mi, Claudia, Marsha, and Meleissa are good, good (repetition for emphasis) friends. She was never just my designer. Plus, when I wanted an outfit and don't have enough money she always fixed me up. So, I have to give and take sometimes.

Claudia and Marsha texted me about 6:45pm telling me they finished doing their hair and they are now doing their nails at Serita's nail shop. It is a good thing that my nails, which was done during Christmas season, still looks good(ish) because they say the salon has stopped taking (accepting) people. Meleissa finished my dress about 8pm. To tell you the truth, I did not even get the dress I designed. She just build (created) a dress for me out of a piece of white stretchy lace material she had in stock. Even though I never (didn't) get the dress I wanted, the dress she ended up making (is) “bad like yawz.”<sup>505</sup> She made a long flowy dress that is suck on

(close fitted) to my hips with the top half of the dress having the same design like (similar) the swimsuit that I described in the My Location Section of this essay. When I looked on the time and traffic I just headed straight to my yard (home). I have a few wigs I can choose from and I already bought my shoes and bag, so I am good. All things considered, my outfit sell off (looks good). Plus, I manage to save some money: I ended up paying JA\$5000.00 for the dress because Meleissa gave me a JA\$3,500.00 discount because I waited so long, and I won't get to do my hair (so I'll keep the money I would have paid the hairdresser). Give thanks for small blessings.

I reached home about 10pm, and tried on my outfit for mommy. The first thing she said was, "then Mona, [isn't] that dress there see not through?" I laughed and said, "yeah, but the material is a thick lace, not chiffon. So, it's not really showing up [revealing] nothing, mommy." She said it looked nice, but she does not understand how the dress is long (reach) down to my ankle but I am still naked." I just laughed and told her, "fashion over style." I decided to get some sleep before I start to get ready. It's just 10:30pm, so it's still early. I can get about three hours sleep before I go to the dance. And all though its bear clappers a bus up<sup>506</sup> in Dela-vega city, the men are outside running a boat<sup>507</sup> and playing dominos in the lane, and making a whole heap of noise because they are celebrating the new year, I am going to try to get some sleep before this party here. It will be daylight before it's going to done (end).

About 1:30am, Marsha texted me saying she and Claudia are going to start getting ready, and that they are taking a take because they didn't bother to rent a car. Even though it will take a longer time for them to reach La Roose than me because Dela is closer to Portmore than Kingston, I decided to get up so I can get rid of my sleepy face when it's time for me to apply my make-up. By 2:30am I am ready, called a cab and told Marsha and Claudia I'm leaving out now. When I went out by the lane mouth (entrance) to wait on the cab, I saw Michelle and Shelly-Ann at the top of the avenue in their Sunday best, and I know that they are going to Black and White because they go every year.

The taxi drove on (what is popularly known as) Back Road to get to La Roose from Dela-vega. Back Road is dark and usually very lonely, and it is on this strip of road that the prostitutes in Spanish Town and Portmore mostly work. I knew I was almost there when I started to hear the music from a distance. The closer the taxi got the louder the music got, too. I started to get

excited in the back of the car as we drove in darkness. As the music got louder and louder, I began to see the street lights in the distance. The closer and closer (we got, the) brighter and brighter (the lights became). At last, we reach!

The taxi couldn't let me off close (nearby) because all the cars that were lined up bumper to bumper, trying to get into La Roose. The taxi about 200 meters away from the entrance. I am still in a little darkness. I came out of (exit) the car—darkness behind me, and walking towards the light. I exit the car on the left-hand side of the road (on the soft shoulder). There was bear (a lot of) bush and abandoned/unfinished buildings on that side of the road, and La Roose and some hotels on the right. This is why Back Road is always full of prostitutes, but tonight, there are only flashy, expensive cars and people lined off on the street. Everybody came out tonight: party-goers, stall owners, jerk-men, soup women, bikes, cars, and even dogs. Brand-name cars blasting music like they were competing with the music from the party. Bike riders with their women sprawled on the back, while revving their engines and span their tires, smoking up the road so that dogs got cowards and ran—hiding behind a stall. I passed the line of cars as I walked towards La Roose on the opposite side. The line to enter is long and looks miserable, and I was not ready to push my way through the line like “hog and goat.”<sup>508</sup> As I walk past one car, two car, three car, four, I start to feel the excitement growing as I got closer to the big crowd.

I could see, smell and hear the dance. The string of jerk pans lined off on both sides of the road. The smoke coming from out of the top of the jerk pan. The smell of meat jerking: Lord it smelled good! In all, I past about six jerk pans lined off on both sides of the road. Between them were ladies selling soup: one might have chicken foot, one vegetable or corn, the will other have beef., but not everybody selling the same soup. Another woman was selling roast fish that is wrapped up in aluminum file. Then you have cart vendors lined off on each side of the road between the jerk man and the soup women; in no real (particular) order to the thing (structure). As I past one stall a vendor called out asking: “Nice girl, you don't want something to buy?” When you pass another, you get asked the same question. I heard a loud annoying whistle and when I look around to see what was making that sound, I saw a peanut man a sell roasted nuts from his handcart over on the sided where La Roose is located. I wonder is “who is going to buy peanuts and get their mouths smelly before big dance?” I think to myself. Immediately, man dressed in a white pants suit with black inside shirt, black tie and a white pointed toe shoe bought

a parcel of peanut that's wrap in a coned shape brown paper. "I guess I'm the only one thinking that way" I thought to myself. The road was paved off smooth, but the sidewalk is very rocky and full of white mall (loose white dirt). A girl in front of me wearing black heels sink into the white mall and emerge scraped and damaged. I felt myself struggling a little to walk in my new shoe on this sidewalk, so I start to watch my step (more carefully) and find somewhere to stand while I wait on Claudia and Marsha.

I past the jerk men and stand (in a place) where my friends can see me once they drive up. It's kind of hard because the place (is so) packed to the brim (capacity). The men look nice, yeah, but the girls really represent tonight! A bear (a lot of) hot girl are here; their hair, shoes, and clothes is up there (looks good). "These girls did not get the memo?" I think to myself as I see a group of girls who are dressed as if they are going to a regular dance amongst the crowd of people that's so elegantly dressed—as much as one can be in a dance. I catch myself. "Maybe they don't have the money go all out like of us, but all of us are going to the same dance, hear the same music and dance to the same songs." I think correctively. I stand right at the edge of the entrance of the parking lot, which is really an open space where everybody use to park their cars. Beside me is a woman selling soup and next to her is a jerk man. I noticed a pattern: the women were selling soup while men were jerking. One Rasta man past me with a big bouquet of ganja stalks adverting for sale, shouting: "high grade! high grade!" And even though there are a few police around, he does not really seem fi care. The smell of the jerk meat and soup makes me realize I did not eat, and my belly begins rumbling in hunger. I stopped a lady walking by of nick-nacks on her head and in her hands selling (appendix 5) and got a pack of Wrigley's from her, but she does not have change for a Nanny (JA\$500.00). So I bought a hundred and fifty dollars (JA\$150.00) soup and kill two birds with one stone: get soup so I won't faint in the dance later in the morning, and get the money changed that I can get my pack of gum. I can't even find anywhere to sit and drink the soup. I have to stand on the road side where people passing and bouncing up on me like they want me to drop soup on my good-up, good-up dress and I have not even got into the dance as yet.

"Hey Girl" Who is looking so [sexy]?" shout Claudia from her taxi. Thank you, Jesus! They are here. "My friends look good no ..... claat!" I shout back at them once they exist the car. First of all, I don't even know how Claudia got her locks so flat that she could install a full

house (full head of hair) extension without it looking high and unnatural. Claudia has on a long tight sheer black dress with small shiny flowers that's spread out scanty. One side has long sleeve long dung that spans down to her wrist while the other side is without. The side with sleeve is cut diagonally from her left shoulder to her right hip at the back and front so that only the right side of chest and back are covered. Meleissa make a bikini top from the same material—otherwise, Claudia's right breast would be exposed. A silver broach was used to connect the front and back of dress on her left hip, and a long front split flowed down from the broad doe to her ankle. Claudia then matched it with a silver shiny heel where one strop was over her toes and the other just a little above her angle that goes through loop at the back strop, which is connected to the sole of the shoes and heel. She pairs it with a silver and black clutch and French tips. Marsha looked like a little doll and she always dressed that way. Marsha have on a short blond twenty-nine-piece hair that's cut short on both sides curly at the top. She paired it with a long chandelier silver earring. The top half of dress is made from black stretchy chiffon like material. The neck has a broad, tick band at the front that makes it look like turtle neck and is tied in a bow in the back. A cylinder shape hole cut out from di bottom lining of the neck to about the middle of her chest. The sleeve end about midway between her shoulder and elbow, and is shaped like a little pumpkin with the same kind of tick band at the end. When she turns her back, the only thing you can see is the bow at the back of her neck, her naked back, and her Venusian dimples: the entire back of the dress is cut out. From front view, the top half that's made from chiffon connects to her down to her hips where the round, fluffy, pumpkin shaped, shiny short skirt begin. She too wore a silver clutch, black and silver bracelet, and black nails. Her shoes were a black pointy pump, which was worn with a silver anklet. When we were finished complementing each other, turn towards La Roose's entrance, making up our minds to take on the task of getting in through the crowd, the gate security, paying patrons, and those who are begging for the "boss man" to allow him to enter for a discount or free. "If you can't find the thousand-dollar entrance fee, stay at your yard!" I heard the voice in my head saying. But then again, not everyone has money, but everyone wants to fuljoy (enjoy) themselves.

We finally get in. Everybody and their mother is here. The artists are out in full force and locked off (carrell) a corner with their entourages making what looks like protective circle around the table with the drinks. When you look way over the turn, it looked like all the selectors are here. Big Belly Sky Juice is set plying: "One More Night"<sup>509</sup> by Phil Collins, Tony

Matterhorn, Fire Links, and many more are here. Lucky British and his friends are there. They look like foreigners. The dancer roll out: Sample Six and his people, Shady Squad, Ding Dong and the Ravers Clavers, Sadiki, Keiva di dancing Diva, Mad Michelle, Dancehall Queen Latesha, an Mystic Davis. I even saw Tamara and some other models. There are a few groups of Japanese: male and female. There are even more Whittie than usual. I'm not going to lie, La Roose pack. Anyways, we find a nice spot to stand and hold a vibes for the night. After a while Nick from Nickfotoworks came and told us to pose for a pic we pose, took the pic then kept it moving. We're not even worried about the pitchers because we know we will see him at Weddy Weddy a next time. We will pay for then and collect next time. Marsha and I (duo name, Mosha) decided to buy drinks by the bar. We barely found walking room. As we shuffled through the crowd towards the bar I saw Michelle and Shelly from Dela. We greeted each other and keep it moving. We shuffle past video man, Scrappy making sure to capture Lucky British and his friend's clothes from head to toe. We past the other video man, Two Grand, videoing in the direction of popular artists. Reaching the bar is one thing, getting a chance to order is another. We fought and pushed until we reached the front, made our order, and headed to back our spot. When we got to our spot, we just held a vibe.

