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SHORT TITLE OF THESIS:

Rastafari and conceptions of musical meaning in roots reggae music.
ABSTRACT

Reggae is a popular musical form that originated in Jamaica in the late 1960's and soon came to be closely associated with the oppositional, Afrocentric Rastafarian movement. During the 1970's it achieved global popularity and is now produced in many locations around the world. In Montreal, reggae is produced by and for a cosmopolitan community; however, certain conceptions of the distinctiveness of this music as an effective intervention in social processes, derived from Rastafarian philosophy, are maintained by its performers. This thesis examines reggae song lyrics and elements of discourse about reggae music in relation to Rastafarian cultural practices, showing how the aesthetic conventions of the form involve a certain ritualization of musical activity that allows for the interpretation of aesthetic experience in terms of solidarity, resistance and historical progress.

Le reggae est une musique d'origine jamaïquaine qui date de la fin des années soixante et qui est vite devenue étroitement liée au projet oppositionnel et Africaniste du mouvement Rastafarien. Au cours des années soixante-dix le reggae a atteint une popularité mondiale, et maintenant est joué dans plusieurs régions du monde. A Montreal, le reggae est réalisé par et pour une communauté cosmopolite; cependant, des conceptions d'origine Rastafarienne, visant le caractère distinct de cette musique comme force sociale, sont maintenues par ceux qui la produisent. Cette these, en analysant des textes des chansons reggae et le discours sur cette musique par rapport aux pratiques culturelles des Rastafariens, montre comment l'esthétique du reggae implique une ritualisation de l'activité musicale qui permet l'interprétation de l'expérience esthétique comme expérience de la solidarité, la résistance et le progrès historique.
PREFACE

While researching and writing this thesis, I participated simultaneously in two very different communities -- that of the academy and that of the Montréal reggae scene -- whose priorities and timetables often seemed to conflict. During this sometimes difficult period I was guided and supported by my family, and by a number of friends and colleagues in both the academic and musical worlds. At McGill, the advice and encouragement of Professors Jérôme Rousseau and Carmen Lambert have been particularly helpful from the beginning, as have comments from Professor Eric Schwimmer; the sympathetic interest shown by my fellow students in the Department of Anthropology is also greatly appreciated. On the musical side, maximum respect is due to my friends and band-mates Buntin and Andrew, as well as to all the musicians with whom I have played in Montréal and elsewhere. Give thanks and praise.

The lyrical texts of the following songs have been reproduced here by permission of the composers:

"Good Feeling" and "Benefit", (c) 1992 Joel Neil.
"Slaveship", (c) 1992 Albert Adu-Fosu.
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I. INTRODUCTION: The Reggae Feeling

In the pages that follow I will examine the manner in which the political/religious sensibility of the Rastafarian movement is involved in the aesthetic practices of musicians playing reggae music in Montréal. During my years of experience playing with reggae groups in this city, I have noted that musicians specializing in reggae tend to regard this style as a unique kind of aesthetic activity. While many of these musicians also play other styles in various groups and projects, a significant proportion consider their engagement in the production of reggae to involve a special personal commitment, on the order of a spiritual or ethical conviction. For them, reggae is not simply another "beat" that can be played by any competent musician, but a specific mode of expression that depends upon certain moral qualities in the musician.

Although reggae is generally produced within the structures of the mainstream commercial entertainment industry (nightclubs, popular music festivals, commercial recordings) and intended for a cosmopolitan audience, Montréal reggae musicians tend to perceive their efforts as persistently marginalized by this industry in relation to other forms of popular music in North America, not simply because of reggae's "ethnic" origins but because of its serious,
critical engagement with spiritual and political reality. However, they continue in their efforts, confident that eventually reggae's "time will come" and bring the popular recognition due to such an important and appealing art form\(^1\). Much discussion of the value of reggae music and the special personal qualities considered necessary for its production is carried on in terms of a conceptual "grid," derived from Rastafarian philosophy, that tends to ritualize and politicize musical activity. This essay will examine the distinctive conception of music-making that is involved in reggae and which to a certain extent provides the "motor" for the continued production of this cultural form under the often frustrating conditions that are frequently identified by musicians in Rastafarian terms as typical of life in "Babylon\(^2\)."

In conceptualizing the distinctiveness of their aesthetic activity, reggae musicians can focus on diverse aspects of the musical process. When speaking of their personal engagement with this style of music, however, the factor most commonly brought up by performers in explanation of reggae's special appeal is the particular "vibe"

\(^1\)A brief description of the Montréal reggae scene will be provided later in this chapter.

\(^2\)For the definition of this and other important Rastafarian terms, see the glossary (Appendix 1). Terms defined in the glossary are marked with an asterisk the first time they appear in the main text.
("vibration") or feeling considered to be involved in the music. A quote from the acknowledged "king" of reggae, the late Bob Marley, is typical in this respect: when asked why he played what he called "roots* music" -- a term designating the style of serious reggae that is the focus of this study -- rather than any other style, he replied that it was because

it have the most... it have the best feelin' to me right now. It have more feelin' than any other music me hear... because... that thing, you have to feel it. (Whitney and Hussey 1984: 88; the ellipses represent pauses and not omissions)

Interviews with Marley show him to have been a thoughtful and articulate speaker who was rarely at a loss for words: his response should not be taken as a confused evasion, but rather as an indication of the essential incommunicability of the feeling that is taken by him to constitute reggae's ultimate value. Such an appeal to ineffable affective qualities is not surprising in a characterization of music, which as an aesthetic form is usually associated with emotional effects. However, for performers and fans of reggae music, a special personal experience promoted by this musical style is the main focus in characterizations of its production and reception, and is the ultimate frame of reference for assertions of the value of the music. "You have to feel it" is a statement that sums up the reggae
enthusiast's view of verbal descriptions of the reggae experience: words alone cannot communicate the feeling, but only evoke an experience already assumed to be shared. If someone has not felt the power of the music then attempts at explanation of its appeal are futile, as any committed reggae fan will attest, for (to quote a Jamaican saying that appears not infrequently in reggae songs) "who feels it, knows it."

More specifically, roots reggae music is commonly spoken of as generating "positive vibrations" among those participating in the musical process (including listeners and dancers as well as performers). These statements imply a certain concept of musical communication that is specific to this style of music. Such vibrations might be described as a kind of force that impacts on the subjectivity of the participants at bodily, emotional, and intellectual levels, bringing them into a kind of attunement with themselves and with those around them. The musical experience is thus viewed as the catalyst of a special social knowledge that might be described as a sense of community, taking "sense" with its various connotations of feeling, meaning, and directionality.

The success of a reggae performance will commonly be judged in terms of the "vibe" that characterizes the event,
emphasizing not just the quality of the music but the interactional ambience of the event -- violence among audience members, for example, or a police raid can be said to "cold up [i.e. 'kill' or dampen] the vibe." In this respect positive vibrations represent a total quality of sociality to which all participants actively contribute. Within the context of musical performance, such interactional qualities can be linked to symbolic constructions of a social reality extending beyond the immediate situation, and it is in this manner that the production of reggae is often interpreted by performers as an effective intervention in historical processes.

Such symbolic links are effected through a number of aesthetic media (pictorial backdrops, costume, dance and gestures) but are most clearly and consistently forged in song texts of a special sort, the "conscious* lyrics" that are generally considered a defining feature of roots reggae. Reggae is in fact often called "rebel music" in reference to the centrality of themes of resistance in its songs; this oppositional discourse is directed against the systematic oppression of certain social groups, usually defined in economic, racial or ethnic terms, by institutions of the dominant society (or, in the Rastafarian parlance favoured by reggae performers, "Babylon"). This tendency derives from the historical association of reggae with the
Rastafarian movement, and so with resistance to the inequitable social order of post-colonial Jamaica. Situated in its original Jamaican context, reggae can be considered as a manifestation of what is termed "roots and culture*," mediating the creation of a kind of African (or Afro-Jamaican) cultural identity for the economically and culturally marginalized black majority of the island's population, who initially constituted the main producers of and audience for the music; in other situations the musical form has been appropriated to assert the cultural pride and strength of displaced groups of various types (particularly but not necessarily people of African descent), or to encourage unity and solidarity among such populations.

