Hip-hop in Jamaica:
Representing the Local through International Sound[1]

"It's gone too hip-hop again," said Damian, his brethren, Fiya Rhed, nodding his head in agreement. Rashorn, a gentle guy with a raspy voice, looked on with interest but did not add his opinion, despite being the vocalist, or DJ, for whom we were building a *riddim*.[2] I turned back to my computer, about to remove the stuttering, double-time hi-hat line I had just added to a beat that sounded enough like dancehall reggae only moments before. Suddenly, Damian reconsidered: "Wait a minute," he said, apparently intrigued by the mix of styles, "It can work." For the next hour or so we continued to negotiate the sonic boundaries of hip-hop and reggae, I pulling toward hip-hop almost subconsciously, having learned to produce in the style of sample-based rap traditionalists, Damian and Fiya Rhed pushing toward a more Jamaican sound, more appropriate for a DJ representing the Twelve Tribes of Israel, one of the largest groups within the organized side of the Rastafarian movement. When we finally settled on a mix that seemed to satisfy all, Rashorn stepped up to the microphone and launched into the first of many takes of his tune, "In di Dance" [CD selection #1]:[3]

Now mi bankbook gettin' fatta /	Now my bankbook's getting fatter /
Girls dem gettin' hotta /	Girls are getting hotter [more attractive] /
Dem say, tat fi tit, an' tit fi tatta /	They say, "Tat for tit, and tit for tat" /
Ova big Ras, weh di girls dem a flatta, /	To me, "Big Ras," who the girls flatter /
Yo, Monday, we rollin' in di Esc-y-lator /	Monday, we drive the [Cadillac] Escalade /
Chuesday, it's di Navigator /	Tuesday, the [Lincoln] Navigator /
Yo, di Benz and Bima dem can stay until later . . .	The Benz and BMW can wait until later . . .

Having wrestled for hours over the placement of kicks and snares, the rhythms of hi-hats and basslines, the timbres of samples and synthesizers—and the genres these details define—I was surprised by the irony that Rashorn's lyrics and delivery seemed to be caught in their own

struggle between hip-hop and reggae. His celebration of luxury SUVs and expensive liquor, his use of African-American slang, and his occasional dip into hip-hop *flow*[4], or rhythmic delivery, showed that I was not the only one bringing hip-hop into the mix. "In di Dance" (the title itself a nod to American rapper 50 Cent's "In the Club") thus provides an example of the tensions and paradoxes hip-hop presents to Jamaican youth today.

The apparent contradiction of a young Rastafarian extolling symbols of material wealth should not be too quickly seized upon, however, as an indication of local values crumbling beneath the force of American imperial power. At the most obvious level, "In di Dance" represents, at least from Rashorn's perspective, a fully coherent statement. Although Rashorn borrows forms, phrases, and symbols from hip-hop, he deploys them in a way fully consistent with his understanding of himself as a Rastafarian and a Jamaican. A close examination of Rashorn's rhetorical strategies and their context reveals an underlying logic. He places himself within an African-American tradition—alongside performers such as Sammy Davis Jr., James Brown, and hip-hop's Cash Money Millionaires—wherein those traditionally denied access to opportunity and prosperity, in turn, flaunt symbols of affluence to confront the status quo. Thus, for Rashorn, hip-hop's ostentatious displays of wealth, or "bling-bling,"[5] rather than endorsing the social order, stands in direct opposition to Babylon.

Rashorn's idiosyncratic use of such materials illustrates the peculiar way that music travels across national boundaries. Some significations (e.g., hip-hop's oppositional character) may carry over, while others (e.g., hip-hop's materialism) may not. It is noteworthy that Jamaicans tend to embrace the symbols and styles of mainstream American hip-hop, whereas, generally speaking, hip-hop performers in other countries around the world seem to emulate the overtly political styles of American "underground" and "Golden Age" hip-hop.[6] This difference

may be related to a number of factors, including the relative penetration of American media in various countries, the salient political and social concerns in particular places, or the unique historical circumstances of hip-hop's transmission and development within a certain locale. In all cases, a connection to the local necessarily remains paramount despite people's fluency with the "foreign" forms they decide to adopt. Thus, Jamaicans of the hip-hop generation are making music that expresses their Jamaicanness in new ways, or perhaps expresses a new kind of Jamaicanness—one more reflective of current social and cultural realities, and the imagined communities that flow from them.