About 4:30am or so the dance gets hot. Mostly male songs are play and male dancers are making a dancing stage in the middle of the dance. There are a few female dancers that have joined them doing the move for move without missing a beat, but because it is male segment of the dance you can see where the female dancers are fighting in the midst of the men trying to make their presence known. They surround the di video man and the spot light is on them. There are a few pockets of other dancers doing their thing throughout the dance, but I can't really see which crew is creating so much excitement. Mi can only see the one's close to us. We are just there waiting on girl tunes (songs) to start. My glad bag burst (I was so happy) when Tony Matterhorn switched up the mood and start the segment called "dash away morning" (throw away morning is a segment that is popularly regarded as a time for female orientated songs to play) and start to play Vybz Kartel "Beyoncé Wine"<sup>510</sup> for the ladies in attendance. We all broke out (dance extensively). Who was prim and proper is now bending over and is "bruk out" (break out) in their good dresses. If you were there and stood upright and look around all you would see is a sea of women's back as they bend over performing variated wines. The camera men start to feature the women, and female dancers begin to showcase their talent, doing their

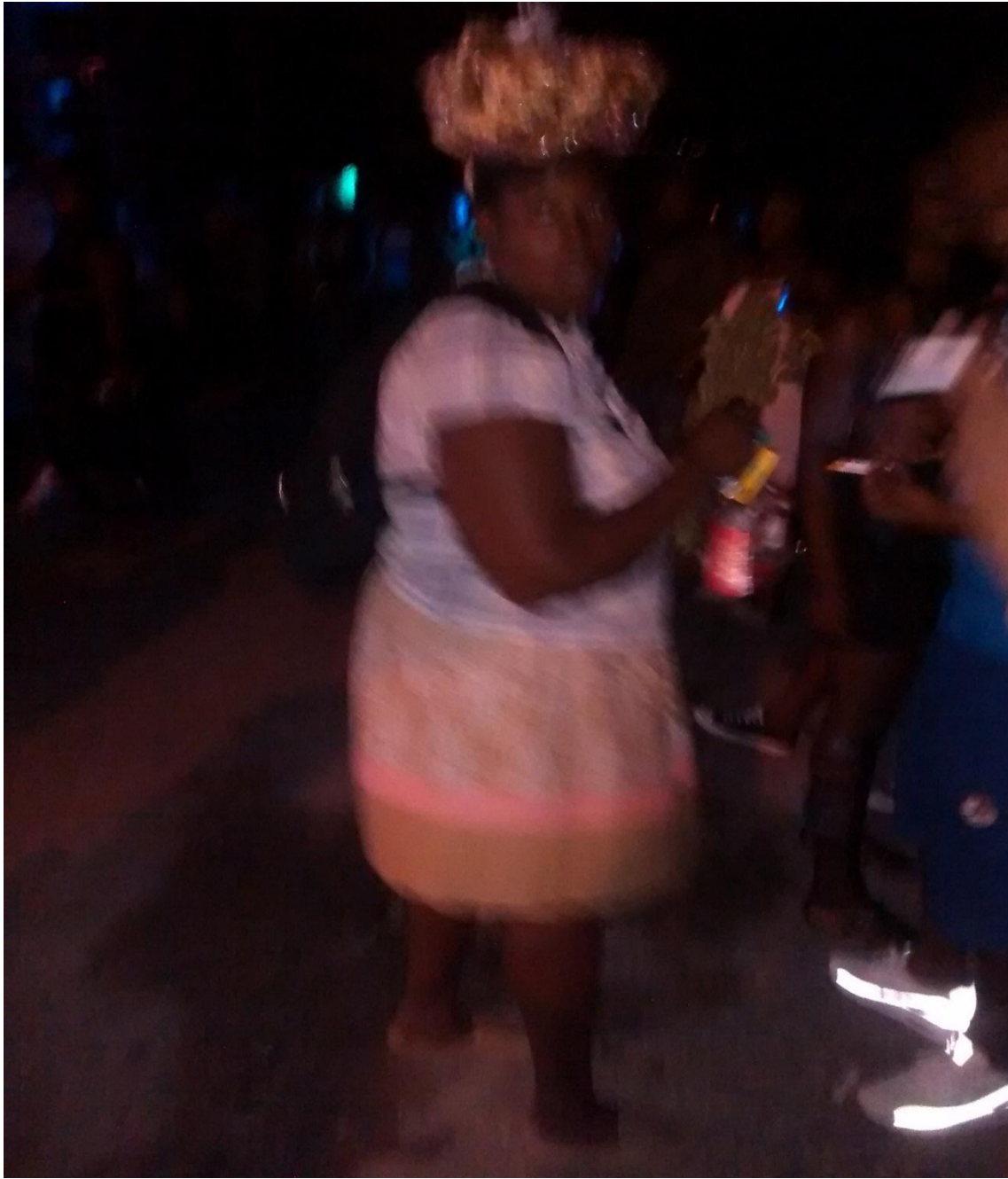


signature dance move or reveal a new move they created. Every girl starts to “dash out:” Jamaican dancers roll out! Japanese dancers roll out! I was even surprised when I saw some of the white women who look like they can’t mash ants (innocent) roll out also. Women and men began to dance together. Who is not getting jumped on getting dragged (a style of dancing). Girl tunes after girl tunes played. You can always count pan Tony Matterhorn fi represent the girl—whenever he is not chatting out his segment. And the video men were right there to catch everything. People overseas will buy up this party video in no time. We dance until the sun come up. Uniformed police come in the party, exposing their big guns, about 7:am. The selector starts playing Assassin’s “Cyah Lock off Di Dance”<sup>511</sup> and everyone starting the song loudly on the top of their lungs at the police. I guess they can lock off the dance because everyone starts heading to the gate at the sight of the police.

Outside is busy. People talking and laughing as they leave. Some remain inside the venue: some talking, dancing. Just waiting on the first wave of people to leave. Me, Claudia and Masha head to the gate. The security open both gates so that people can leave easier. Some people are on their phone calling their rides. There are cars driving out the parking lot. Bikes riding out. Sum girls have their shoes in their hands and walking barefooted because their shoes are burning or their feet are just tired from standing so long. People buying food from vendors. The taxis are parked outside now more than earlier trying to catch people who are going home. Claudia buy a piece a jerk chicken and shares it between the three of us. It was too early in the morning for each to eat a whole serving. I start feeling sick so I bear a Ginger Bear. We tell each other bye and di two of them got a cab going into Town while I get one to Dela. We really fulljoy (enjoy) ourselves. Last night when I was coming to dance the road was dark. Now I’m leave and the sun is bright and hot. As I sit in the back of the taxi, I realize this is the first time I’m sitting first time my feet are getting a little rest within the last four hours. As my mind drifts away, I remember that Meleissa said she was going to come to Black and White. I guess she was too tired after she was finished sowing. “Poor soul,” I think silently. But then again, she must have a made a killing.



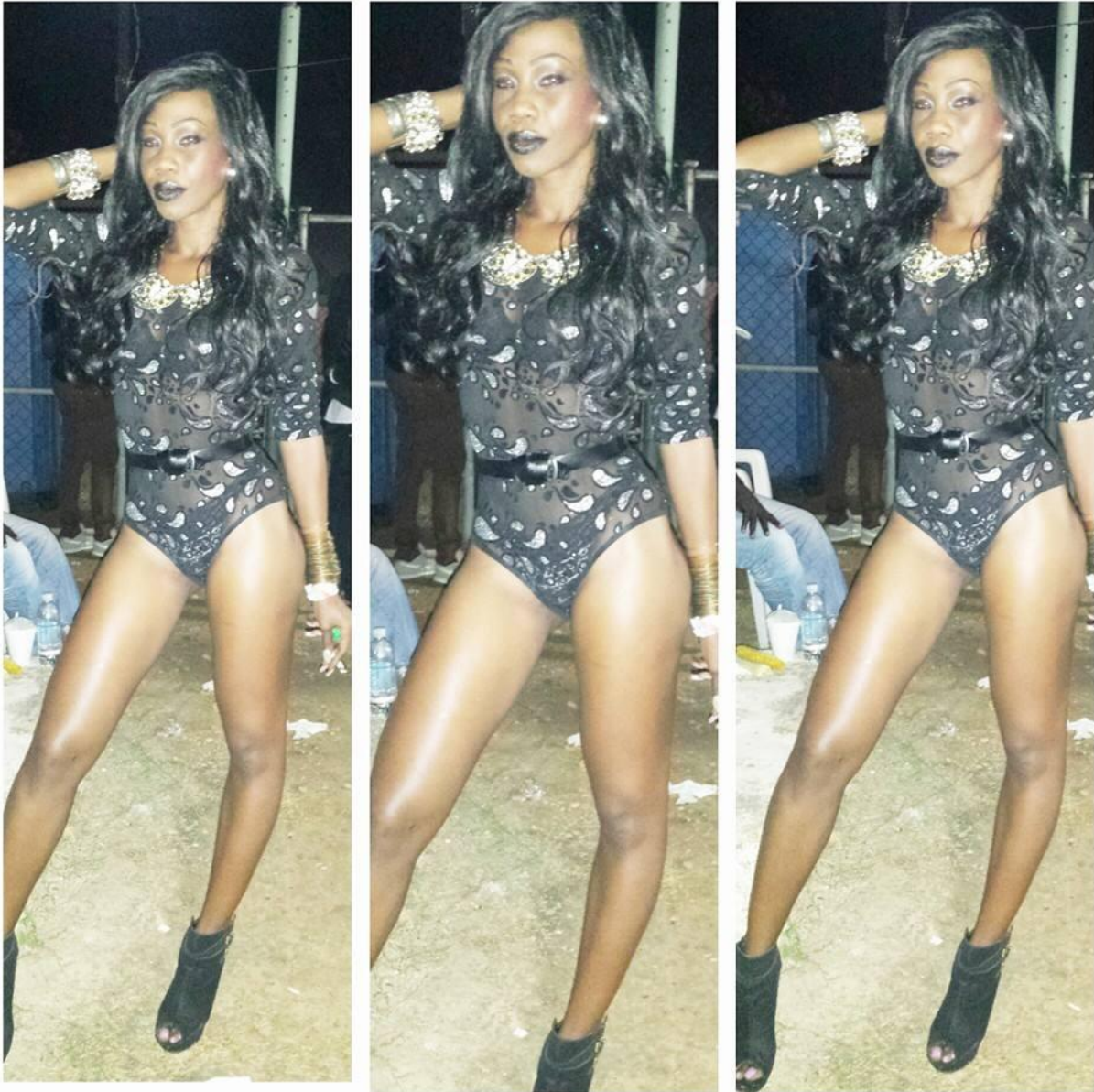
## Appendix 5



Female vendor with hand-held good and goods balanced on her head walking through the dance selling.

Photo Credit: Leslie-Ann Fullerton, 2014

## Appendix 6



Dancehall Queen, Latesha: 2004 winner of the International Dancehall Queen Competition.

Dancer, teacher, choreographer, and promoter/agent. Her signature fashion style is wearing a belt with her outfits, multiple belts at times.