These dimensions of roots reggae music constitute the sociomusical framework in terms of which reggae musicians can conceptualize their aesthetic activities as a particular kind of social/political praxis. While the ethnographic data on which I base my analysis of this musical culture emerge primarily from my experience of the reggae scene in Montréal (which I will describe shortly), reference to recordings, interviews, and writings from Jamaica and elsewhere also figure prominently in my analysis. In this way I contextualize the ethnographic material by situating it within a cultural complex that is organized around the music and which has travelled around the world -- through
the movement of immigrants from Jamaica to metropolitan centres and musical encounters of various sorts (contact with Jamaican performers, listening to recorded reggae, attending concerts), as well as through other media such as film, television, magazines, record jackets, and so on.

The Argument

My approach to the internationalized "reggae culture" will take as its starting point a set of central themes and explicate them in terms of their implication in the production of reggae music and to the philosophical concerns of Rastafari. The organization of these themes in my analysis basically involves beginning with the most general concepts and progressively sharpening the focus in order to set more specific issues within the conceptual context that gives them meaning.

First, I discuss the concepts of knowledge and experience as they appear in discourse on Rastafari and reggae music. In such discourse, an epistemological primacy is accorded to personal experience, relating to a Rastafarian conception of "consciousness" that is founded on self-knowledge involving a recognition of the situation of the self within a community. While the "conscious lyrics" associated with roots reggae are evaluated primarily in terms of the knowledge or awareness they represent, their perceived
communicative power hinges on the establishment of a field of common experience among those participating in the musical process. This shared experiential ground for the transmission of knowledge can be defined in social/historical (or sometimes racial) terms, or from a more universalistic perspective -- more prevalent in the productions of Montréal reggae groups, -- as a common moral state available to all humans. In the performance context, communication is also associated with a form of communal involvement in the music, mediated by "positive vibrations" generated by the music that envelops the participants. The realms of musical and social/moral experience are merged, in a sense; the shared feeling uniting the participants is immediately musical, but can be represented in terms of relations among a community extending beyond the specific context of performance.

With this in mind, I discuss the defining features of "conscious" or "culture*" lyrics (considered to be a crucial component of the distinctive character of roots reggae) in terms of dominant thematic tendencies, emphasizing particularly their orientation towards the organization of holistic personal experience involving at once the "body, heart, and mind." I analyze the text of a song performed by the Montréal reggae group Inusaso, treating it as a commentary on or interpretation of a particular quality of
experience: the text relates feelings of *communitas* ideally generated in the musical process to a Rastafarian conception of social reality as the conflictual encounter of two opposed moral forces. This text can be viewed as a kind of ritual (or ritualizing) utterance, with a performative dimension that focuses on the definition of the relationships among the participants and their position vis-à-vis the surrounding social world.

I continue by examining in more detail some of the narrative tropes commonly encountered in conscious lyrics, focusing on themes of progressive historical movement and their relation to the experience of the participants in the musical process. I discern a general symbolic scheme in these texts, associating the dance movements of performers and audience with the historical trajectory of a community of "captives" moving toward liberation: conscious lyrics focus on themes of unity and collective power or strength in resistance to oppression, juxtaposing them to the aesthetic experience of the musical/ritual community. I then examine how such themes are presented in the music of two Montréal reggae groups (Inusaso and Jahlélé), indicating the limits of an approach to musical meaning via song texts alone.
Reggae and Rastafari in Jamaica and Abroad

The history and social context of Jamaican reggae music has been treated at some length in a variety of journalistic accounts, and thus will not be recapitulated here. As a rhythmic form, reggae emerged in the late 1960s through relatively subtle rhythmic shifts from the earlier "ska" and "rock steady" styles, which had developed as a fusion of indigenous folk musical elements with American jazz and rhythm & blues forms. Like its predecessors, reggae is a form of urban popular dance music, performed by small ensembles using the complement of amplified instruments standard in most contemporary pop music: trap drums, bass guitar, electric guitars, piano, organ or synthesizer, horns (usually saxophones, trumpet, and trombone), and a variety of percussion instruments. The reggae rhythm is always played in 4/4 time, and generally should not vary in tempo or volume throughout a piece. The bass and drums are considered to provide the foundation of the music, and indeed the repeated bass figure (known as a riddim) is often treated as the principal distinguishing feature of a composition. In ideal performance conditions (and in the mixing of recordings), the bass frequencies are the loudest.

3 Among the best of these accounts are Clarke 1980, Davis and Simon 1982, and Johnson and Pines 1982.

4 Creatively-remixed "versions" or "dubs" of reggae recordings emphasize this bass part, and in fact sometimes feature only the drums and bass.
sounds in the reggae arrangement, and are often amplified to thunderous volumes -- such that they are felt in the body as much as heard by the ear. The harmonic basis of a reggae composition is usually fairly simple (generally cycling through two, three, or four chords) and is mainly supplied by the distinctive "chops" of guitar and piano on the second an fourth beats of the bar; lead guitar, keyboard instruments and horns contribute melodic "lines" and solo parts.

While strictly instrumental compositions are sometimes heard, most reggae features a vocal part that is either sung or delivered in the highly rhythmic musical speech characteristic of "DJing", so called because it was originated by disc-jockeys playing recorded music at dances. In Jamaica, both song and DJ styles are often produced by individual artists performing with recorded instrumental tracks -- most Jamaican single records include a "version" or "dub" instrumental remix of the featured composition -- and so one recorded "riddim" may serve to accompany any number of vocal performances; new performances of "classic" riddims are also frequently heard. Some artists, such as Bob Marley and many non-Jamaican performers, prefer however to compose songs comprising a distinctive instrumental component to accompany the vocals.
Reggae appeared at a time of some social unrest in Jamaica: independence from Great Britain (achieved in 1962) had failed to bring about an improvement in the conditions of life for the island's impoverished majority, who were mainly "black" Afro-Jamaicans\(^5\) situated at the bottom of the economic and social hierarchy, and the new national motto "out of many, one people" was belied by continuing social stratification along racial lines. In this period the social and religious positions associated with the Rastafarian movement, whose adherents were concentrated in the ghettos of Kingston, began to gain greater prominence in the lyrics of reggae songs. Jamaican popular song already had a tradition of secular social commentary focusing on the outlaw "rude boy" figure struggling to succeed in the face of poverty and police harrassment, and these themes were easily adapted in terms of the oppositional stance of Rastafari\(^6\). Reggae performers increasingly came to identify themselves with the movement through their song lyrics, stage names, hairstyles, and

\(^5\)The term "black" is used in this text to refer to people of African descent. This is the term employed most often in reggae circles, and should be understood to derive from Jamaican usage in which it contrasts with "white" and "brown" in designating a particular social status as much as actual skin colour.

\(^6\)An excellent fictional treatment of the encounter of the rude boy culture with that of Rastafari, incorporating much historical and sociological detail, is found in Michael Thelwell's novel The Harder They Come (New York: Grove Press, 1980), based on Perry Henzell's film of the same title.
manner of speech. Reggae's most well-known exponent, Bob Marley, was one of these: his recordings (initially, as part of the Wailers trio with Bunny Wailer and Peter Tosh), released internationally by Chris Blackwell's Island Records company, were the first to attain wide success outside Jamaica, and the songs projected through their lyrics an oppositional Rastafarian image that became an integral component of the conception of reggae music among global audiences. While the reggae style also includes less politicized secular genres such as "lovers' rock" (which focuses on romantic themes) and has never been exclusively identified with the Rastafarian movement, the association of the two was very strong in Jamaica in the 1970s and continues to dominate the international reggae scene. The politically and spiritually "conscious" genre associated with the productions of artists like Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Burning Spear, and Culture is generally known as "roots" reggae.

Since the 1930s Rastafarians had proclaimed the divinity of the "black king," Emperor Haile Selassie I* of Ethiopia*, and the inevitability of the black peoples' return (or repatriation) to Africa as prophesied by Marcus Garvey7.