It is an oft-repeated assertion that almost as many Jamaicans now reside outside of Jamaica as on the island itself.[7] Despite such a dispersed population, however, members of the Jamaican diaspora—thanks to revolutions in air travel and communications technology—maintain close ties to friends, family, and associates back home. To some extent, Jamaica's ongoing formation as a nation—in both real and imagined terms—is as determined by Jamaicans living in Brooklyn, Boston, and Miami as by Jamaicans living in Kingston.[8] "Music is central to the diasporic experience," argues Mark Slobin, "linking homeland and here-land in an intricate network of sound" (1994:243). And indeed, for the past three decades, the transnational circulation and combination of hip-hop and reggae have given shape and form to a Jamaican nation that exceeds its geographical boundaries.

The story of Jamaican music often reads like an unbroken narrative of indigenous development ever since ska turned its back on American R&B in the early 60s. But hip-hop's contemporary presence in Jamaica offers a clear example of outside influence.[9] In the land that gave us reggae—one of the world's most popular musics and a significant source of national pride and profit—hip-hop's current ubiquity is remarkable. Although roots reggae's distinctive

"one-drop"—the sparse, defining rhythm of most Bob Marley songs—and dancehall's unmistakable 3+3+2 still resound around Kingston, the city also has many hip-hop devotees, particularly in middle- and upper-class areas. As indicated by the beats blaring from car stereos, from the mini-soundsystems of roadside CD vendors, and in the dancehalls themselves, Bounty Killer, Beenie Man, and even Bob Marley face serious competition from Jay Z, Nelly, and other mainstream American rappers. Some of dancehall's biggest stars—in particular, Elephant Man and Wayne Marshall—routinely score local hits with their own versions of hip-hop favorites. And upcoming DJs like Bling Dawg and Vybz Kartel have made names for themselves by seamlessly incorporating hip-hop flow into dancehall style. Sean Paul has become the national darling thanks to his recent U.S. chart successes, as well as the inroads he has made into the lucrative, globally popular hip-hop scene.[10] BET and MTV far outshine any local television offerings, and several radio stations now devote programming to contemporary hip-hop.

At the level of on-the-ground practice, especially among middle- and upper-class Jamaicans, aspiring rappers—some of them with impeccable New York borough accents—are becoming as common as DJs or singers. One musician with whom I collaborated, a DJ called Wasp, explained dancehall as a stylistic development of reggae essentially prompted by hip-hop's impact.[11] As we worked on a track together, he asked me to place the snares squarely on beats 2 and 4 and to avoid any semblance of a 3+3+2 in the bass. Wasp did not want a dancehall sound. He wanted what he called an "international sound," which, stylistically, amounted to hip-hop. For a country that takes great pride in its "national culture," and whose tourism industry depends on the maintenance of an attractive, distinctive image, Jamaica sometimes seems in the midst of an identity crisis.

While such musical interplay and local practice may signal an erosion of nation as a primary marker of identity, however, such a shift appears to accompany a reinforcement of groupings such as class. The embrace of hip-hop by middle-class[12] Jamaicans is consistent with a broader cultural pattern across the Caribbean, whereby American popular culture has come to dominate the imaginations of young people yearning for the freedom and wealth denied to them in post- and neo-colonial circumstances. In this sense, we can compare some Jamaicans' adoption of hip-hop style to the "homeboy cosmopolitanism" that Manthia Diawara attributes to young people of color in contemporary Greenwich Village—an attempt at transcendence and identity assertion through public display which Diawara compares to his and his peers' adoption of James Brown's style during the 60s and 70s in West Africa. For Diawara, hip-hop's commodification and worldwide spread "are an expression of poor people's desire for the good life" (1998:238). Through hip-hop, young, middle-class Jamaicans can participate in an international narrative of resistance, perseverance, and triumph, even when these concepts are tied to such problematic themes as materialism, sexism and homophobia, and a rugged individualism tending toward extreme violence.