## Appendix 7



Latonya Style: The founder and Chief Executive Officer of Dance Jamaica (Dance Movement) a Talent/Entertainment Organization which portrays the culture of Jamaica and its vibrant people.<sup>512</sup> She is also a dance teacher and choreographer by profession.

Latonya Style's signature fashion style is wearing colourful clothing, most of which represents the Jamaica flag, and brandishing colourful braids and cornrows (frequently in a mohawk).

## Appendix 8



Mama P: Serving a customer soup from her bellagut pot outside of a dancehall party in 2014.

Photo Credit: Leslie-Ann Fullerton:2014

## Appendix 9



### Appendix

Dancehall Queen, Junko: 2002 International Dancehall Queen winner  
Japanese national. Dancer, teacher, choreographer in Japan.

Photo credit: Google Image

## Appendix 10

It is kind of difficult to be a part of a fashion industry in Jamaica and foreign and not develop relationship with members of the LGBT community. They normally an instrumental role in the production of a desired look for the runway or print, whether they are designers or beautician. A year or so before I migrated, I started working with a new fashion label who was not branded as a dancehall modeling agency—unlike La Crème Model and talent. This organization, which I prefer not to name—aspired to be a competitive force with regards to providing models to high fashion clienteles. Unlike La Crème, this is where I became friends with a lot of persons from the LGBT community who earned a living from the fashion industry. Rich Kid (not his real name) was one such person.

I lost contacts with a lot of people when I came to foreign in 2009. Rich Kid was one of them. We eventually met up back on Facebook. It was through his Facebook pictures that I learned he had travelled extensively—why? This came with surprises. Let’s just put it this way: The alias of “Rich Kid” I have chosen to use in this research would have not been the case before I left Jamaica. His living situation was very complicated but is not a unique characteristic of being gay in Jamaica. I also remember him being attacked and beaten at one point because of assumed sexual orientation. Essentially, when I left Jamaica he was an at-risk youth whose vulnerability was exponentially increased because of his sexuality. This was no longer the case. What is even more noteworthy is the fact that these women—yes, transwomen—are also intertwined within the dancehall informal economy: they perform and contribute to the flow of monetary currency through the tropes of dancers and auxiliary staffs. It is clear, that a deeper



examination of this community and the ways the navigate system oppression in Jamaica as a society and within the dancehall subculture.

## Appendix 11



Keith (Shebada) Ramsey.

Photo taken during a scene in one of the many theater production he has acted in.

Phot credit: Google imange.

## Appendix 12



Shizzle Sherlock



Dancehall personality that is famous for being famous. In this picture he is seen wearing a woman's dress.

## Appendix 13



Elephant Man and Beenie Man onstage performance at the 2013 BET Awards show.

## Appendix 14

### **My life and the Informal Economy.**

I grew up in a family where a leafy, green, vegetable by the name of callaloo fed, clothed, and schooled us. I grew up seeing my mother carry fifty and hundred pounds of callaloo on her head from Lakes Pen to Dela. When she got close to home someone sympathies and help with the load. I remember when she would go as far as Kitson Town to buy Callaloo to sell, and carry it on her head from di taxi stand in Spanish Town to Dela. If she had enough money, she'd pay a hand cart man to drop it by the house. I remember once when I attended Spanish Town Primary School, I'd literally wait around in my uniform for someone to buy a bundle of callaloo s<sup>513</sup>o that I could have lunch money (JA\$3.50) to go to school. I still hate bun and milk.<sup>514</sup> I remember my childhood friends, Nicky and Shelly, would tease me by calling me “nyam an guweh” (eat and go away) because I frequently went to their house just to have meal that was not made from Callaloo. I grew up in a house where selling callaloo in the scheme and market brought in an income for the family and also served as dinner.

I started modeling with La Crème after a friend Raquel, invited me. However, when St. Catherine Cooperate Credit Union did not renew my contract after three years I could have gone in search of another cooperate job, but I chose dancehall. Dancehall's informal economy became the source of all my income. A part of me believe that the Credit Union did not renew my contract because they found out I was doing dancehall videos—even though always try disguise myself. The truth is they never paid enough created the needed for me to supplement my income. They didn't have a problem with me modeling runway. They even sponsor me for Pulse International model search competition in 2006

I used to only do runway (fashion show). I did a lot of work with Natalie Paraboosighn.<sup>515</sup> I even did one at British High Commission with Tessanne Chin performing her hit song “Hide Away”<sup>516</sup> for, then Posh designs, now Poshstyle Image Consulting.<sup>517</sup> However, there were more money to be made in dancehall. While managing La Crème, Meleissa use to make the outfit for video shoots, provide models, and manage models. At times, she even did video, too. After Meleissa decided she would stop managing La Crème in order to focus more on her designing career, Freddie asked me to think about managing La Crème. I took him up on his offer. That was in 2006. Up until 2009 summer, I made a living from dancehall. Thursday and or Friday nights we did fashion show in Asylum. We did alcohol promotions in QUAD and other clubs and venues, and as extras in music video.

I remember on one night I was doing a fashion show on a boat ride. I was see sick the whole night but I had to work. I use to stand for lengthy periods in heels until the balls of my feet developed thick callous. It even got difficult fi mi walk in flat shoes because my feet got accustomed to heels. Night after night, we work at events. If you didn’t go out there and work, you would not pay. If you had menstrual cramps, you had to work. If you had an headache, you had to work in the noisy dancehall. Just like any other job, if you felt *vexed* bout a particular work environment, you still had to go to work in order to get paid, or simply resign. This was my job.

Two of the biggest contracts I have ever landed was with with Magnum Tonic Wine of the Lascelles Limited Group. Claudia, myself, and a self-made dancehall artist, L.A. Lewis, posed for the “Cash Een” promotional campaign in 2007. Unfortunately, I do not have a copy, and I have yet to receive a reply from Magnum in response to my request for one. That poster was circulated all across Jamaica. I got that contract because marketing manager, Gary Dixon, did saw a picture of Claudia and I in Nick’s photo collection. The other big contact was through Natalie Paraboosighn where myself and most of La Creme female models opened for Magnum Kings and Queens of Dancehall every night for the entire 2008 season. Every Saturday night my family made sure they watched the opening fashion show so they could see me on T.V. That was a good financial “trade off”<sup>518</sup> that was more profitable than two months’ salary at the Credit Union. I did also moved into Kingston because I could not manage the commute,

especially when I finish working at 4am and 5am in the morning. Dancehall was what I use to earn a living and pay my rent after leaving the Credit Union.

I met my husband in 2007. My friend, Phylicia, who I met while modelling at La Crème, introduced us. In 2014, my seventy-year-old mother took her first trip to Canada in order to attend my undergraduate conversation at the University of Toronto. If I was not modelling in dancehall I would have not met Phylicia, neither would I have met my husband. Furthermore, mommy would have not been jumping up in excitement, making a lot of noise, shouting with pride: Mona! Mona! as I walked across the stage. Then when she died last year, and friends were telling me “don’t cry” or “God knows best,” only Rodney (bounty Killer) Price was able make me feel better because I valued what he had to say since he knows exactly what I was going through. And now, I am sitting around this desk, writing this thesis in response to limited understanding of woman in Jamaica dancehall because I participated in dancehall. My life is one example of how dancehall can be used as a tool through which empowerment is achieved.

## Appendix 15



Picture of a Callaloo.

Photo Credit: Google Image.



## Appendix 16



Magnum Kings and Queens of Dancehall Opening fashion show on March 1, 2008

Photo Credit: Colin Hamilton of The Star, March 4, 2008.<sup>519</sup>

Leslie-Ann Fullerton (back/left), Gloria (top/right).



## Appendix 17



Leslie-Ann Fullerton:

Photo Credit: Family Album.

## Appendix 18



A group of a female dancehall dance group with both Jamaican and Japanese women. They even dressed in the same colour theme.

Name of group: Unknown.

Photo Credit: Leslie-Ann Fullerton (field research 2014).

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Dunkley, M. MDiz Collection. <http://www.mdizcollections.com/>

<sup>2</sup> Oxford University Press. 2017. English Oxford Living Dictionary.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/pum-pum> The vulgar descriptive option female genitals. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word originates from a West African language.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, Niketa. Owner of NickFotoWorks. [www.nickfotowork.com](http://www.nickfotowork.com) He was a well-known photographer in the dancehall scene. He took pictures at dancehall parties of patrons, dancehall personalities, models, and artists for a fee. He was declared missing in 2015 and has yet to be discovered. At this point, he is presumed dead. The Gleaner. Jamaica W.I. \$500,000 Reward For Info On Missing Photographer, Cousin Unclaimed. November 2, 2015 . <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20151102/500000-reward-info-missing-photographer-cousin-unclaimed>

<sup>4</sup> Vybz Kartel, *Dancehall Can't Stall*. Album: Viking (Vybz is King)-EP By Vybz Kartel. Produced by Vybz Kartel & TJ Records, Directed and Edited by Extreme Arts. February 2015. YouTube: VybzKartelVevo. March 9, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMJD7N-flx8>

<sup>5</sup> Prof. M. Newton. 2014. Caribbean Popular Culture. Course code: NEWHIS305F. University of Toronto.

<sup>6</sup> (Cooper, Lady Saw Cuts Loose 2004)

<sup>7</sup> (Lake, Rastafari Women: Subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology 1998, 131)

<sup>8</sup> Cooper. Carolyn. 2005. "Sweet and Sour Sauce: Sexual Politics in Jamaican Dancehall Culture." York University. p.1

<sup>9</sup> (N. C. Stolzoff 2000, 3)

<sup>10</sup> Bakare-Yusuf, Bibi. "Fabricating Identities: Survival and the Imagination in Jamaican Dancehall Culture." *Fashion Theory*, 2006.462

<sup>11</sup> Noble, Denise. (2008). Postcolonial Criticism, Transnational Identifications and the Hegemonies of Dancehall, Academic and Popular Culture. (Feminist Review) 107

<sup>12</sup> Fullerton, Leslie-Ann, 2014. Pum Pum Rule Jamaican Dancehall: An Analytic Response to the Inability to Recognize Female Sovereignty in Dancehall. (Caribbean Quilt-Volume 111. University of Toronto.