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7Garvey, who founded the United Negro Improvement Association in the early part of this century and advocated "Africa for the Africans," is revered by the Rastafarians as a prophet of repatriation.
By the time of reggae's emergence, they constituted a formidable presence in the urban ghettos of Jamaica. A self-consciously marginal social movement, Rastafarians generally maintain a distance from the dominant institutions of mainstream society (which they regard as morally corrupt), subsisting through various forms of self-employment (craft production, for example) and often adopting distinctive styles of speech, dress, and behaviour -- for example, the long uncombed hair known as dreadlocks*. While sub-groupings exhibiting various degrees of formal organization have appeared within the movement (for example the Twelve Tribes and the Edwardites⁸), Rastafarians generally exhibit an egalitarian individualism and a distaste for official authority that tends to limit the centralization or routinization of the movement. In fact, despite efforts of various writers (for example, Barrett 1977: 104, 126) to draw up a list of "beliefs" constituting "Rastafarianism," it is difficult to identify any consistent tenets of the movement beyond an identification of Haile Selassie as the living God and a trust in the inevitable repatriation of black people to Africa.

As mentioned above, the promotion of Bob Marley and the Wailers on the global entertainment market signalled the beginning of the "internationalization" of reggae.

⁸On the Edwardites, see Barrett 1977: 181-185.
accompanied by an increased visibility of Rastafari outside Jamaica. Since the early- to mid-1970s reggae has become part of a cosmopolitan popular music culture. Recorded reggae has been heard in all corners of the globe, and groups play the music (sometimes fused with local styles) in places as diverse as Japan, Brazil, West Africa, England, Germany, the Solomon Islands, and of course Canada. In Montreal, Canada's second largest city, reggae groups have been playing at least since the mid-1970s, and while these have largely been formed and led by members of the city's English-speaking West Indian immigrant population, musicians of very diverse cultural backgrounds have also participated in the production of the music.

My Field Experience: The Montréal Reggae Scene

Broadly speaking, there exist two overlapping domains for the production of "live" reggae in Montréal: shows produced by and for members of the Jamaican immigrant community, usually in "uptown" neighbourhoods where the Jamaican community is concentrated, and performances in central "downtown" nightclubs for a mixed audience composed mainly of young people under thirty years of age. Most groups have played in both contexts and consider their music appropriate for either type of audience, though their efforts may be concentrated primarily in one domain -- the bands I have worked with, for example, have performed more often on the
club scene. Generally, support for reggae remains constant among the Jamaican-Canadian community (though tending to favour the variety currently popular in Jamaica), while the popularity of the music among cosmopolitan audiences fluctuates over the years and focuses on the roots variety. Montreal reggae groups are still trying to "break into" the mainstream music market: though a number have released recordings, none have achieved the degree of commercial success (in terms of recording contracts, radio and video airplay, major concert tours) enjoyed by some reggae bands from Toronto, for example, or by certain local groups playing original rock music.

Since arriving in Montréal in the summer of 1990, I have worked as a keyboard player in three groups specializing in roots reggae. All of these groups composed their own music and lyrics (though material by Bob Marley and other Jamaican artists was sometimes included in performances), and this is considered to set them apart from certain groups that play only "cover" material by other composers. The compositional strategies in these groups varied, but were generally collaborative: in two of them the singer often contributed lyrics to music that was developed by other members (including myself), in another the leader/singer/bass guitarist composed both lyrics and music, and had the ultimate authority in judging the appropriateness of any
contributions by other musicians. However, the compositional process generally involved each member of the group working on his or her own part within a skeletal framework provided by the composer -- this usually consisting of a bass line, chord changes and perhaps a distinctive melodic instrumental "line." Indeed, spontaneous group performances or "jams" at rehearsals often developed into the basis for a new song.

The membership of these bands reflected the cosmopolitan character of Montréal's "downtown" community. In two bands the leaders/singers were of Jamaican origin (one of them a Rastafarian); the other was led by a Euro-Canadian -- which made it something of an oddity among roots reggae bands -- and featured a Ghanaian singer. The musicians who worked with these groups (sometimes for only a short period) were drawn from very diverse backgrounds. Anglophone and francophone Canadians, Europeans, Africans, and West Indians participated at various times in the production of the music, and, despite the androcentric tendencies of Rastafari and the reggae culture in general, women have worked in each of these bands as musicians or backup singers -- accepted, like the men, on the basis of their musical abilities. Most of those involved considered themselves to be primarily musicians by vocation, but usually supported the meagre earnings from local performances with other "day jobs" of
various sorts. Only a few had strong commitments to non-musical employment, and a couple (including myself) were studying at local universities.

Thus while most Montréal reggae bands are led by males of West Indian origin identifying themselves with the Rastafarian movement, participation in the production of the music is not limited to this group. As a Euro-Canadian, I have gained a familiarity with the musical and textual dimensions of reggae through approximately seven years' amateur interest in the music (listening to a wide variety of recorded reggae and attending reggae performances in various Canadian locations) and three years of involvement in playing it professionally. During the period of my fieldwork from the fall of 1991 to the spring of 1993, I worked consistently with two different groups, participating in the composition, live performance and recording of original reggae in Montréal and the surrounding area. In the course of these activities I was able to observe closely the processes involved in the creation of the music and to engage in the frequent discussions concerning musical, spiritual, ethical and social issues that accompanied it -- not only with the numerous musicians who were involved in the bands with which I played, but also with many other Montréal artists, Jamaican and non-Jamaican, Rastafarian and non-Rastafarian.
A concern for the meaning and purpose of music is a central feature of the reggae culture, and in my research I found no need to initiate a process of formal interviews in gathering data for this project: the topics treated in my analysis are recurring subjects of discussion and debate among reggae musicians, and it seemed more practical to observe how they arose in the context of musical activities than to elicit them artificially. I have, however, made frequent use of quotations from published interviews with Jamaican reggae artists, for discourse on reggae is fairly standardized in terms of its thematic emphases and metaphorical repertoire: statements by Bob Marley, for example, are in these respects fairly representative of what any Rastafarian reggae musician might say about the music. The same can be said of the song lyrics cited to support the argument: the texts I have chosen, drawn from the productions of both local and Jamaican performers, are part of a tradition well-respected by composers who want to create the "real thing," and would readily be recognized as appropriate examples of "conscious lyrics" by knowledgeable reggae fans.
II. WHO FEELS IT, KNOWS IT: Experience, Knowledge and Communication in Rastafari and Reggae

As the quote from Bob Marley indicates (see Introduction, p.3), the notion of feeling is central to the definition of reggae as an aesthetic practice; however, there is no doubt that performers of roots reggae also regard it as "message music" that should make clear statements about social reality. Reggae is considered by those who produce it to deal with important truths relating to the human situation. A song by Jamaican singer Bunny Wailer states the prevailing view with the directness typical of reggae texts: "reggae is the music that sends a message,/ speaks of history, the truth and the right" ("Roots Radics Rockers Reggae"9). How are these defining characteristics of reggae related in conceptualizations of the musical process? The answer may be found in an examination of certain views of the relation of knowledge and experience, derived from Rastafarian philosophy, that are implied in discourse about reggae.

In Jamaica a popular saying describes the understanding of the hardships of life: "who feels it, knows it." This phrase, which appears in the lyrics of a number of reggae songs, implies a conception of a kind of certain knowledge

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9For information on the provenance of song lyrics cited, see the discography (Appendix 2).
that is not discursively communicated but attained only through direct experience, and which cannot be separated from a subjective emotional valuation. Joseph Owens, whose book *Dread* (1976) is a compilation of statements from Jamaican Rastafarians on various religious and philosophical topics, refers to this experiential epistemology in his discussion of the Rastafarian conception of knowledge:

Knowing is always characterized by a high degree of certainty, by a close relation to the practical, and by an innate presence within man. Such a conception of knowledge has some basis in Jamaican creole usage, as, for example, when speaking of places, a Jamaican will say he 'knows' a place only when he has actually lived there. Further, the Rastafarian use of the verb 'know' could derive from the ancient biblical meaning, viz. to have direct, experiential knowledge of some object. (Owens 1976: 170)

This conception is elaborated in Owens's chapter on "Knowing Dread," in which statements by Rastafarians make clear that truth, for them, is something that is experienced inwardly by each individual and not located in external sources, nor simply transmitted through discourse (Owens 1976: 171, 174-177). In this conception one may be directed towards the "innate presence" of truth within one's self, but not taught it after the manner of a catechism; knowledge is not circulated in an objectified form but inculcated or brought about in others. Indeed, "Rastafarianism" cannot be said to exist as a codified body of knowledge or precepts -- even
the English Bible is approached by Rastafarians with some caution as a source of wisdom (Barrett 1977: 127).