Of these dominant themes, hip-hop's endorsement of conspicuous consumption appears to contradict most strongly what is perhaps Rastafari's most central concept: a rejection of the oppressive conditions, physical and psychological, of Babylon. According to Ennis Barrington Edmonds, a scholar of Rastafari, "Globally, Babylon is that worldly state of affairs in which the struggle for power and possessions takes precedence over the cultivation of human freedom and the concern for human dignity" (1998:24). Another writer on Rastafari, Randal Hepner, essentially equates "chanting down Babylon"—recall Rashorn's lyric in the chorus, "listen to the words weh di [which the] Rastaman chant"—with "signify[ing] to themselves and others their

rejection of a world based on crass, materialistic values…" (1998:211). Rex Nettleford couches the stance in more specifically anti-American terms, arguing that Rastafarians emphasize self-reliance over "a North American consumption pattern" and "living within one's means versus the wanton overconsumption of the ostentatious *nouveaux riches*" (1998:316). If the U.S. is frequently equated with Babylon, whose materialistic values seem so embraced by mainstream American hip-hop artists, Rashorn's hip-hop-accented celebration of luxury goods appears to contradict more common Rastafarian notions of the good life, or *livity*—"a code of relationships with God, nature, and society" (Chevannes 1994:169).

From the opening line about his growing "bankbook" to the litany of luxury vehicles, each casually assigned a day of the week for driving (or to use Rashorn's hip-hop-inflected term "rollin'"), the young DJ seems to embrace wholeheartedly American hip-hop's preoccupation with ostentatious displays of wealth. Remarkably, during our recording session, some of Rashorn's most materialistic lyrics emerged when he appeared to forget his lines, veering off in extemporaneous "freestyle" verses that seemed to fall even more egregiously into the clichés of contemporary hip-hop.[13] Two freestyle moments stand out in particular for their progression from Jamaican to American points of reference, complete with African-American slang and hip-hop flow (i.e., rhythmic delivery). In one instance, Rashorn's freestyle moved in non-sequitur fashion from devout Rastafarian maxims through more earthy, Jamaican-dancehall sentiments to an American hip-hop-ish preoccupation with money which seemed ultimately to trip up the performance itself: "Givin' thanks and praises to the Almighty / you on the dancefloor, moving hardcore / money fi flow, yo, you know it's all dough / it's all dough, it's on the flo' / money a flow, money a flow . . ." In another instance, Rashorn transformed the pre-composed phrase "sippin' on soldier roots"—an endorsement of the "natural" tonics favored by Rastafarians—into

an endorsement of two of the preferred, pricey beverages of today's hip-hop stars: "sippin' on Hennessy mix up with Mo' [Moet Champagne]."

During these moments, I was often left wondering whether Rashorn was simply refashioning American hip-hop for his own use or falling prey to its attractive, materialistic rhetoric. Rather than some subliminal surrender to black Babylon's bling, however, Rashorn's freestyles—and, for that matter, his pre-composed lyrics—seem to signal a more deliberate deployment of stock phrases and patterns. We can compare Rashorn's appropriation of hip-hop to Rastafarians' adoption and revision of the Bible, about which Stuart Hall observes:

> [Rastafarians] had to turn the text upside-down, to get a meaning which fit their experience . . . They learned to speak a new language. And they spoke it with a vengeance . . . They did not assume that their only cultural resources lay in the past . . . They did not go back and try to recover some absolutely pure "folk culture," untouched by history, as if that would be the only way they could learn to speak. No, they made use of modern media to broadcast their message. (1996:143)

In the same way, Rashorn's song employs a newly accented vocabulary through which the DJ can communicate with the wider world of transnational Jamaican society, the pan-African Rastafarian movement, and the overlapping global music cultures—and international markets—of hip-hop and reggae.

Moreover, Rashorn's usage of hip-hop's clichés often verges on parody. Not only are his boasts almost incredibly excessive, he seems to display a patent lack of interest in the objects he glorifies: his corruption of "Escalade" to "Esc-y-lator" stands in stark contrast to the almost obsessive specifics of some American rappers' descriptions of their luxury items. All of this suggests that Rashorn self-consciously deploys these symbols of power, and these gestures to the wider world, in order to give more currency to the song's simple and fundamental point of glorification: having fun at a dance. Rashorn revels in the positive images of his brethren and

sistren enjoying themselves and looking good—"jumping" and "prancing"—and he underscores the importance of community with the typically Rastafarian first-person-plural subject of the chorus: "Find *we* in di dance." Despite the trappings of bling-bling boasting, Rashorn puts forward a stance that seems, from his angle, consistent with the Rastafarian notion of livity. The juxtaposition of forms and practices in "In di Dance" demonstrates synthesis, coherence, and an underlying logic of identity, as convincingly as it suggests paradox and fracture.