<sup>13</sup> (Noble, Postcolonial Criticism , Transnational Identifications and the Degemonies of Dancehall's Academic and Popular Performativities 2008 , 108)

<sup>14</sup> (Noble, Postcolonial Criticism , Transnational Identifications and the Degemonies of Dancehall's Academic and Popular Performativities 2008 , 106)

<sup>15</sup> (Cooper, Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large 2004)

<sup>16</sup> (Cooper, Noises in the Blood 1993, 141)

<sup>17</sup> (Cooper, Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large 2004, 18)

<sup>18</sup> (Noble, Postcolonial Criticism , Transnational Identifications and the Degemonies of Dancehall's Academic and Popular Performativities 2008 , 116)

<sup>19</sup> (Cooper, Noises in the Blood 1993, 141)

<sup>20</sup> (Noble, Postcolonial Criticism , Transnational Identifications and the Degemonies of Dancehall's Academic and Popular Performativities 2008 )

<sup>21</sup> (Cooper, Noises in the Blood 1993, 160)

<sup>22</sup> (Cooper, Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large 2004, 2-3)

<sup>23</sup> Mr. McGowan cited in the Sunday Gleaner, January 1, 1988, p.5, cited by Cooper in Noise in the Blood, 1993, p.161

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- <sup>24</sup> Mr. McGowan cited in the Sunday Gleaner, January 1, 1988, p.5, cited by Cooper in *Noise in the Blood*, 1993, p.161.
- <sup>25</sup> (Cooper, *Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* 2004)
- <sup>26</sup> (Cooper, *Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* 2004, 11)
- <sup>28</sup> (Noble, *Postcolonial Criticism , Transnational Identifications and the Degemonies of Dancehall's Academic and Popular Performativities* 2008 , 115)
- <sup>29</sup> (Cooper, *Noises in the Blood* 1993, 161)
- <sup>30</sup> (Cooper, *Noises in the Blood* 1993, 163)
- <sup>31</sup> (Lake, *Rastafari Women: Subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology* 1998)
- <sup>32</sup> (Lake, *Rastafrian Women: Oppression in the Midst of Revolution* 1998, 181)
- <sup>33</sup> (Lake 1998, 131)
- <sup>34</sup> (Lake, *Rastafrian Women: Oppression in the Midst of Revolution* 1998, 183)
- <sup>35</sup> (Lake, *Rastafari Women: Subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology* 1998)132
- <sup>36</sup> (Lake, *Rastafari Women: Subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology* 1998, 133)
- <sup>37</sup> (Cooper, *Lady Saw Cuts Loose* 2004, 100-103)
- <sup>38</sup> (Cooper, Cooper. Carolyn. 2005. "Sweet and Sour Sauce: Sexual Politics in Jamaican Dancehall Culture." 2005, 100-102)
- <sup>39</sup> (Cooper, *Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* 2004, 100-144)
- <sup>40</sup> (Merriam 2009, 11)
- <sup>41</sup> Hope, Donna. "THE BRITISH LINK-UP CREW: Consumption Masquerading as Masculinity in the Dancehall." *Interventions* 6, no. 1 (2004): 101-17. Accessed 2016. doi:10.1080/1369801042000185688. p.103
- <sup>42</sup> (D. Hope, *Inna Di Dancehall: Popular Culture and Politics of Identity in Jamaica* 2006)
- <sup>43</sup> Barake-Yusuf, B. 2006. *Fabricating Identities: Survival and the Imagination in Jamaican Dancehall.* (Fashion Theory) P.103.
- <sup>44</sup> Noble, Denise. (2008). *Postcolonial Criticism, Transnational Identifications and the Hegemonies of Dancehall, Academic and Popular Culture.* (Feminist Review) 107.
- <sup>45</sup> (Cooper, *Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture.* 1993, 136)
- <sup>46</sup> idbid
- <sup>47</sup> (Noble, *Postcolonial Criticism , Transnational Identifications and the Degemonies of Dancehall's Academic and Popular Performativities* 2008 , 109)
- <sup>48</sup> Lake, O. (1998). *Rastafari Women: Subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology.* Durham: North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press. P.131.
- <sup>49</sup> (Cooper, *Noises in the Blood* 1993, 163)
- <sup>50</sup> (Cooper, *Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* 2004, 125)
- <sup>51</sup> (Cooper, *Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* 2004, 103)
- <sup>52</sup> Merriam, Sharan. 2009. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009) p.5.
- <sup>53</sup> (Merriam 2009, 5)
- <sup>54</sup> (Schuster 2013, 11)
- <sup>55</sup> Cooper, C. 1993. *Oral/Sexual Discourse in Jamaican Popular Culture.* (MacMillan Caribbean: London). P.9
- <sup>56</sup> (Cooper, *Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture.* 1993)
- <sup>57</sup> Cooper, C. 1993. *Oral/Sexual Discourse in Jamaican Popular Culture.* (MacMillan Caribbean: London) p.1-2

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- <sup>58</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 8)
- <sup>59</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 8)
- <sup>60</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 8)
- <sup>61</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 49)
- <sup>62</sup> (Ulysses, Gina. 2007, Downtown Ladies. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- <sup>63</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 35)
- <sup>64</sup> Mintz, S., Hall, D. 1970. The Origins of Jamaican Internal Market System. (Papers on Caribbean Anthropology)3.
- <sup>65</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 28)
- <sup>66</sup> (Ulyssess 2007, 25)
- <sup>67</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 35)
- <sup>68</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 35-37)
- <sup>69</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 32)
- <sup>70</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 10-11)
- <sup>71</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 35)
- <sup>72</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 32)
- <sup>73</sup> (Ulyssess 2007, 27)
- <sup>74</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 27)
- <sup>75</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 29)
- <sup>76</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 36)
- <sup>77</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 27)
- <sup>78</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 36)
- <sup>79</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 35)
- <sup>80</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 36)
- <sup>81</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 29)
- <sup>82</sup> (Cooper, Sound Clask: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large 2004, 80)
- <sup>83</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 29)
- <sup>84</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 47)
- <sup>85</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 11)
- <sup>86</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 8)
- <sup>87</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 6-8)
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>89</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 5-13)
- <sup>90</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 13)
- <sup>91</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 2)
- <sup>92</sup> Cooper, C. 2004. Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large. (Palgrave MacMillan) p.6
- <sup>93</sup> Cooper, Carolyn, 1993. Noises in the Blood. (Palgrave Macmillan: New York).90
- <sup>94</sup> (Cooper, Noises in the Blood 1993, 90-91)
- <sup>96</sup> (Cooper, Oral/Sexual Discourses in Jamaican Pop Culture. 1993, 14)
- Myself, Claudia, Mommy, Marsha, Melissa, Kerro, Phylicia, Paul, my husband and the women I interviewed.
- <sup>97</sup> Harrison, Faye V. Outsider Within: Reworking Anthropology in the Global Age. University of Illinois Press Illinois: Urbana and Chicago, 2008.
- <sup>98</sup> (Harrison 2008, 15)



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- <sup>99</sup> (Harrison 2008, 18)
- <sup>100</sup> (Harrison 2008, 17)
- <sup>101</sup> (Harrison 2008, 16)
- <sup>102</sup> (Harrison 2008, 18)
- <sup>103</sup> (Harrison 2008, 18)
- <sup>104</sup> (Harrison 2008, 18)
- <sup>105</sup> (Harrison 2008, 41)
- <sup>106</sup> This is a Jamaican proverb. The English translation is: You will see how water walk to a pumpkin's stomach. This proverb serves as a warning for someone who is not taking a warning seriously. It can be used in many ways. One way is it used was in Tenor Saw's Pumpkin Belly. Mixtape R.I.P 1966-1988 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4fjGwVpbm0>
- <sup>107</sup> (Cooper, Lady Saw Cuts Loose 2004)
- <sup>108</sup> Kiss Kiss, 2013 Dance J.A. <http://www.danceja.com/kiss-kiss/>
- <sup>109</sup> (Harrison 2008, 15)
- <sup>110</sup> Reeves, Kuper and Hodge. 2008. Qualitative research Methodologies: Ethnography. Qualitative Research Practice. *BMJ* 2008; 337 doi: <http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1136/bmj.a1020> (Published 07 August 2008) Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1020
- <sup>111</sup> (Reeves, Kuper and Hodge 2008, 3)
- <sup>112</sup> (Reeves, Kuper and Hodge 2008, 1)
- <sup>113</sup> English translation: Throw out and go on (act) badly on the dance floor. A song by female artist, Tifa, beautifully captures the sentiments of this slang in Tifa. "Dash Out." YouTube. 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ5-6uYNWIE>
- <sup>114</sup> Hill-Collins. Patricia. 1996 "What's in a Name: Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond" *The Black Scholar* 26(1):12
- <sup>115</sup> (Hill-Collins 1996, 13)
- <sup>116</sup> (Hill-Collins 1996, 13)
- <sup>117</sup> Idbid
- <sup>118</sup> Idbid
- <sup>119</sup> Eisenstein, Z. 1987. THE COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE: "The Combahee River Collective Statement," copyright © 1978 by Zillah Eisenstein.
- <sup>120</sup> (Hill-Collins 1996, 13)
- <sup>121</sup> Wane, N, Deliovsky, K. and Lawson, E. 2002. Back to the Drawing Board. African-Canadian Feminisms. Toronto: Sumach Press. 38
- <sup>122</sup> bell hooks.1994. "Theory as Liberatory Practice" 1994. In Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom. Pp. 59-76. New York: Routledge.p.1
- <sup>123</sup> (Hooks 1994, 3)
- <sup>124</sup> Coleman. M 2006. "Must I be a Womanist?" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*.
- <sup>125</sup> (Coleman 2006, 87)
- <sup>126</sup> (Coleman 2006, 86-87)
- <sup>127</sup> (Coleman 2006, 92)
- <sup>128</sup> hooks, bell, 1992- author. Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015.
- <sup>129</sup> Reddock, Rhoda. Women Workers' Struggles in The British Colonial Caribbean: The 1930s,' in Constance Sutton (ed) Revisiting Caribbean Labour, Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers,2005), Pg. 20-22.

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- <sup>130</sup> (Reddock 2005, 22)
- <sup>131</sup> See Barrow-Giles, Cynthia. Introduction to Caribbean Politics, Kingston, Jamaica. (Ian Randle Publishers 2002), pp. 78-81 for the Morne Commission.
- <sup>132</sup> (Harrison 2008, 40)
- <sup>133</sup> Lewis, Linden. "Re-regulating the State, the Celebration of the Market, and the Crisis of Civil Society in the Commonwealth Caribbean." *Caribbean Quarterly* 52, no. 2/3 (2006): 121. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40654565> The rolling back of the state meant housing, meals, school provision for children, and promotion of workers' rights had decreased drastically.
- <sup>134</sup> (Reddock 2005, 22-23)
- <sup>135</sup> (Lewis 2006, 125)
- <sup>136</sup> Ruddock, Rhoda. Women Workers' Struggles in The British Colonial Caribbean
- <sup>137</sup> (Reddock 2005, 59)
- <sup>138</sup> Ford-Smith, Honor. 1989. Ring ding in a tight corner: a case study of funding and organizational democracy in Sistren, 1977-1988. Toronto, On: Women's Program, ICAE.
- <sup>139</sup> Sistren was one of the first in a line of feminist-oriented autonomous women's groups to emerge from this period onwards in the Caribbean.
- <sup>140</sup> (Reddock 2005, 66-76)
- <sup>141</sup> "Pardna: Still Helping Hundreds Reach Their Savings Goals." *The Voice*, July 26, 2011. Accessed June 6, 2017. <http://www.voice-online.co.uk/article/pardna-still-helping-hundreds-reach-their-savings-goals>. (Writer is not acknowledged.) A Partner is basically a partnership among people to save collectively.
- "It is a rotating savings and credit association (ROSCA)...As a registered company in the United Kingdom, we aim to deliver a 'Pardna Service' with a difference," said Grant, whose company offers help to UK-based people from Afro Caribbean and Asian backgrounds, whether they are middle income families who need helping learning how to save; have limited access to credit; are low income; are people who want access to quick cash in emergency situation without the need of a credit history or people who find it difficult to save normally and want to actively save in 'pardna group.'
- <sup>142</sup> English Translation: No wave, nor no wave to my thing (theoretical discourse). I am good [with applying a woman-centered framework instead of Black-Feminist Thought). Trust me. The mention of waves and ripples, here, is in reference to the different waves of feminism (specifically 4) that has emerged over the years.
- <sup>143</sup> (Harrison 2008, 18)
- <sup>144</sup> (Harrison 2008, 41)
- <sup>145</sup> Lorde, Audre. "Coal." Poetry Foundation. 1997. Reprinted with the permission of Charlotte Sheedy Literary Agency and W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., Accessed June 17, 2017. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/42577>.
- <sup>146</sup> (Lorde 1997)
- <sup>147</sup> (Harrison 2008, 114)
- <sup>148</sup> (Harrison 2008, 18)
- <sup>149</sup> (Harrison 2008, 13)
- <sup>150</sup> (Harrison 2008, 110)