A. Reasoning

The perspective just described involves a view of knowledge as depending on a correct interpretive orientation toward experience, something that is considered by Rastafarians to be made possible by special symbolic schemes that are fundamental constituents of the "culture" they have created. This is evident in the specialized discursive practices that could be viewed as one of the primary indices of affiliation to the movement. Interpretive commentary -- on current events, personal experiences, Biblical passages or what have you -- is frequently noted to be a particular passion of Rastafarians. They devote much time to discussions in relatively small face-to-face groups, in which a satisfactory understanding of various matters is collectively negotiated through exchanges that often turn on metaphoric associations and word-play, as well as references to biblical passages and to history (cf. Owens 1976: 185-187; Yawney 1978: 213-223, 368-375). In such activity, which is called reasoning by Rastas, the spoken word takes on immense symbolic importance as the social mediator of an interior state that permits a comprehension ("penetration" or "overstanding" are the common Rastafarian terms) of all aspects of reality.
The particular attention accorded to speech as a vehicle of wisdom is apparent in the distinctive Rastafarian dialect, which is well described by Roberts (1988), Pollard (1980, 1983, 1984) and Jah Bones (1986a, b); the glossary in Appendix I lists some of the more important Rastafarian terms, with brief definitions. The self-conscious modification of English and Jamaican "Patois"\textsuperscript{10} in the practice of "Dread Talk" (to use Pollard's term) involves not only a special lexicon of terms related to Rastafarian culture, but also a strategy of transforming words so that their sounds will conform "literally" to their positive or negative symbolic connotations (for example, changing "op(up)-pression" to "down-pression", or "understanding" to "overstanding"). Rasta speech can thus be viewed as an activity with symbolic significance -- an appropriation of the English language for specialized philosophical purposes -- as well as a distinctive vocabulary. In this discursive mode, speech also takes on an important expressive dimension, testifying to the speaker's interior conviction at the same time as it constructs a true interpretation of the matter at hand. The practice of reasoning is viewed as producing more than just analytical knowledge: of crucial importance is a "positive" communal experience that seems to pertain at once to a valuation of knowledge, a sense of

\textsuperscript{10}This is the term employed by Jamaicans in referring to their Creole dialect.
identity invoked by the symbolic associations of peculiarly Rastafarian themes and words, and an acute appreciation of the expressive, performative aspect of oral discourse.

An example of such specialized discursive activity is a discussion that took place at a rehearsal of one of the reggae groups I have worked with, which is led by a Rastafarian. A member of another local band showed up before the music began; he had been the victim of brutal violence after a show at a local nightclub a few months before, and had not been seen by us for some time. While he had suffered some permanent physical damage, his remarkably rapid recovery after the attack and his positive attitude toward returning to a normal creative life were discussed at length (delaying the planned rehearsal by over an hour). He and others made much of the "trust in Jah*" (God) that enabled him to survive such difficulties, by giving him spiritual strength and allowing him to use "mind over matter" in recovering quickly and without bitterness or other adverse psychological effects. On the other hand, the discussion also dwelt on the perpetrators of the attack, analyzing the specific social problem of "black on black" violence in a white-dominated society, as well as proclaiming the inevitable justice that would be handed out by Jah to those who act in such a fashion (i.e., they too would sooner or later "get theirs" in some way).
This reasoning aimed at once to analyze the experience of the visitor as a social phenomenon, to praise Jah, and to celebrate the strength derived from the clear self-knowledge associated with Rastafari. Other discussions in the same context, regarding music for example, are generally oriented in a similar way towards a thematic focus on inspiration, strength, and positive attitudes, all related ultimately to divine power and guidance. Such reasoning takes on the character of an informal ritual, in which Jah is considered to be present in the form of "inspiration," and is often accompanied by the smoking of marijuana (generally regarded as the Rastafarian sacrament). A Rastafarian quoted by Owens makes clear this ritual aspect of reasoning: "brethren sit together and reason together, for Jah say: Wherever two or three sit together touching anything according to my name, behold I'm here!" (Owens 1976: 186).

Highly focused (rarely does more than one person speak at a time), egalitarian (everyone is encouraged to contribute to the discussion), and generally non-adversarial, the activity of reasoning itself should ideally produce an experience of "positive vibrations," which might be briefly described as a feeling of unity, inspiration, and strength among participants. A statement by the British Rastafarian writer Jah Bones sums up this view of linguistic activity:
"Powah" [power] in every reasoning, argument and discussion must be "Irated" or vibrated "thru" words and sounds. Sounds are very important because they allow words to reach people with an impact, so they are drawn to their attention. It is crucial that people "overstand" words for what they really are; "thru" sounds they will achieve the "powah" of wisdom....

The vibration ("Iration") that words and sounds generate among human beings is not seriously checked [attended to] by many people. Rastafarians feel the "Iration"; therefore they check deeply for it. They also seek consciously to generate more and more "Iration", hence the long hours spent in reasoning sessions. This becomes a highly valued activity, an on-going process, so that more and more "powah" is accumulated. The "powah" is what gives Rasta strength and makes him formidable. (Jah Bones 1986a: 48-49)

The collective production of truth -- "Iration*" can also mean "creation" -- through verbal exchange is important in that it promotes such a feeling, which will be carried by each individual beyond the occasion as a moral strength that can be brought to bear on other situations, for example in making music. The rehearsals of the band mentioned earlier are often preceded by sessions of reasoning, and these are sometimes cited by the leader as an important aspect of the group's approach to music; indeed, in my experience the effect of the focusing of attention achieved in reasoning is often notable in the quality of performance during the rehearsal that follows.
B. Experience and Knowledge in Reggae

Something of the experiential conception of knowledge I have attributed to Rastafari appears in comments on reggae texts that treat them as the aesthetic expression of a particular experience, one that is assumed to be shared by the appreciative listener. Bob Marley has remarked: "the lyrics is important.... Some people understand them, but others have never really been in them [those] situation[s]..."

Linton Kwesi Johnson (a non-Rastafarian poet and political activist born in Jamaica but living in England), in his discussion of reggae texts of the early 1970s, emphasizes the function of this music as a "spiritual expression" or "reflection" of a collective historical experience of suffering ("sufferation" is the Rastafarian version of this word common in reggae texts) by the Jamaican masses (Johnson 1976: 398-399). He examines this process in the lyrics of a secular reggae song by Toots and the Maytals called "Time Tough":

In this song, the lyricist is lamenting the hardships of life, the bitterness of life....
... every sufferer is experiencing the hardness of the time. 'Sister Lee cannot bear it/ and Brother Lee can hardly stand it/ they're crying night and day/ nobody to help them on their way.'.... So when Toots with so much pain in his parched voice sings: 'from I was a little boy/ I keep on feeling
it feeling it now'...,'Sister Lee' feels it, and 'Brother Lee' too; immersed in music and song, everyone feels it for they immediately recognise the pain in this song as their own pain as the music takes them to the very depths of their being. (Johnson 1976: 399)

Johnson stresses the text's focus on shared experience as the grounds for communication between lyricist and audience, and thus for the representation of a unified community of "sufferers". His analysis emphasizes the specific social and historical determinants of this collective "feeling," limiting it to that of impoverished Jamaicans, but in many instances the social and affective/spiritual aspects may be assimilated to varying degrees in the construction of a universalized community of participants in the music (as will be shown in later discussion).