Rashorn's denial of any contradiction in his song confirms his own belief in the coherence of his lyrics. When I interviewed him about "In di Dance," his answers expressed his lack of concern with the tensions I observed:

> W: You express a strong element of Rastafari in your music. Do you ever feel like that's in tension with some of the major themes of hip-hop or dancehall? How do they come together?
>
> R: Music is jus' music, y'know. Seen? And whether you a do Rastafari music inna a hip-hop way, or you a do it R&B, or you a do it jazz, seen? Or you a do it blues, seen? Or you a do it funky, you see-me-a-say? Or even if you do it rock 'n' roll, it still remain music.
>
> W: And it doesn't matter if it's about sufferation or flossin'?
>
> R: No. It no matter, a still music.
>
> W: They come under the same umbrella?
>
> R: Yeah. Still music. It jus' one ting, y'know: music. A seven note, y'know.

Directing the conversation toward the transcendent qualities of music, Rashorn indicates that, for him, there is no tension here. He draws on the language of hip-hop and reggae in the same manner that he selects notes from a scale. Ultimately, Rashorn is seeking to make music, and through that music—regardless of genre or style—to express himself and Rastafari. In the chorus to a second song that we recorded together, he underlined the inherent unity of his

performance, expression, and philosophy: "Everything I do a jus' Rastafari / Everything I say a jus' Rastafari."

Claiming hip-hop's symbols for Rastafari represents a powerful move for Rashorn. Although there may be no contradiction as far as he is concerned, his strategy could create tension for a number of possible listeners. One target of Rashorn's stance is Babylon itself (which includes such embodiments of power as members of the police force, politicians, and elites of all sorts). Parading through Kingston's streets in large, expensive vehicles, engaging in extravagant consumption, and simply possessing the money from which power flows in Babylon, all represent oppositional practices for someone like Rashorn, who as a Rastafarian is associated with a marginal underclass[14]—despite Rastafari's cultural prominence and spread to the middle- and upper-classes.

Rashorn's position also challenges Rastafarians with a different conception of livity and of Babylon. Rastafari, as a matter of principle, holds that institutions are an inappropriate mediation of an individual's relationship to Jah. Such built-in individualism necessarily creates a degree of heterodoxy among Rastafarians. Thus, it is not surprising that Rashorn would fashion his own conception of Rastafari, his own consistent practices, his own synthesis of the cultural resources available to him. Even so, many Rastafarians would find Rashorn's materialist language incompatible with the basic tenets of the faith. This is a valid and persuasive argument against Rashorn's choice to incorporate these motifs. Indeed, many people—Rastafarian and otherwise—believe that other dominant themes in hip-hop, such as violence and misogyny, are also too negative to recuperate.

Rashorn's affiliation with the Twelve Tribes of Israel may shed some light on his seemingly idiosyncratic interpretation of Rastafari. As a member of such an organization,

Rashorn falls outside of the Rastafarian mainstream. For decades the Twelve Tribes has been "a haven for middle-class Rastas," and the group is often characterized as espousing liberal values, such as "greater equality between the sexes" and "freedom for those who prefer not to grow the beard or wear dreadlocks" (Chevannes 1998:66). On one hand, then, Rashorn's expression of identity, asserted through symbols of material wealth, can be seen as consistent with certain bourgeois proclivities. On the other hand, the Twelve Tribes of Israel's association with progressive social values suggests that many members might not approve of Rashorn's seemingly positive references to American bling-bling.

Rashorn's example illustrates some of the ways that hip-hop draws the lines of community in Jamaica today. Due to revolutions in media and communication technologies, as well as air travel, the range of cultural choices and suggestive subjectivities[15] available to the average Jamaican has exploded. People's connections to friends and family abroad have become increasingly close, and millions of eyes have shifted their gaze to American cities and the flashy, urbane lifestyles associated with them through the representations of Hollywood, cable TV, and mainstream hip-hop music. The cosmopolitanism that one hears in contemporary Jamaican dancehall and hip-hop bears witness to these social and cultural changes. Jamaicans draw on global sounds, including those of the U.S., in order to affirm, ironically, a local, even oppositional, identity. The social signifiers of such international sounds—e.g., materialism—do not necessarily corrupt an internally coherent musical system that, for example, supports Rastafarians against Babylon. Indeed, the oppositional associations of hip-hop reinforce this local identity formation. Hip-hop in Jamaica thus offers a rich resource for creative reinvention, another powerful text to turn upside-down.