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- <sup>151</sup> Cho, Sumi, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall. "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Summer 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/669608>
- <sup>152</sup> (Cho, Williams Crenshaw and McCall Summer 2014, 786)
- <sup>153</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>154</sup> (Cooper, *Sound Clash* 2004, 114) & Saw, L. *Condom. Give Me a Reason. Shocking Vibes*, Kingston, Jamaica. 1996
- <sup>155</sup> (Cooper, *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* 2004)
- <sup>156</sup> Cooper, C. (2000). *Lady Saw Cuts Loose: Female Fertility Rituals*. Dancing in the Millennium Conference, Washington D.C.
- <sup>157</sup> (Cooper, *Lady Saw Cuts Loose: Female Fertility Rituals* 2000)
- <sup>158</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>159</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010)
- <sup>160</sup> Cooper, C. (2004). *Sound Clash*. New York: Palgrave: Macmillan. 114
- <sup>161</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 1)
- <sup>162</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 1)
- <sup>163</sup> Le Franc, Elise. "Petty Trading and Labour Mobility: Higglers in the Kingston Metropolitan Area." *In Women and the Sexual Division of Labour in the Caribbean*, edited by Keith Hart. Kingston: Canoe Press, 1996. 105
- <sup>164</sup> (Ulysses, *Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica*. 2007)
- <sup>165</sup> (Mintz and Hall 1970, 758)
- <sup>166</sup> (Mintz and Hall 1970, 759)
- <sup>167</sup> (Le Franc 1996, 123)
- <sup>168</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>169</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 2) A term used by Jamaicans to identify a particular kind of street side vendor—a so called lower class black woman who sells a range of items on the streets or in a government appointed market area and arcade.
- <sup>170</sup> A term used by Jamaicans to identify a particular kind of street side vendor—a so called lower class black woman who sells a range of items on the streets or in a government appointed market area and arcade
- <sup>171</sup> Harrison, F. (1988). *Women in Jamaica's Urban Informal Economy: Insight from a Kingston Slum*. Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, 62(3/4), 105
- <sup>172</sup> (Harrison 1988, 104-106)
- <sup>173</sup> (Harrison 1988, 4)
- <sup>174</sup> Harrison, F. (1988). *Women in Jamaica's Urban Informal Economy: Insight From a Kingston Slum*. Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, 62(3/4), 103
- <sup>175</sup> (Harrison 1988, 103-105)
- <sup>176</sup> (Harrison 1988, 105)
- <sup>177</sup> (Harrison 1988, 107)
- <sup>178</sup> (Harrison 1988, 109)
- <sup>179</sup> (Le Franc 1996, 107)
- <sup>180</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 3)
- <sup>181</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 2)
- <sup>182</sup> (Le Franc 1996, 109)
- <sup>183</sup> (Le Franc 1996, 106)



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- <sup>184</sup> (Cooper, Dancing Around development: The Jamaica Dancehall Model of Socio-Economic Transitions 2014, 8)
- <sup>185</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 51)
- <sup>186</sup> (Ulysses, Downton Ladies, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica. 2007, 58)
- <sup>187</sup> (Le Franc 1996, 107)
- <sup>188</sup> (Harrison 1988)
- <sup>189</sup> (Harrison 1988, 106-108)
- <sup>190</sup> (Le Franc 1996, 111)
- <sup>192</sup> The section Evolution of Dancehall is an excerpt that was taken from (Fullerton 2013, 102-103)
- <sup>193</sup> Cooper, Carolyne. "Lady Saw Cuts Loose" Female Fertility Rituals in Dancehall" in Sound Clash: Jamaica Dancehall Culture at large" 2004
- <sup>194</sup> Stolzoff, Norman. C "Wake the Town and Tell the People". P. 68
- <sup>195</sup> Stolzoff, Norman. C "Wake the Town and Tell the People". P. 65
- <sup>196</sup> Chevannes, Barry. Rastafari (New York: Syracuse University Press.1994) p, 17.
- <sup>197</sup>
- <sup>198</sup> Chude-Sokei, Louis. 1994 POST-NATIONALIST GEOGRAPHIES Rasta, Ragga, and Reinventing Africa. p80.
- <sup>199</sup> Stolzoff, Norman. C. wake the town and tell the people 99.
- <sup>200</sup> Idib
- <sup>201</sup> Chude-Sokei, Post-National Geographies. Rasta, reggae, and Reinventing Africa. 82
- <sup>202</sup> Chude-Sokei, Post-National Geographies. Rasta, reggae, and Reinventing Africa P.82.
- <sup>203</sup> Idib
- <sup>204</sup> Stanley-Niaah, Sonjah. From Slaveships to Ghetto. Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 2010
- <sup>205</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 1)
- <sup>206</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 1)
- <sup>207</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 1)
- <sup>208</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 2)
- <sup>209</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 37)
- <sup>210</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 34)
- <sup>211</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 98-100)
- <sup>212</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 152) Jamaican vernacular for gossiping that can result in conflict.
- <sup>213</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 110)
- <sup>214</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 38)
- <sup>215</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 173)
- <sup>216</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 151)
- <sup>217</sup> Bakare-Yusuf, Bibi. "Fabricating Identities: Survival and the Imagination in Jamaican Dancehall Culture." *Fashion Theory*, 2006:
- <sup>218</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 462)
- <sup>219</sup> Stolzoff, Norma.C "Wake the Town and Tell the People". P. 68
- <sup>220</sup> Chevannes, Barry. *Rastafari* (New York: Syracuse University Press) 1994.17
- <sup>221</sup> Stolzoff, Norma.C. Wake The Town and Tell The People: Dancehall Culture In Jamaica. (Duke University Press, 200), Pg. 65-67.
- <sup>222</sup> Stolzoff, Norman. C. *Wake the Town And Tell The People* 67-99.
- <sup>223</sup> (Harrison 1988, 110-111)

- <sup>224</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 865)
- <sup>225</sup> Alissa, Anna, StreetSidesalon/ Downtown Kingston Jamaican Dancehall Fashion. 2010. (accessed March 24, 2014). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=te4PkUrAVJM>
- <sup>226</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 469)
- <sup>227</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 474)
- <sup>228</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 470)
- <sup>229</sup> This section of the essay can be found in greater detail in my earlier work, (L.-A. Fullerton, Pum Pum Rule Jamaican Dance: An Analytic Response to the Inability to Recognize Female Sovereignty in Dancehall 2013, 107-111)
- <sup>230</sup> (N. C. Stolzoff 2000, 110)
- <sup>231</sup> (N. C. Stolzoff 2000, 109)
- <sup>232</sup> D'Elia, Suzan 2002, Speech:214 Rhetoric of Dancehall Music (Women's Fashion in Jamaican Dancehall). <http://debate.uvm.edu/dreadlibrary/delia02.html>
- <sup>233</sup> (N. C. Stolzoff 2000, 110)
- <sup>234</sup> <sup>234</sup> Stolzoff, Norman.C. Wake the town and Tell the People,108
- <sup>235</sup> Susan D' Elia, 2002. Speech:214 Rhetoric of Dancehall Music (Women's Fashion in Jamaican Dancehall) <http://debate.uvm.edu/dreadlibrary/delia02.html>
- <sup>236</sup> Boston, Thomas., Ross, Catheirne. The Inner City: Urban Poverty and economic development.1994, P.190.
- <sup>237</sup> English Translation: That is not cheap, you know!
- <sup>238</sup> Stolzoff, Norman. C. Wake the town and Tell the People, p108
- <sup>239</sup> Idib
- <sup>240</sup> Chacka Demous, Pliers, 2000. Murder she wrote. (Decce, Spectrum).
- <sup>240</sup> D'Elia, Suzan 2002, Speech:214 Rhetoric of Dancehall Music (Women's Fashion in Jamaican Dancehall. <http://debate.uvm.edu/dreadlibrary/delia02.html>
- <sup>241</sup> Lewis, Linden. 2003. The culture of gender in the Caribbean. (Florida: University Press). 232
- <sup>242</sup> Glamour in the Sunshine: Style Week Jamaica, "Melissa Dunkley's Collection." May 14, 2009. <http://styleweekjamaica.blogspot.ca/2009/05/mellisa-dunkleys-collection.html>
- <sup>243</sup> Ellis, Tanya. The Jamaica Star: The Changing Image of dancehall (January 19, 2008) <http://jamaica-star.com/thestar/20080119/ent/ent4.html>
- <sup>244</sup> Ibid (T. Ellis 2008)
- <sup>246</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=te4PkUrAVJM>
- <sup>247</sup> (Cooper, Dancing Around development: The Jamaica Dancehall Model of Socio-Economic Transitions 2014, 10)
- <sup>248</sup> (N. C. Stolzoff 2000)
- <sup>249</sup> (D. Hope, Inna Di Dancehall: Popular Culture and Politics of Identity in Jamaica 2006)
- <sup>250</sup> (D. Hope, Inna Di Dancehall: Popular Culture and Politics of Identity in Jamaica 2006, 74)
- <sup>251</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 104)
- <sup>252</sup> Like Bembe Thursdays or Passa Passa
- <sup>253</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 108)
- <sup>254</sup> Audrey Reid, *Dancehall Queen*. The Movie. Directed by: Rick Elgood, Don Letts. Canada, Toronto Film Festival, 1997The main character, Marcia, was a single that worked as a 'Higgla' (i.e. street vender). Living in a "poverty stricken risk inner city" community in Kingston, Jamaica, Marcia enters in the Dancehall queen competition in order to win the prize cash out of a hundred thousand dollars to help sustain her and family. She enters the competition, defeated the

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reigning Dancehall Queen, wins the cash prize, and become infamous after she was crowned the new Dancehall Queen. However, when Alove, the reigning Dancehall Queen, learned the identity of her forceful competitor, Marcia, she threatens to let everyone know Marcia was “nutt’n but a likkle street venda” to the public if Marcia did not step down from the competition. This is because, in the dancehall community, streets Vendors are not revered.