In a more academic discursive setting, a similar view of the communicative process is adopted by Becky Mulvaney in her analysis of a particular performance situation (a large reggae show called the "Youth Consciousness Festival," held on Christmas Day, 1982 in Jamaica), in which the "stocks of knowledge" shared by performers and audience are viewed as allowing a "roughly symmetrical correspondence between moments of encoding and decoding" (Mulvaney 1985: 120). In her argument, local and personal references as well as the dialectal vocabulary and pronunciation that characterized the vocal performances at this event are taken to define
communicative participation as limited to the "indigenous" singers and audience, who as Jamaicans of a certain socio-economic background share a particular cultural and social experience that is addressed in the music.

Views such as Johnson's and Mulvaney's emphasize the cultural purity (or authenticity) of the music they study as an aesthetic form produced by and for a specific class of Jamaican society; they take pains to exclude from their analyses the trans-cultural context of "international" reggae, which is sometimes viewed as an inauthentic or watered-down version of the original "local" form (cf. Johnson 1980). Contrastingly, in the performers' discourse on reggae that is being examined here, such limits to communicative participation are generally not emphasized: in fact, the success of the music in moving diverse audiences worldwide is often celebrated. The music is generally viewed as speaking to the "hearts" of those who are morally prepared to hear its message.

11Certainly in Montreal there is little articulated concern among lyricists or singers regarding the ability of a culturally heterogeneous audience to "decode" their texts (except perhaps when the audience composition is perceived as mainly francophone), which are nevertheless constructed with great care as serious and meaningful commentaries on reality.
Thus Bob Marley's statement quoted above -- offered in the context of his international success -- does not refer to "situations" limited to Jamaica but rather the experience of all "sufferers" who have been "downpressed" at the hands of Babylon. In another interview, he adopted a slightly different perspective in crediting reggae's success in Europe to a shared awareness deriving from an experience common to Europeans and Jamaicans:

I feel Europe [is] nearer to a certain consciousness we have. For instance, [when] we going down to Germany me can see the people farming and working on the land. I mean, you can see it in America too and every other place, but in Europe me can see little farm on every hillside. Dem nearer to the earth and ting, y'know? I figure that's why dem have a more easier feeling to us. (in Davis and Simon 1982: 90)

Though this statement does not refer specifically to lyrics, the "consciousness" that is involved in the appreciation of reggae is still grounded in a common experience of a particular existential reality, one that is not restricted to Jamaican society. On the other hand, the "wicked" ones who work for the corrupt Babylon system are excluded from understanding the import of the reggae text, as indicated by the remark made in 1969 by the Jamaican

12For Rastafarians, the concept of truth is closely bound up with the "natural," and working the land is regarded as a highly desirable way of life.
Rastafarian poet Bongo Jerry (in Pollard 1983: 54; the translation is given rather than the phonetic rendering of the original Patois, and the emphasis is mine): "all the music on the radio that is really saying anything is Rasta music. It is just music to them [Babylon]...."

In her study of the Youth Consciousness reggae concert, Mulvaney in fact provides an alternative perspective on the performance situation by quoting the words of Bunny Wailer — the top-billing performer — as he introduced the song "Hypocrite" to the audience that had stayed through the night-long concert: "Yes, yes, yes, ah ... the hypocrite, dem no deah [there], no hypocrite no deah [pointing to the audience], I see dat -- the ones deah, conscious, living beings, no hypocrite, no tell lie" (Mulvaney 1985: 130).

While it may be true, as Mulvaney suggests, that the singer was flattering the crowd, this moralized characterization of the reggae audience by the performer is nonetheless notable for its definition of participation in the musical process in terms of a common ethical attitude. A member of one of the bands with which I have worked once made a statement of a similar order to a "mixed" crowd at a local university: "love... that's why we're all here today." Whatever the actual social composition of the audience, whatever the degree of linguistic or cultural competence they can bring to bear on the unfolding of the performance, the rhetoric
accompanying a roots reggae performance tends to assert a definition of the situation in terms of a moral unity that takes precedence over social divisions -- in Rastafarian terms, it is a vibration of "one love*" that is evoked to characterize the quality of the social relations involved in musical performance.

This perspective on the musical event can be related to the practices of Jamaican Rastafarians in their larger rituals called "groundations" or "nyabingis*," in which Rastas gather together in rural "camps" for extended sessions of reasoning, drumming, singing ("chanting"), and marijuana smoking. The term "nyabingi," according to Rastafarians encountered by Verena Reckord (1977: 10), is interpreted as meaning "death to evil forces"; it can also be used in referring to the distinctive drum rhythm characteristic of Rasta music\(^\text{13}\). The Rastas quoted by Reckord emphasize the effective moral power generated in such rituals ("when we use the Nyabingi any part of the earth the wicked is, him have to move"), the unity of the participants in their focus on this goal, and a supposedly unrestricted access to participation: "[The] Groundation [ritual] is not just for Rasta, but to help everybody to recognise them true self"\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{13}\)This style can be heard in recordings by Count Ossie and the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari or Ras Michael and the Sons of Negus, and in the rhythms of some Bob Marley songs such as "Rastaman Chant," "Time Will Tell," and "Babylon System."
(Reckord 1977: 10). In these respects the desired effect of these rituals is very similar to that noted above for more informal "reasoning sessions." While in the final analysis reggae is produced as a form of popular entertainment, conceptualisations of the music by its performers clearly draw upon these typically Rastafarian ritual practices.

Thus when reggae performance is conceived in the ritualized terms associated with Rastafarian discursive and musical activities, the notion of shared social experience as a ground for communication between performers and audience coexists with a spiritualized and universalized perspective about the relationship between those involved, which stresses the affective component of the musical experience. The participants are viewed as united on a moral level, and the process of communication is conceptualized less in terms of localized cultural codes, and more as a total participation in a ritual community. Such participation is something that must be elicited and defined in performance, rather than regarded as a given (especially in the cosmopolitan context of international reggae): this involves a rhetorical, performative dimension in the "conscious" lyrical texts that are considered to constitute a central aspect of reggae's distinctiveness for its producers and
fans. The next chapter will look at one such text in terms of its construction of the musical event as a ritual performance.
III. GOOD FEELING: Reggae as Ritual Action

As an example of the manner in which the textuality of the reggae song can work in the definition of the performance situation and of the experience of those who participate in it, I will examine the lyrics of a song performed by the Montréal reggae group Inusaso. The music and lyrics of this song were written by the group's vocalist (who is also the bandleader and bass guitarist); a Rastafarian, he is Jamaican-born but has lived more than half his life in Canada.

I have indicated with an asterisk the invented words, most of which remained unclear to me until the songwriter clarified them at my request; I will return to them. Variations or additions to the basic lyrical text have been enclosed in parentheses; a slash within a line indicates a caesura.

GOOD FEELING (as performed by Inusaso in a Montréal club, 21-11-92)

instrumental introduction

chorus:
good feeling
oh good good feeling
good feeling
oh irie irie (positive) feeling [repeat]

that's what we need, need need need
to go on [rpt.]

in this tribulation
oh yeah frustration
oh I-n-I/ got inspiration
we got to keep the movement
one and all/ from every nation
face to face/ for this is revelation
I-dification*/ the truth and the right vibration
deuter[h]onor-I*
equal rights, prior perfectation*

so one of their wicked ways
cause many terrible and dreadful days [rpt.]

say when we try [rpt. twice]
anyway we try

chorus
(chant it I say)

[dub: bass and drums only] we goin out/ exalting the most high
in the presence of the heathen
we don't like what they do no
Jah lightning and thunder shall destroy them
praising Jah they keep testing

and yes we do it, Jah works I say
yes we do it, Jah works [rpt.]