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Notes

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[2] *Riddim* (sometimes *rhythm*) is Jamaican parlance for *beat* (to employ the hip-hop term)—which is to say, the accompanying musical track over which a vocalist DJs, raps, or sings. Also, whereas *DJ* in hip-hop parlance refers to the musician operating the turntables, in Jamaica *DJ* is equivalent to *rapper*, except of course that it signifies a Jamaican style of rapping, which entails rhythmic, melodic, timbral, and linguistic features that differentiate it from its American counterpart. *Selector* is the Jamaican equivalent of hip-hop's turntable-based *DJ*.

[3] Throughout this essay, readers will note a consistent inconsistency in my transcriptions of song lyrics and speech. The task of representing the distinctive sound of Jamaican English is fraught with difficulties and dangers. On the one hand, I do not want to distort the sound or the meaning of the words by imposing "standard" spellings. On the other hand, I am wary of obscuring the meaning with unreadable transcriptions, not to mention falling into trap of employing a form of representation that smacks of minstrel-ish mockery. I take my cue, therefore, from L. Emilie Adams, whose book, *Understanding Jamaican Patois*, features a meditation on the same problems. For the majority of her text, Adams employs what she calls an "imperfect and incomplete system" (7), which is only partially phonetic. I find her explanation of this system rather sensible: "A true indication of pronunciation is given only in the spelling of peculiarly Afro-Jamaican words, or where the Afro-Jamaican pronunciation diverges appreciably from the standard English pronunciation, or where there is some danger of confusion between the two juxtaposed systems" (7). In some cases, I also provide a side-by-side "translation" in order to facilitate comprehension and bring into relief the distinctive quality of Jamaican English.

[4] If we define *flow* as *a combination of rhythmic delivery and rhyme placement*, we can observe some basic differences between contemporary hip-hop and dancehall. Hip-hop flow, especially recently, tends toward irregular rhyme placement, creating patterns that accent beats other than the traditional or "old school" emphasis on beats 2 and 4. There is also an underlying nonchalance in hip-hop flow, produced mainly by a sense of play around the pulse—usually hesitation and legato phrasing. In contrast, dancehall flow tends to be much more staccato and "on-beat," featuring consistent end-rhymes around beat 4.

[5] *Bling-bling* is a quasi-onomatopoetic, metonymic term for the shine of jewelry. The New Orleans-based Cash Money Millionaires popularized the phrase with a song by the same name in the late 90s. "Bling-bling" (often shortened to "bling") endures as a symbolic expression—and not just in hip-hop, but in dancehall, soca, and other popular global forms that have been influenced by the language of hip-hop.

[6] Generally, "underground" refers to hip-hop produced on independent labels and outside of mainstream mass media. "Underground" hip-hop artists tend to focus on aesthetics and idealized notions of community and culture. "Golden Age" hip-hop refers to the rap music made between 1987-1994 (give or take a year on either side), much of which put forward a prominently political orientation, from the Afrocentric affirmations of A Tribe Called Quest to the controversial critiques of Public Enemy.

[7] Typical estimates place the number of Jamaican citizens living abroad as about one-third of total Jamaican citizens. If one includes second-generation migrants, the figure quickly approaches one-half of all "Jamaicans" (from Orlando Patterson, in conversation).

[8] Although it emphasizes more the effect of Jamaica's population and cultural flows on areas of the United States than vice versa, Orlando Patterson's piece, "Ecumenical America: Global Culture and the American Cosmos" (1994), serves to underscore the new conception of community emerging from late 20th century "peripheral" migration patterns and their "reverse colonization" of metropoles, which become re-oriented as "cosmopoles": "There is no traumatic transfer of national loyalty from the home country to the host polity, since home is readily accessible and national loyalty is a waning sentiment in what is increasingly a postnational world. Jamaican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Barbadian societies are no longer principally defined by the political-geographical units of Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Barbados, but by *both* the populations and cultures of these untis and their postnational colonies in the cosmopolis" (111, emphasis in original). Significantly, Patterson primarily employs reggae music to illustrate the new cultural products arising from these new social relationships.