<sup>255</sup> (Cooper, *Dancing Around development: The Jamaica Dancehall Model of Socio-Economic Transitions* 2014, 11)

<sup>256</sup> Like Lateish, carrot, Stacey, Mad Michell and Mumzel.

<sup>257</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 465)

<sup>258</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 105) One of the examples Stanley provided was the Guns and Roses Girls.

<sup>259</sup> Tun up

<sup>260</sup> (Harrison 1988, 113)

<sup>261</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 170)

<sup>262</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 11)

<sup>263</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 139)

<sup>264</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 139)

<sup>265</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 171)

<sup>266</sup> (Harrison 1988, 114)

<sup>267</sup> (Cooper, *Dancing Around development: The Jamaica Dancehall Model of Socio-Economic Transitions* 2014, 11)

<sup>268</sup> (Harrison 1988, 117)

<sup>269</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 123-124)

<sup>270</sup> (Harrison 1988, 119)

<sup>271</sup> (Harrison 1988, 119)

<sup>272</sup> Ibid

<sup>273</sup> (Harrison 1988, 114)

<sup>274</sup> (Harrison 1988, 117)

<sup>275</sup> (Harrison 1988, 119)

<sup>276</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 16)

<sup>277</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 4)

<sup>278</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 15)

<sup>279</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 17)

<sup>280</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 9)

<sup>281</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 4)

<sup>282</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 465)

<sup>283</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 462)

<sup>284</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2010, 467)

<sup>285</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 467)

<sup>286</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 466)

<sup>287</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 468)

<sup>288</sup> (King 2011, 218)

<sup>289</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 463)

<sup>290</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 465)

<sup>291</sup> King, Rosamond s. "New Citizens, New Sexualities." In *Sex and the Caribbean: Interrogating the Caribbean*, 215-223. Charlottesville: University of Carolina Press, 2011.217

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<sup>292</sup> (King 2011, 214)  
<sup>293</sup> (King 2011, 215)  
<sup>294</sup> (King 2011, 216-221)  
<sup>295</sup> (King 2011, 217)  
<sup>296</sup> (King 2011, 217-219)  
<sup>297</sup> (King 2011, 222)  
<sup>298</sup> (Bakare-Yusuf 2006, 469)  
<sup>299</sup> (King 2011, 216)  
<sup>300</sup> (Saw 1996)  
<sup>301</sup> (Le Franc 1996, 123)  
<sup>302</sup> (Brown-Claude 2011, 5)  
<sup>303</sup> (Harrison 1988, 106)  
<sup>304</sup> (Harrison 1988, 107)  
<sup>305</sup> (Harrison 1988, 119)  
<sup>306</sup> (Le Franc 1996, 122)  
<sup>307</sup> (Cooper, Dancing Around development: The Jamaica Dancehall Model of Socio-Economic Transitions 2014, 11)  
<sup>308</sup> Ibid  
<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> (Cooper, Dancing Around development: The Jamaica Dancehall Model of Socio-Economic Transitions 2014, 11-12)  
<sup>311</sup> (Harrison 1988, 110-111)  
<sup>312</sup> (Saw 1996)  
<sup>313</sup> Shaggy (Mr. Bombastic) 2006. Church Heathen. Directed by Jay Will (Game Over). Performed: Emprezz Golding: YouTube.com/Jay Will. Accessed 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Dxq25Toh7k>. Also, an example of the significance of creating social power being played out in this video can be seen in the time stamp 4:51 when myself (in the khaki skirt suite) and Mystic Davis (Black and white skirt suite) agreeing to strategically walk in the view of the camera upon exiting the church so we could be seen in the video.

<sup>314</sup> Value of currency show here is calculated as was accurate at the time of the interview: June 2014. "Jamaican Dollar to Canadian Dollar (JMD CAD) for 23 June 2014 (23/06/2014)." Exchange Rates UK: Your Live Currency Exchange Rates Website. June 2014. Accessed July 2017. [http://www.exchangerates.org.uk/JMD-CAD-23\\_06\\_2014-exchange-rate-history.html](http://www.exchangerates.org.uk/JMD-CAD-23_06_2014-exchange-rate-history.html).

<sup>315</sup> This term colloquially to refer to something impressive.

<sup>316</sup> Smechy” is a word that is derived from the word sexy that myself, Claudia, and Marsha use as among ourselves.

<sup>317</sup> Collins, Phill. One More Night. 1985. Accessed 2017. Album: No Jacket Required. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKVq-P3z5Vg>

<sup>318</sup> Kartel, Vybz. Beyonce Wine. November 2006. Accessed 207. [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=beyonce](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=beyonce) Album: Riddim Driven: Sidewalk University

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<sup>319</sup> Agent Saso, Assassin. Cyaa Lock Off Di Dance. 2003. Accessed 2017.

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=assasin](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=assasin).

River Stone Buss Dem Head Mixtape.

<sup>320</sup> Fullerton, Leslie-Ann R. "Women in Jamaican Dancehall: Accommodation and Resistance." M.A. (Cand.), Lecture, Black Feminist Thought. Course Code: HSJ1989H. University of Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, April 16, 2015.

<sup>321</sup> This folk-dance form is rarely heard of but is similar in form and structure to the Dinki Mini as it forms part of the death observances and rituals in Portland. The difference is in the main instruments which is a pair of Kumina drums

<sup>322</sup> Dinki Mini is done on the Eastern end of the island in the parish of St. Mary. It is usually performed after the death of a person until the ninth night. These 'Nine-Night' sessions are lively and are held usually to cheer up the bereaved. During the performance, the male dancer bends one leg at the knee and makes high leaps on the other foot. Both male and females dance together with very suggestive pelvic movements. An integral aspect of this dance is the use of the instrument called a benta.

<sup>323</sup> Ring Games are rhymes and rhythms passed down through generations that are played or performed by participate standing in a circle or with another person. Please see a YouTube clip of this game: Christensen, Josh. Jamaican children playing. February 10, 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpexeCmzKjM>.

<sup>324</sup> I remember having dancing competitions between children in opposing street/lanes/avenue in Dela-Vega City with the winner having bragging rights as the lane with the best dancers in the community.

<sup>325</sup> English Translation: Me don't have no certificate or nothing [license] to do it [hair], but my brains goo like that," meaning she's able to catch on to information easily.

<sup>326</sup> English Translation: "If dance no [don't] clothes nuh [don't] sell. Especially the kind of clothes that I sell, if dance no [don't] keep no clothes no [won't] sell and nobody not going [to] come an] buy them. The whole thing [business] will slow up."

<sup>327</sup> Value of currency show here is calculated as was accurate at the time of the interview: June 2014. "Jamaican Dollar to Canadian Dollar (JMD CAD) for 23 June 2014 (23/06/2014)." Exchange Rates UK: Your Live Currency Exchange Rates Website. June 2014. Accessed July 2017. [http://www.exchangerates.org.uk/JMD-CAD-23\\_06\\_2014-exchange-rate-history.html](http://www.exchangerates.org.uk/JMD-CAD-23_06_2014-exchange-rate-history.html).

<sup>328</sup> English Translation: "a dead me dead right there" meaning her business would be over and she would no longer have a source of income to care for herself and her family. Therefore, that would be equivalent to eventually dying or being "dead."

<sup>329</sup> English Translation: "Mi Beg a di dance, like buy me a drink and stuff like that. Like go to me friend dem and say, "buy me a drink, no (please)?" And them buy me, you see me? And

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when then buy the liquor and me feel nice, me no (don't) stand up in the dance make the people then feel like me not work[ing]. We just start keep we self move up (active) until we see scrappy come in now and we get the whole thing together, and start mash up the place.

English Translation: "Me dance with a man and beg him, tell him me want something to drink then me full a bottle of water and take the money."

<sup>330</sup> English Translation: "Yes, this is my work. This is what me do and buy up my furniture's in my house, take care of my family, and put money in my bank book.

<sup>331</sup> This is a phrase used in Jamaican vernacular to express someone having a rapid and extraordinary success in a particular place or with a particular group of people.

<sup>332</sup> Jamaican Patwa: Patois and Slang Dictionary> Mashup di place. January 13, 2014.  
<http://jamaicanpatwah.com/term/Mash-up-di-place/1676#.WW5XqYTyUk>.

<sup>333</sup> English Translation: "A work I am going" )

<sup>334</sup> English Translation: "Me go to dancehall to hustle."

<sup>335</sup> Oztok, Murat, Daniel Zingaro, and Alexandra Makos. 2013. "What Social Capital can Tell Us about Social Presence." *British Journal of Educational Technology* 44 (6): E203-E206.

doi:10.1111/bjet.12079.[http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/00071013/v44i0006/e203\\_wscctuasp](http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/00071013/v44i0006/e203_wscctuasp).

<sup>336</sup> (Oztok, Zingaro and Makos 2013, E204)

<sup>337</sup> (D. Hope, *Inna Di Dancehall: Popular Culture and the Politics of Identity in Jamaica* 2006, 77)

<sup>338</sup> English Translation: "everybody can dance, but not everyone is a dancer."

<sup>339</sup> English Translation: "I cannot do hair [properly]"

<sup>340</sup> English Translation: "Oil and powder" are ingredients believed to be essential to the practitioner of a spiritual rituals associated with Obeah.

<sup>341</sup> English Translation: "some models were bitches" and will "Sleep with artists"

<sup>342</sup> English Translation: "dancing is when you can really showcase your talent and skills, but...some of them [dancers] just put on a show and like suck of bottle." There was a dancehall song released in 2014 by dancehall artist, Gage, which praised a female ability to perform oral sex. Some women I dancehall began to dance this song by using drink bottles to simulate the action of felicitous to the rhythm while dancing to the song. The song can be heard at: Gage. "Throat." Soundcloud. January 2014.

<sup>343</sup> Black Barbie

<sup>344</sup> Black Barbie

<sup>345</sup> Nature Girl

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<sup>346</sup> <sup>346</sup> Money Pull-Up is a practice originated in Jamaican dancehall where someone in the audience pays the selector or dancer to continue playing a favorite song and a dancer to perform a dance move once more. This practice was immortalized in a dancehall song by Miss. O called Money Pull-Up. Miss O. "Money Pull-Up." YouTube.COM. Accessed May 2, 2013.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeEv4\\_Sp6lk&list=RDDDeEv4\\_Sp6lk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeEv4_Sp6lk&list=RDDDeEv4_Sp6lk).

<sup>347</sup> Jamaican vernacular for a business that is not being operated professional.

<sup>348</sup> “At the end of the day, just because me wear a short shorts you feel like me don’t live nowhere or my morals don’t have no meaning, or me no (don’t) have nowhere a go [in life]. Maybe if you saw me on the T.V. or if you knew that my me and Bill Gates are friends or di president know my mother you would say: “Oh but her short shorts looks good, man! Me wouldn’t be a problem then because they want to put you in a status. They want to class you. People like to judge because of your status.”

<sup>349</sup> (more or guarantee payment for services and more ladies orientated music selection by the selectors so she can dance and showcase her skill—she is not as proficient in male dance moves as some of the other female (Jamaican) dancers.

<sup>350</sup> English Translation: “original and doing my thing”.