[end dub]
chorus

instrumental

chorus

oh I-n-I/ got inspiration
you got to keep the movement
one and all/ from every nation
face to face/ for this is revelation
I-dification*/ yes the truth and the right vibration
deuter-[h]onor-I*
equal rights, prior perfectation*

for one of their wicked ways
cause many terrible and dreadful days [rpt.]

and yeah when we try [rpt. three times]

chorus
Generally, the lyrics of reggae songs are delivered with self-conscious efforts at clarity, especially when the didactic function of the music is stressed14. In the performance of the song transcribed above, most of the lyrics were clearly enunciated in Jamaican-accented English, albeit with a fair amount of vocal embellishment. However, the invented words resist translation into a simple gloss, as I discovered in trying to transcribe them for analysis. They appear as evocative sonic symbols and remain open to interpretation, though extended exegesis is not crucial to the purposes of this study. Here it will suffice to note their exemplification of a creative approach to the manipulation of language at the lexical level, and the emphasis on sonic associations, that are characteristic of Rastafarian discourse15.

Reggae is dance music, designed to move its audience, and the aesthetic success of a public performance is qualitatively assessed in terms of its affective impact on the crowd: thus performers and MC's (masters of ceremony who

14See Sister Carol's DJ number "Jah Disciple": "Carol upon the mike, can't afford to mumble,/ deliver it straight, not in a jumble."

15For example, "deuter-[h]onor-I" plays on the name of the Biblical book Deuteronomy and its connotations of sanctity, with an implied focus on the "honor" or respect due to the righteous community (I-n-I) that participates in the "good feeling" described in the text, and a typical substitution of the Rasta first-person pronoun "I" for the "me" sound in the last syllable.
introduce the performers) will often ask the audience if they feel "alright" or "Irie!*" and ideally get a resounding "Yes!" in response. There is no doubt that this is the kind of experience thematized in the chorus of the song considered here: in a way the text is a "reasoning" or commentary on its own performance, a definition of the meaning of the musical experience in relation to a wider ethical field. The persuasive force of this interpretation, ideally issuing in the creation of a particular mood in the musical situation, is largely the effect of various juxtapositions and repetitions (both textual and musical) that are built up over the course of the performance.

As this transcription suggests, reggae texts are often highly repetitive, rarely consisting of more than three short verses and a repeated chorus. In the song transcribed above (as in most reggae), the musical part is also repetitive, centering on a bass-guitar figure played at a medium tempo and repeated with only a few variations throughout the song; the chords accompanying this bass-line (which is sometimes called a "riddim" in reggae circles) follow a pattern typical in reggae, alternating from C major to D minor throughout with a few variations in harmonic colouring. "Dub" sections in which the rhythm guitar and piano stop or "drop out" serve partly to accentuate the bass
and drum pattern that is considered to be the foundation of the song.

Montréal audiences relatively unfamiliar with the accent of a singer and the lexical peculiarities of a text seem to focus on the reiterated melodic "hooks" of the song, perhaps even singing along if they have heard it before. The text of "Good Feeling" centres around such a repeated chorus, which itself consists of the simple repetition of the words "good feeling," followed by "Irie Irie feeling" ("positive" is substituted for "Irie" at one point in this performance) as a complementary response; the stress in each line falls on the syllable "feel." Moreover, each verbal phrase of this chorus is sung to the same three-note melody corresponding to the three syllables of "good feeling" (additional syllables of the other phrases being sung on the same initial note) and is answered by the bass-line which begins near the end of the vocal phrase. The reiterated chorus thus has something of an incantatory quality: it is not so much informative as insistently persuasive in its focus on the special experience that is the ultimate goal of the reggae performance. The pattern of statement and response along with the layers of repetition in both text and music -- a crucial characteristic of reggae as a musical form -- might be said to create an effect of confirmation, which can be associated with the "positive vibe" so
important to roots reggae performance and to interaction in general within a Rastafarian framework, as was noted above in the discussion of reasoning.\textsuperscript{16}

The "good feeling" that is the central theme of the song might immediately be identified simply as the pleasure derived from music and bodily movement -- "Irie" is a term that can also be used to describe sexual pleasure. In subsequent lines this experience is associated with vitality and motion as the human requirement for "going on" through the "tribulation" and "frustration" of existence, bringing in suggestions of progress and survival that are typically conscious (the importance of these themes in "conscious lyrics" will be discussed in the next chapter). In the third line of the first verse the "feeling" takes on a more precisely spiritual character with the introduction of the term "inspiration," which might itself be identified as the "good feeling" on which the text focuses.\textsuperscript{17} "Inspiration" is indeed a common mode of conceptualization of musical performance within the group that performs this song, whose

\textsuperscript{16} As such this text shows some similarity to a well-known song by Bob Marley, "Positive Vibration": "Rastaman vibration, yeah, positive/ that's what we got to give/ I-n-I vibration, yeah, Irie Ites/ got to have a good vibe."

\textsuperscript{17} A Rastafarian interviewed by Reckord (1977: 10) speaks of the effect of the dancing, drumming, chanting, and smoking at the Groundation ritual as "the Irix," a "high spiritual feeling" corresponding to "the nature of man rising."
rehearsals frequently begin with an impromptu "blessing" (a kind of improvised prayer, often using verses from the Psalms), invoking divine presence in the musical situation; "reasonings" within this group will often include statements to the effect that "all music comes from Jah."

The third and fourth lines of the first verse focus on "movement" as the purposeful action of an inspired community, "I-n-I*." In this context the Rastafarian first-person plural pronoun designates a collective subjectivity that is ambiguous in scope: it could be taken to encompass at one level the co-present musicians and audience, inspired in the context of musical performance, at another to include all "conscious" people moving through life with divine guidance. The second level of interpretation is reinforced by the fifth and sixth lines: "one and all, from every nation/ face to face, for this is revelation."

The musical performance and the movements it involves are thus associated with "inspiration," connoting force and creativity, and with "revelation," suggesting knowledge and vision. The term that is rhymed with these, "I-dification," is a Rasta neologism that connotes both "identification" and "edification," again relating the musical experience to knowledge, and with further emphasis on vision ("I*" can also be heard as "eye"). These rhymed terms all assume an
empowering relationship to a divine presence. In the next line, the phrase "the truth and the right vibration" associates the positive mood of performance with conventional Rastafarian themes of knowledge, morality, and justice. Thus throughout the song, a very general metaphorical narrative of "conscious" life is placed in close relation to the experience of the participants in the musical process. The accretion of metaphorical associations, juxtaposed to the insistent repetition of the instrumental "riddim," works in this way to colour the musical performance as a ritual occasion, an effect reinforced later in the song when the singer announces that "we goin out, exalting the most high [i.e. God]/ in the presence of the heathen."

The following sections of the song relate this experience of collective vitality and movement to a moral scheme, setting "we" or "I-n-I" in opposition to "them," the "heathen" with their "wicked ways." The text offers no specification of righteous or wicked actions; it is the spiritual/existential situation of the community that is being constructed. What might be called the "argument" of this song involves a rhetorical assumption (or performative institution) of moral unity among the participants in the event -- a major implication of the pronoun "I-n-I," -- an assurance that those involved are "doing Jah works" and are thus
strengthened by divine power in their confrontation with the wickedness to which they are opposed: "we don't like what they're doing/ Jah lightning and thunder shall destroy them." This positioning of the participants ultimately relates to the "Irie feeling" of the performers and listeners or dancers as they are brought together and carried steadily forward by the rhythm of the bass and drums.

Reggae songs often deal more explicitly with specific issues than does the relatively abstract text just considered, and they do cannot always be referred so directly to the performance context. However, a similar schematic quality is evident in the structure of most song texts. This is the effect of the frequent repetition of short, simple vocal phrases, and the use of highly recognizable, polysemous words such as "I-n-I," "Babylon," "dread*," and so on, in the construction of the kind of "us versus them" scenario typical of Rastafarian social philosophy. Indeed this text, taken by itself with its vague frame of reference, communicates relatively little; once considered in relation to the context of the performance and the participants involved in it, its rhetorical function in relating various levels of experience becomes more evident. While the instrumental music by itself might be considered to appeal to dancers (at the bodily or auditory level), the textual
component of the song is charged with setting the positive spiritual mood of the occasion and defining the significance of the involvement of the participants as a form of social action -- thus appealing also to the intellectual and spiritual/emotional levels. This is the view implied in a comment on contemporary dancehall reggae by Rastafarian journalist I. Jabulani Tafari: "[t]aking the meaning and message out of 'Heartbeat' music relegates Reggae to being a purposeless beat that appeals only to the body and not to the heart and mind" (Tafari 1990: 9).