[9] The story of Jamaican music, as conventionally told, rarely admits any outside influence after the American R&B of the 40s and 50s that prompted the ska revolution. From Bradley 2000 to Stolzoff 2000, Bilby 1995 to Lewin 1998, one finds a consistent denial of any significant outside influence on the music of Jamaica after the early 1960s. This creates a seamless and powerful narrative about local creation and the unique cultural resources of Jamaica, but it also overlooks some rather interesting cultural and social details. Jamaica's transnational community, colonial history, and geographical location make it a conduit for culture from the outside. Simply flipping channels on the radio (an extremely popular medium in Jamaica), one finds a vast range of music being broadcast by and for Jamaicans. Jamaica's airwaves seem to present a veritable archive of popular music from the last 50 years, encompassing myriad genres across various musical eras. The history of reggae itself shows the incorporation of stylistic influences from rock, to disco, to world music, to hip-hop. Still, to refer to the same Rastafarian saying that Bilby employs to justify his emphasis on the traditional, "the half has never been told." As a result, the dominant narrative of Jamaican music, in true nationalist form, distorts the complicated story of Jamaican cultural and social flows, refusing to acknowledge the centrality of routes to its roots.

[10] From Sean Paul's most recent album, *Dutty Rock* (2002), "Gimme the Light" peaked at number 7 on Billboard's Hot 100 and the follow-up single, "Get Busy," reached number 1. His newfound status as a favorite collaborator of top American hip-hop and R&B acts has many a DJ—even those critical of his uptown background—hoping that such exposure translates to greater access to the substantial, highly sought-after American market for other Jamaican artists.

[11] According to Wasp: "Rap, on a level now, come from reggae. Dancehall now is a new thing a come after rap. Hip-hop get influence from reggae, but this thing a we a do now . . . a dancehall, and that come from the rap." For others, however, such as dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson, dancehall represents a return to roots: "[T]he rhythms are far more Jamaican," he writes, "they're drawn from Etu, Pocomania, Kumina—African-based religious cults" (1993). Clearly, dancehall's place in reggae's lineage remains ambiguous—and contested. The relationship between hip-hop and dancehall is often couched in familial terms, though people disagree on whether hip-hop and dancehall are brothers, cousins, or father and son.

[12] I should note that middle-class Jamaicans are, in relation to middle-class Americans, rather poor. Compare for example the difference in per capita income (as of 2001) between Jamaicans (US$2,720) and residents of Mississippi (US$21,643), the poorest state in the U.S. (*Europa World Year Book 2003*, New York: Europa Publications; *World Almanac Book of Facts 2003*, New York: World Almanac Books).

[13] Freestyle, or extemporaneous rap, is a rather interesting medium for observing the relationship between composition and what we might call "lyrical vocabulary." In particular, by demanding spontaneous exposition, freestyle exposes the way that language—in the form of stock phrases—can determine the content and underlying philosophy of one's lyrics. Typically, individual artists will return to a set of idiosyncratic tropes during a freestyle—a crutch perhaps, but also a necessary strategy for such a challenging practice. What was particularly striking in my experience with freestyle in Jamaica was the recurrence of particular phrases, especially when the freestyle assumed the form of rap-style verse. Again and again, I heard references to "representin'," "keepin' it real," and "playa-hatin'." These phrases are strong markers of mid- to late-90s hip-hop (clearly a formative period for hip-hop's influence on a generation of Jamaicans), and, although they have fallen somewhat out of vogue in the U.S., they frequently emerge in the freestyles and compositions of hip-hop-influenced Jamaican artists. It is no surprise that "playa-haters" make repeat appearances in Rashorn's song, and in the pre-composed sections at that.

[14] Conflicting reports estimate that Rastafarians make up between 1 and 10 percent of Jamaicans. A 1982 census reported only 14,249 Rastafarians, or 0.7% (*Europa World Year Book 2003*, New York: Europa Publications). The popular travel guide, *Lonely Planet: Jamaica* (2001), places the number at "as many as 100,000" (73), while an online Lonely Planet publication puts the figure at "just over 10 percent" which would be closer to 300,000 (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/theme/music/mus_reggae.htm> [accessed 29 September 2003]).

[15] In his essay, "Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers: Media and the Creation of Parallel Modernities" (2002), Brian Larkin examines the process by which Bollywood engenders alternative subjectivities among the Hausa in Nigeria. Because Indian film "engages with real desires and conflicts in African societies" (373), it invites people to "participate in the imagined realities of other cultures as part of their daily lives" (352). Clearly, hip-hop serves a similar function, among others, in Jamaica. Because hip-hop simultaneously promotes foreign and appealing lifestyles, resonates with the everyday experiences of many Jamaicans, and—despite its intense ties to the local—participates in an increasingly post-national conception of identity, it provides various points of entry, especially for middle-class observers regularly exposed to American mass media.