<sup>351</sup> English Translation: “heels for the club”

<sup>352</sup> Natural Girl

<sup>353</sup> English Translation: “corner dance.” These are dancehall parties that uses are the corner or end of a street or avenue as the venue

<sup>354</sup> The Ouch Crew can be seen in the 1997 movie, Dancehall Queen, when Audrey Reed’s character Marcia, begins her transformation from mother/street side vender into a dancehall diva and visits the OUCH Crew clothing store to research and design her own dancehall outfits, which Ms. Gordon’s then sews.

<sup>356</sup> English Translation: “Leave (Kinston) town, jump on a bus and start to sell boxed donuts. Go to Montego Bay, gone to Ochos Rios, anywhere at all the things (parties) are keeping. I went to “A St. Mary Mi Come From” to sell, and when my things (products) are finished I don’t bother [to] go home, I just buy more things in that area and go sell in dancehall still. It’s just that I continue going until when I go back a foreign. When I came back home I start selling again.”

<sup>357</sup> English Translation: I would not see my yard (home) for all (as long as) a week because Im on the road selling.”

<sup>358</sup> (D. Hope, *Inna Di Dancehall: Popular Culture and Politics of Identity in Jamaica* 2006, 77)

<sup>359</sup> (N. C. Stolzoff 2000, 110)

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- <sup>360</sup> Freemason, Carla. NC: Durham. 2000. Accessed July 2017.  
<http://books2.scholarsportal.info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/viewdoc.html?id=/ebooks/ebooks0/duke/2012-10-25/1/9780822380290&page=8#tabview=tab0>.
- <sup>361</sup> (Freeman 2000, 17)
- <sup>362</sup> (Freeman 2000, 18)
- <sup>363</sup> (Freeman 2000, 117)
- <sup>364</sup> (Freeman 2000, 105-118)
- <sup>365</sup> (Freeman 2000, 17)
- <sup>366</sup> (Freeman 2000, 35)
- <sup>367</sup> (Freeman 2000, 18)
- <sup>368</sup> (Freeman 2000, 18)
- <sup>369</sup> (D. Hope, Inna Di Dancehall: Popular Culture and Politics of Identity in Jamaica 2006, 70)
- <sup>370</sup> Leslie pum pum10
- <sup>371</sup> Diamond, Macka Charmaine Munroe. "Dye Dye." Label: Truckback Recods. March 6, 2013.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxoQXfFbO98>.
- <sup>372</sup> Fullerton, Leslie-Ann R. "Women in Jamaican Dancehall: Accommodation and Resistance." M.A. (Cand.), Lecture, Black Feminist Thought. Course Code: HSJ1989H. University of Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, April 16, 2015.
- <sup>373</sup> Hampton, Meleissa. D. 2014, MDiz Collections. <http://www.mdizcollections.com/about/>
- <sup>374</sup> Hampton, Meleissa, D.2014. MDIZ collections show at Orlando International Fashion Week.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fbxF2UppSQ>
- <sup>375</sup> (Lake, Rastafari Women: Subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology 1998)
- <sup>376</sup> "'Lyrical Gun': Metaphor and Role Play in Jamaican Dancehall Culture." The Massachusetts Review; Amherst 35, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 429. Accessed January 2016
- <sup>377</sup> Hope, Donna. "Dons and Shattas: Performing Violent Masculinity in Dancehall Culture." Social and Economic Studies, 2nd ser., 55, no. 1 (March 2006): 115-31. Accessed April 2016. Music Periodicals Database. 115.
- <sup>377</sup> Banton, Buju. 1992. *Boom Bye-Bye*. Cond. Mercury Records.
- <sup>378</sup> Ellis, Nadia. Out and Bad: Towards a Queen Performance of Hermeneutic in Jamaican Dancehall 15, no. 35 (July 2011): 7-23. Accessed July 2017. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/446631>.
- <sup>379</sup> Lake 131
- <sup>380</sup> Hope, Donna. "Dons and Shattas: Performing Violent Masculinity in Dancehall Culture." Social and Economic Studies, 2nd ser., 55, no. 1 (March 2006): 115-31. Accessed April 2016. Music Periodicals Database. 115.
- <sup>381</sup> Banton, Buju. 1992. *Boom Bye-Bye*. Cond. Mercury Records
- <sup>382</sup> Cooper 1988 25
- <sup>383</sup> Noble 108



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<sup>384</sup> Noble 117

<sup>385</sup> Noble 107

<sup>386</sup> English Translation: “Foreign something.”

<sup>387</sup> White. Frances, E. 2001. *Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability*. Temple University Press. Introduction. 75

<sup>388</sup> Idbid

<sup>389</sup> Idbid

<sup>390</sup> Government of Jamaica. SEXUAL OFFENCES: THE SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT. 1884. Accessed July 6, 2015.

<http://moj.gov.jm/sites/default/files/laws/Sexual%20Offences%20Act.pdf>. Amended 2010.

<sup>391</sup> **Unnatural Crimes**

76. Whosoever shall be convicted of the abominable crime of buggery, committed either with' mankind or with any animal, shall be liable to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for a term not exceeding ten years.

**Attempt**

77. Whosoever shall attempt to commit the said abominable crime, or shall be guilty of my assault with intent to commit the same, or of any indecent assault upon any male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof, shall be liable to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding seven years, with or without hard labour.

**Proof of Carnal Knowledge**

78. Whenever upon the trial of any offence punishable under this Act, it may be necessary to prove carnal knowledge, it shall not be necessary to prove the actual emission of seed in order to constitute a carnal knowledge, but the carnal knowledge shall be deemed complete upon proof of penetration only.

**Outrages on Decency**

79. Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.

<sup>392</sup> (Government of Jamaica 1884 (Ammended 2010), 26)

<sup>393</sup> Cooper, Carolyn. Dressed for Murder. August 4, 2013. Accessed April 2017. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20130804/cleisure/cleisure3.html> (C. Cooper 2013)

<sup>394</sup> (Government of Jamaica 1884 (Ammended 2010), 26)

<sup>395</sup> (Alexander 2005, 85)

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<sup>396</sup> Hope, Donna P. "Pon di Borderline": Exploring Constructions of Jamaican Masculinity in Dancehall and Roots Theatre." *Journal of West Indian Literature* 21, no. 1/2 (April 2013): 105-28. Accessed June 27, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24615446>. p.105-106

<sup>397</sup> (D. Hope, *Dons and Shattas: Performing Violent Masculinity in Dancehall Culture*. 2006, 116)

<sup>398</sup> Hope 2006, 115

<sup>399</sup> (D. Hope, *Dons and Shattas: Performing Violent Masculinity in Dancehall Culture*. 2006, 116)

<sup>400</sup> Cooper, *Noises in the Blood*. 1988

<sup>401</sup> (D. Hope, *British Link-Up Crew* 2004, 107)

<sup>402</sup> The English translation for the term "Bun Out" in Jamaican vernacular is "Burn(ed) out." It linguistically signifies a burn flame. In the dancehall context, with its origins in Rastafarianism, this burning flame is designed to purify impurities or iniquities—the latter should be understood in the biblical context. Even more specific is the relationship that dancehall and Jamaican culture has the LGBT community where the iniquity that need to be cleans is that of same sex relations—more so the relationship between males. Used in a homophobic sense, "Batty Bwoy fi get bun out" (Batty Boys must be burned out). The following is the popular Capleton song which serves as an anthem for the burning out of gay men: Bailey 111, Clifton "Capleton". "Bun Out Di Chi Chi." YouTube. February 26, 2002. Accessed June 27, 2017.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaLY6lWVMFA>. (Capleton (Clifton Bailey 111) 2002)

<sup>403</sup> (D. Hope 2013, 107)

<sup>405</sup> (D. Hope 2013, 106)

<sup>406</sup> (D. Hope 2013, 112)

<sup>407</sup> Clarke, 1982. 28

<sup>408</sup> (D. P. Hope 2013, 106)

<sup>409</sup> YouTube.com <https://www.youtube.com/>

<sup>410</sup> YouTube.Com. Gay Men Beaten in Jamaica.

<https://www.youtube.com/results?q=Gay+Men+beaten+in+Jamaica&sp=SDzqAwA%253D>

<sup>411</sup> Hope, Donna P. "Pon di Borderline": Exploring Constructions of Jamaican Masculinity in Dancehall and Roots Theatre." *Journal of West Indian Literature* 21, no. 1/2 (April 2013): 105-28. Accessed June 27, 2017. p. 116 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24615446>. p.105-106.

<sup>412</sup> English Translation: "Questions about gender and imputed notions of sexual identity/ self-identification were answered best by Shebada when, in a scene from *Bashment Granny* an irritated policeman asks, "You are [a] man or you are [a] woman?" Shebada's bold response "Me [I am on] the borderline," accompanied by a pronounced swish of his hips, was indeed a staged response within the confines of the *Bashment Granny* roots play."

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<sup>413</sup> (D. Hope 2013) 105

<sup>414</sup> (D. Hope 2013, 114)

<sup>415</sup> See Hope 2013

<sup>416</sup> idbid

<sup>417</sup> idbid

<sup>418</sup> Idbid

<sup>419</sup> Stages Production. \*NEW\* BASHMENT GRANNY. December 2, 2008.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qm6srXUJsyI>.

<sup>420</sup> (D. P. Hope 2013, 117)

<sup>421</sup> (D. P. Hope 2013, 116)

<sup>422</sup> Me [I am] on the borderline.

<sup>423</sup> CVM is the abbreviation for C' - Community Television Systems Limited; 'V' - Videomax Limited and 'M' - Mediamix Limited.

<sup>424</sup> "Shebada Fathers Child with DJ's Girlfriend?" Onstage TV. November 30, 2014. Accessed March 2017. Accessed March 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3\\_y0kOS5O4&t=559s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3_y0kOS5O4&t=559s)

<sup>425</sup> (D. P. Hope 2013, 117)

<sup>426</sup> (D. P. Hope 2013, 117)

<sup>427</sup> (D. P. Hope 2013, 117)

<sup>428</sup> Cooper, Carolyn. "Dressed for Murder." Dressed For Murder, August 4, 2013. Accessed March 2017. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20130804/cleisure/cleisure3.html>.

<sup>429</sup> Mail Online. "Jamaican Transgender Teen, 16, Harassed at School, Kicked Out of House and Beaten to Death in the Streets for Wanting to be a Woman." August 2013. Accessed March 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2389284/Dwayne-Jones-16-year-old-transgender-teen-latest-die-Jamaican-mob-violence-LGBT-community.html>.

<sup>430</sup> (Mail Online 2013)

<sup>431</sup> Franc, Priscilla. These are the Fearless LGBTQ Youth Who Live in Jamaica's Sewers. August 28, 2016. Accessed March 2017. Franc, Priscilla. Huff. August 30, 2016. Accessed March 2017. [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/christo-geoghegan-gully-queen-photos\\_us\\_57c09c34e4b085c1ff29586f](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/christo-geoghegan-gully-queen-photos_us_57c09c34e4b085c1ff29586f).

<sup>432</sup> (Franc 2013)

<sup>433</sup> Zuckerberg, Mark. Facebook. 2017. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). Facebook is an American on for profit social media cooperation networking.