The mode of communication involved in the production of reggae thus actively coordinates different levels of involvement in the musical process: though the rhythmic aspect is generally taken to be fundamental to the performance, in the terms of reggae culture its effect would be purposeless unless associated with a discursive component that establishes a framework for interpreting the audience's bodily/auditory experience of rhythm, melody, and harmony. The knowledge transmitted in conscious lyrics of this sort does not consist of information per se but rather of a set of relations established between the participants and their social environment: in short, it is a way of knowing one's place in relation to others as a collective historical subject. We can compare this observation to the late Jamaican poet Mikey Smith's definition of Rastafari (to
which he claimed he was very close, without identifying himself as a Rasta): "Rastaman say from [when] you born and you come to a certain consciousness [a]bout you people and them livity [way of life] and which part [where] them supposed to be heading as a people, you is Rasta" (Smith 1985: 45).

Conclusion
The preceding discussion suggests that a "conscious" reggae text communicates an interpretation of social reality emphasizing at once its irreducibly particular emergence in the experience of individuals and its collective character as the shared history of a community. In "classic" Rastafarian terms, this generally appears as the struggle of chosen people, carried on through moral action, from captivity to freedom, from Babylon to Zion*/Ethiopia. As Linton Kwesi Johnson's analysis of Toots and the Maytals' song demonstrates, a crucial characteristic of reggae texts is their rhetorical effort to relate these two perspectives about experience. This is also a central feature of Rastafarian philosophy, which at once focuses intensely both on the individual and on the collectivity, and in fact virtually conflates these levels (hence the first-person plural pronoun, "I-and-I").
This mode of interpretation is directed not only toward the experience of the community of "sufferers" viewed from a socio-historical perspective, but also toward the ritual community that is established within the musical performance situation. The musical experience (i.e., of rhythm, melody, harmony, vocalized text) is at once ineffably personal and clearly social in that this experience is always created among a community, i.e., the musicians and audience. The knowledge communicated by the texts of roots reggae thus offers a sort of grid for the articulation of personal experience with a specific symbolic construction of historical destiny and the movement of the "people of reggae" (to borrow a term from Jah Bones) within it; the musical event is the field in which these levels of experience are fused as knowledge. The following chapter will examine in greater detail the features of the special type of lyrics that are considered a defining component of roots reggae music, particularly in terms of the thematic emphases on historical struggle and progress that have led to reggae's description as "rebel music."
IV. THE MESSAGE OF CONSCIOUS LYRICS

"Reggae is the music that sends a message,/ speaks of history, the truth and the right." (Bunny Wailer, "Roots Radics Rockers Reggae")

One of the most distinctive aspects of the reggae tradition as it is practised internationally is a conception of reggae music as a serious, critical commentary on reality, offering a vision that is free of moral confusion and unafraid to address questions of social injustice directly and unambiguously. From the late 1960s and early 1970s, as the Rastafarian and Black Power movements became increasingly influential among young Jamaicans, reggae artists tended more and more to produce self-consciously oppositional "rebel music" (though certainly social themes had not been absent from Jamaican popular music before this), and the work of Bob Marley that has dominated the international reggae scene since that time is firmly set within this genre. Most Montréal reggae artists also situate themselves in this tradition, as is demonstrated for example by the title of a compilation cassette produced in 1992 by a grouping of local bands calling itself Association du reggae montréalais/ Montréal Union for Reggae: Riddims of Resistance.

Such a view of the social relevance of reggae music can be related to Rastafarian conceptions of the power of music as
an intervention in social reality, discussed earlier in relation to the Nyabingi ritual: here drumming and chanting are practiced as part of an empowering ritual activity, considered to generate a moral force that operates to eradicate "wickedness" and destroy the social institutions founded upon it. There is little doubt that most performers of roots reggae would affiliate themselves in principle with the practice of Rastafarians as described by the celebrated Rasta drummer Count Ossie: "we were fighting colonialism, but not with gun and bayonet, but wordically, culturally" (quoted in Pollard 1983: 54). While the Nyabingi ritual appears to focus on the activity of collective performance as the source of social empowerment, most reggae artists locate the oppositional power of their music primarily (but not exclusively) in the texts of the songs they perform: this chapter will examine the implications of this conceptualization of socially effective "conscious lyrics" and the textual practices it involves.

In its aspect as a social force, reggae is frequently evaluated by its producers in terms of two closely related concepts: as culture (involving also the notion of "roots" or authenticity), and as consciousness. It is difficult to separate these concepts, as one generally entails the other, and terms relating to each seem to be used interchangeably with regard to music. However it would appear that
"consciousness" is the more general term, designating a certain state of awareness brought to bear on reality, while "culture" is related to the concrete knowledge and practices produced by this awareness, particularly as they involve the individual's place within a social group (whether defined in racial, ethnic, or more universalist terms). For example, "culture" could be used to describe Afrocentric interpretations of history, or the practice of vegetarianism (in particular the avoidance of pork). The importance of the theme of "culture" in reggae music is evident in the frequency with which performers or groups around the world choose names for themselves such as Culture, Smiley Culture, Cultural Roots, Social Roots, Roots Radics, and so on.

Roots reggae may also be described by performers as "conscious" music, implying that it derives from a clear vision of reality, and deals with serious topics of social relevance. This cognitive function of the music is emphasized by the Jamaican vocal group Black Uhuru in its song "Natural Reggae Beat": "it's just knowledge/ for your mentality." The discussion that follows will concentrate on the concept of "conscious music," as this term seems to be the more current among Montréal reggae musicians, and is
used more consistently to designate the special kind of lyrical texts associated with roots reggae.  

What considerations are involved in the classification of reggae lyrics as "conscious"? Within reggae music, conscious lyrics are usually contrasted to the texts of "lover's" reggae, which concentrate on sexual relationships in a manner similar to much American rhythm and blues music, and the "slack" (i.e. obscene) lyrics of DJ's such as Yellowman and Shabba Ranks. Interestingly, "slack" DJ lyrics currently dominate Jamaican popular music, while international reggae (such as most currently produced in Montréal) maintains an orientation towards "consciousness" in the lyrics of both DJ's and singers. There is however no distinction of musical styles that corresponds to these textual genres.

Whereas "culture" can also be used in descriptions of instrumental music, where it is basically equivalent to "roots."

Shabba Ranks, a non-Rastafarian, has himself admitted the preferability of more serious lyrics, here identified as "culture": "now that I've made it with the X-rated... I'm dusting off [i.e. cleaning up]. What's inside of me is Culture" (Shabba Ranks 1991: 22).