<sup>434</sup> English translation can be found in Appendix 5

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<sup>435</sup> Fullerton, Leslie-Ann R. "Women in Jamaican Dancehall: Accommodation and Resistance." M.A. (Cand.), Lecture, Black Feminist Thought. Course Code: HSJ1989H. University of Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, April 16, 2015.

<sup>436</sup> Dunkley-Hampton, Meliessa. MDiz Fashion House. 2017. Accessed March 2017.  
<http://www.mdizcollections.com/>.

<sup>437</sup> English Translation: "Now that I have money I can go anywhere, even inna di dancehall and nobody trouble me. They will look on my clothes and shoes and how I dress but no one don't rich (attack) me. The girls look on my shoes and ask me where I got that from because it bad (looks good). As long as you don't loud up your thing (make it obvious that you are gay), and as long as you have money you will be safe in the dancehall."

<sup>438</sup> (D. P. Hope 2010, 258) Bling is a derivative of the term 'bling bling'. The MSN Encarta Online Dictionary defines 'bling-bling' as an adjective that means: 'rich: having or displaying ostentatious material wealth (slang) [Probably an imitation of the sound of a cash register]'. Colloquially, Jamaicans identify the ringing up of the cash register as a chi-ching sound, not bling-bling.

<sup>439</sup> (D. P. Hope 2010, 258)

<sup>440</sup> (D. P. Hope 2013, 118)

<sup>441</sup> English Translation: "Once you have money in Jamaica you [will be] alright. Once you have money and you don't loud up the thing (make obvious your sexual orientation), you will be alright.

<sup>442</sup> Jamaican Patwa: Patois and Slang Dictionary. Loud Up Di Ting. August 5, 2013. Accessed April 2017. [http://jamaicanpatwah.com/term/Loud-up-di-ting/1245#.WVv\\_g4TyuUk](http://jamaicanpatwah.com/term/Loud-up-di-ting/1245#.WVv_g4TyuUk).

<sup>443</sup> (D. Hope 2013, 118)

<sup>444</sup> Unknown. Inside Jamaica's Gay World Two Young Men Tell of Their Experiences. April 9, 2006. Accessed April 2017. [http://www.soulrebels.org/dancehall/v\\_article\\_025.htm](http://www.soulrebels.org/dancehall/v_article_025.htm). Unfortunately, the Sunday Herald seems to erase articles after a while. I found the article posted on the Real Jamaica forum.

<sup>445</sup> Dancehall Lords. See Anyone You Know? Gay Party in Jamaica. [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) July 1, 2017. Accessed April 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ga7ic6VSWTM>.

<sup>446</sup> English Translation: I know I will get burn out by some fool fool people because me admit say (that) me go gay party but I care zero. You're lucky." The duplication of the word "fool" is intended here as it emphasizes the level of stupidity in the Jamaican vernacular. Also, the word "luddy" colloquially represents the word "lucky" and is used particularly when someone has expressed disdain for your actions, but you don't care so you tell them "they're lucky" in an ironic way.

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<sup>447</sup> Chude-Sokie, Louis, 1994. "Post-Nationalist Geographies: Rasta, Ragga, and Reinventing Africa." *The African Arts*, (UCLA: James S. Coleman Published pp. 82

<sup>448</sup> Fullerton, Leslie-Ann. "Pum Pum Rule Jamaican Dancehall: An Analytic Response to the Inability to Recognize Female Sovereignty in Dancehall." *Caribbean Quilt* 3 (2013): 100-24. Accessed 2013.  
<http://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/cquilt/arjps.library.utoronto.cticle/view/22618>.

<sup>449</sup> Cooper, 2005. 1.

<sup>450</sup> (D. Hope, Pon di Borderline": Exploring Constructions of Jamaican Masculinity in Dancehall and Roots Theatre 2013, 119)

<sup>451</sup> Chude-Sokie, 1994. 82

<sup>452</sup> Ellis, Nadia. Out and Bad: Towards a Queen Performance of Hermeneutic in Jamaican Dancehall 15, no. 35 (July 2011): 7-23. Accessed July 207. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/446631>.

<sup>453</sup> (Ellis 2011, 10)

<sup>454</sup> (Ellis 2011)

<sup>455</sup> (Ellis 2011, 9)

<sup>456</sup> (Ellis 2011, 12)

<sup>457</sup> Idbid

<sup>458</sup> Idbid

<sup>459</sup> (Ellis 2011, 20)

<sup>460</sup> (Ellis 2011)

<sup>461</sup> Idbid

<sup>462</sup> (Ellis 2011, 8 & 17)

<sup>463</sup> (Ellis 2011, 15)

<sup>464</sup> Hamilton, Phillip. "Changes Ahead For Nutribun And Milk." *The Gleaner*. February 25, 2011. Accessed 2017. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20110225/lead/lead91.html>.  
The Government of Jamaica in a cooperation with Nutrition Products Limited (NPL) - the Ministry of Education's agency is responsible for providing milk and nutribun snacks to students island wide who are in need through its school-feeding programme. These "Bun an Milk" meals for low income students are not free and for years cost JA 20 cents.

<sup>465</sup> Directed by Jay Game Over Will. Performed by CeCil. Like That. 2006. Accessed 2011.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_5hdfBuvdk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_5hdfBuvdk). **Invalid source specified.**

<sup>466</sup> The Star. "MKQ names Loud Fashion winner." *MKQ names Loud Fashion winner*, June 3, 2013. Accessed 2017. <http://jamaica-star.com/article/entertainment/20160603/mkq-names-loud-fashion-winner>.

<sup>467</sup> Chin, Tessanne. "Hide Away." *In Between Words*. 2007. Accessed 207.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GLo3uly4m8>.

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<sup>468</sup> Powell, Camesha. Poststyle Image Consulting. 2014. Accessed 2017.  
<http://www.poshestyle.com/>.

<sup>469</sup> Hope, 2006, 74

<sup>471</sup> Hope 75

<sup>472</sup> Hope 2006, 75

<sup>473</sup> (Lake, Women and Dance Hall 1988, 131)

<sup>474</sup> Lake, Obiagele. 1998. Rastafari women: subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology. Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

<sup>475</sup> (Lake, Women and Dance Hall 1988, 131-133)

<sup>476</sup> (Lake, Women and Dance Hall 1988, 131)

<sup>477</sup> (Lake 1998, 131)

<sup>478</sup> (Lake, Women and Dance Hall 1988, 131-132)

<sup>479</sup> (Lake, Women and Dance Hall 1988, 132)

<sup>480</sup> (Lake, Women and Dance Hall 1988) 131

<sup>481</sup> (Lake, Women and Dance Hall 1988, 131) Dane JA

<sup>482</sup> (Lake, Women and Dance Hall 1988, 133)

<sup>483</sup> Lake 1998, 131)

<sup>484</sup> Hope 2006

<sup>485</sup> Cooper 2006 100-14

<sup>486</sup> Lake 1988, 131

<sup>487</sup> (Lake 1998 132)

<sup>488</sup> Ibid

<sup>489</sup> Lake 1998, 131

<sup>490</sup> Hope 2006, 73)

<sup>491</sup> Bubble Butt. Directed by Mystic Davis. Performed by Major Razor. December 2013. Accessed 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wO89\\_H7GqaQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wO89_H7GqaQ).

<sup>492</sup> Styles, Latonya

<sup>493</sup> Williams, Winford "On Stage." Dancing Rebel: Hot New Dance Maker. August 2017, 1027. Accessed 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCkeZHt8-JU>.

<sup>494</sup> Robot taxis in Jamaica refers to privately owned cars that are then placed on the road to provide taxi services without being registered or having been licenses as a public mode of transportations.

<sup>495</sup> Gwaan in Jamaican vernacular is a word used to express a verb in action. Gwaan is the combined word of: going and on. The phrase "pure things" refers to the high magnitude and quality of what is going on, or what a gwaan.

<sup>496</sup> When people in the dancehall use their fingers to signify the gun as they emulate the motion of firing a gun. This is complemented by the sound of gunshot that is produce with the mouth in order to provide a complete representation of a firing gun. This occurs when something pleasing occurs in the dancehall space.

- <sup>497</sup> Oxford University Press. 2017. English Oxford Living Dictionary.  
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/pum-pum> The vulgar descriptive option female genitals. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word originates from a West African language.
- <sup>498</sup> Thomas, Niketa. Owner of Nick Photo Works. [www.nickphotowork.com](http://www.nickphotowork.com) Her was a well-known photographer in the dancehall scene. He took pictures at dancehall parties of patrons and artists for a fee. He was declared missing in 2015 and has yet to be discovered.
- <sup>499</sup> Vybz Kartel, *Dancehall A Mi Everything*. Album Produced by Vybz Kartel & TJ Records, First Single From The Viking (Vybz is King) February 2015. YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMJD7N-f1x8>
- <sup>500</sup> Prof. M. Newton. 2014. Caribbean Popular Culture. Course code: NEWHIS305F. University of Toronto.
- <sup>501</sup> (Cooper, Lady Saw Cuts Loose 2004)
- <sup>502</sup> (Lake, Rastafari Women: Subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology 1998, 131)
- <sup>503</sup> The Bank of Jamaica, 2010. Annual Average Exchange Rate . 2010. Accessed 2017.  
[http://www.boj.org.jm/foreign\\_exchange/fx\\_rates\\_annual.php](http://www.boj.org.jm/foreign_exchange/fx_rates_annual.php).
- <sup>504</sup> Shaggy (Mr. Bombastic). 2006. Church Heathen. Directed by Jay Will (Game Over). Performed: Emprezz Golding: YouTube.com/Jay Will. Accessed 2017.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Dxq25Toh7k>. Also, an example of the significance of creating social power being played out in this video can be seen in the time stamp 4:51 when myself (in the khaki skirt suite) and Mystic Davis (Black and white skirt suite agreeing to strategically walk in the view of the camera upon exiting the church so we could be seen in the video. (Shaggy 2006)
- <sup>505</sup> This term colloquially to refer to something impressive.
- <sup>506</sup> (a lot of fire cracker are being exploded)
- <sup>507</sup> Pool resources together to in order to purchase food ingredient to cook for a large number of people,
- <sup>508</sup> An expression used when one has to fight amongst the crowd just to gain entry into a venue.
- <sup>509</sup> Collins, Phill. One More Night. 1985. Accessed 2017.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKVq-P3z5Vg>.  
 Album: No Jacket Required
- <sup>510</sup> Kartel, Vybz. Beyonce Wine. November 2006. Accessed 207.  
[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=beyonce](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=beyonce) Album: Riddim Driven: Sidewalk University
- <sup>511</sup> Agent Saso, Assassin. Cyaa Lock Off Di Dance. 2003. Accessed 2017.  
[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=assasin](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=assasin).  
 River Stone Buss Dem Head Mixtape
- <sup>511</sup> Dance JA Movements. Accessed July 2017. [https://i1.wp.com/www.danceja.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/MG\\_7791-1.jpg](https://i1.wp.com/www.danceja.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/MG_7791-1.jpg). Date of publication unavailable on Dance JA website

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