In fact, with the process of "versioning" as it is practiced in Jamaica, the same recorded instrumental tracks may be used to accompany both slack and conscious vocal performances, as is the case for example with Shabba Ranks' "[I am] Wicked in Bed" and Sugar Minott's "Raggamuffin" (which celebrates the strength and versatility of young ghetto-dwellers).
Lyrical texts considered conscious usually steer clear of sentimental and sexual themes, concentrating instead on spiritual, philosophical, and social/historical topics presented in a manner intended to expand the awareness of the audience (it is not uncommon however for performers -- Gregory Isaacs and Dennis Brown are well-known examples -- to mix the "lovers" and "roots" genres in their repertoires). The status of the musical performer as a role model and educator as well as an entertainer has always been stressed within both Jamaican and international reggae, and the influence of Rastafari among performers has clearly contributed to this tendency. Brodber and Greene (1979, quoted in Pollard 1983: 55) have remarked on the sense of "social and religious responsibility" displayed by Rastafarian singers; a certain moral seriousness is a general defining quality of conscious texts, and certainly to "joke" or "skin up," i.e. to approach music (or any aspect of life) thoughtlessly or half-heartedly, is spoken of with much disapproval in the reggae circles with which I am familiar. Indeed, while the music is evidently produced as a form of entertainment, and appreciated by audience members as such, it is unlikely that a reggae musician would claim to be involved in the music primarily for "fun" or personal enjoyment: music is considered to be "a serious thing," and musicians or groups perceived to take their craft lightly are regarded with scorn.
The range of topics that may be treated in conscious or culture lyrics is very wide, but generally such texts can be identified either by their derivation from Rastafarian religious themes (for example, praises sung to Selassie/Jah, songs about "repatriation" to Africa, declarations of the strength of the Rastafarian movement and its adherents, "rallying calls" enjoining listeners to unite, and so on), or by their interpretation of everyday social experience and historical events from the perspective of the dispossessed "sufferers" of the world. While some texts appear to focus exclusively on the religious aspect (e.g. "I Love King Selassie" by Black Uhuru) and others on the secular (e.g. "I Shot the Sheriff" by Bob Marley, or "Slavery Days" by Burning Spear), the use of Rastafarian symbolic discourse in reggae lyrics tends not to separate the spiritual and social/material domains of existence (as will be discussed in the next chapter). The "message" sent by reggae is frequently identified indiscriminately by performers as dealing with "truths and rights" or "the truth and the right" (see the quote from Bunny Wailer at the head of this chapter), linking the theme of knowledge -- always implying a spiritual component -- with both morality ("the right") and social justice ("rights").

A speaker who employs the term "conscious lyrics" is thus asserting the meaning and purpose of a text in terms of its
relation to a moralized vision of social reality, which may vary in its degree of association with Rastafari proper. Rastafarian journalist I. Jabulani Tafari's opposition between "commercial" reggae of the 1980s and the "roots and culture" style is typical of such statements, though she uses the term "culture" rather than "conscious": in contrast to the "commercial school," she contends,

those in music's original cultural school were/are in Reggae not only for entertainment, but also to edify, educate, enlighten and to strengthen politically and economically all African people and other downpressed groups.... After the tragic passing of the Reggae maestro, Bob Marley in 1981, the commercial school began growing rapidly, seemingly supported and encouraged by [people]... who were/are trying to promote a non-cultural, non-Rastafarian type of reggae. The only results such efforts produced in the eighties were an overabundance of any and all kinds of commercial lyrics. In the extreme, some of these lyrics have been ridiculously nonsensical, while others have been lewd to the point of being nasty and depraved. (Tafari 1990: 9)

Such moralistic terms are common in discussions of reggae carried on by enthusiasts in the international forum, stressing the responsibility of the performer to enlighten his or her audience and to strengthen the community of "sufferers" through the message transmitted in the music. This reflects the fact that many fans of the music outside Jamaica were drawn to it not only by its musical qualities
but by the oppositional stance of its lyrics\(^21\). A similar view to Tafari's, but without a single reference to Rastafari, is put forward by Linton Kwesi Johnson, who asserts of Jamaican reggae texts that by "consciously setting out to transform the consciousness of the sufferer, to politicize him culturally through music, song and poetry, the lyricist contributes to the continuing struggle of the oppressed" (Johnson 1976: 411). The position of the reggae vocalist is thus epitomized by Bob Marley as he exhorts his audience in a well-known ballad to "emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds" ("Redemption Song").

Having indicated the general conceptual considerations involved in the qualification of lyrical texts as "conscious" (or "cultural"), it is now possible to investigate some of the important textual features of this lyrical genre more specifically, in terms of the strategies by which the musical experience of the reggae audience is defined as social knowledge. The chapters that follow will deal with the textual practice of reggae lyrics (in examples

\(^{21}\)The process of the global dissemination of reggae has taken many different paths. A number of white Canadian musicians I have encountered in Montréal approached reggae through their interest in British punk music, which originally associated itself with reggae as a version of oppositional "rebel music". A sustained examination of the encounter between punk and reggae in Britain can be found in the writings of Dick Hebdige (1979, 1987).
from Jamaica and from Montréal), focusing on two general themes related to the "overstanding" of reality within the musical process: that of movement and that of historical consciousness.
V. FORWARD EVER, BACKWARD NEVER: Music and Narrative
Movement in Conscious Lyrics

The lyrical text of "Good Feeling" examined in Chapter III illustrates how a reggae song text can assert a definition of the musical event as a ritual occasion, in which spiritual power in the form of "inspiration" is channelled and shared among participants through their common experience of the music. In the text, the inspired musical/ritual community (epitomized in the plural pronoun "I-n-I") is represented as in movement within a morally bipolar social world: I suggested that in this way the audience's emotionally-charged bodily involvement in the rhythms -- and few people are completely still at a reggae performance -- is associated with a metaphor of the "conscious" life as vital, purposeful, progressive motion overcoming the various obstacles posed by the Babylon system (these might include, for example, poverty, police harassment, racial discrimination, and socially-based "frustration" and "tribulation" in general). Such a link is more clearly asserted in another text by the composer of "Good Feeling," the chorus of which repeats: "by the powers of Jah most high/ survival, we goin' forward/ by the powers of Jah most high/ no step backward" (Inusaso, "By The Power"). The word "forward*" carries strong positive
connotations of power and social progress in Rastafarian discourse, and was in fact a common cry of appreciation among Jamaican reggae audiences in the 1970s and 1980s. The thematization of movement in conscious lyrics is the subject of the discussion that follows.

First, it will be helpful to establish more clearly the fashion in which "power" is seen to figure in reggae music. As earlier discussion suggested, the concept of inspiration in reggae music involves a connection between a divinely-derived vital, creative, motive power and an experience of participation in the music. This observation invites possible comparisons with spirit possession practices, such as are common in various Afro-Jamaican cults like Revival Zion, Pocomania, and Kumina, which generally involve singing, dancing, and drumming (Simpson 1971; Simpson in fact studies Rastafarian practices alongside these others).

In Rastafarian Nyabingi ritual (see above, pp. 32-33), however, there seems to be no question of an occupation of individuals by spirit "others" such as features in the practices of the other Jamaican cults. Rather, the focus is on a development and celebration of the moral power associated with self-knowledge, a power that constitutes the divine aspect of the human being and which is (ideally) continuously present in the "conscious" individual as the principle of his or her creativity and moral action.
Control of one's self in terms of intellect, emotions, and actions is an important general concern of Rastafari, which figures also in the production of reggae music as a general emphasis on discipline and "cool" (a central value in the playing of the music being the unvarying steadiness of the rhythm); such a valuation of "self-possession" would conflict with a search for experiences of invasion or surrender of the self in encounters with spirits.

According to Bilby and Leib (1986: 23) and Reckord (1977: 8), Jamaican Rastafarians are in fact generally scornful of the emphasis on spirit possession in the more "mainstream" cults, noting that spirits are often identified with departed ancestors and arguing that Rastafari is concerned with life and not with "the things of the dead." Indeed, a crucial aspect of Rastafarian philosophy is its refusal to recognize a realm of the spirit discontinuous with that of physical existence (Owens 1976: 116-119). The "New Zion" of the Rastafarians is identified not with a departure from Earth into heaven but with a revolution in the social order and a total liberation of the "captives" of modern society -- and the return of black people to their original home, Africa. Similarly, as various applications of the name "Rastafari" implies, there is a continuous, ontological relation between the divinity of Haile Selassie conceived as a flesh-and-blood man residing in Ethiopia (reports of his
death notwithstanding) and the individual Rasta that is of a different order from the relatively transitory transformation of self characteristic of possession trance (cf. Owens 1976: 114-116, 130-133). Rather than viewing Haile Selassie or Jah as a separate entity, radically different from normal human beings, Rastafarians treat him as the source and symbol of an infinite potentiality residing in every person.

While much religious music of the Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean traditions focuses on inspiration and the establishment of empowering links between participants and the divinity, Rastafarian-influenced reggae can be distinguished from more traditional gospel music and associated religious practices not just by its rhythms and secular performance situation, but also by its thematic focus on the material realm ("in Earth" rather than "in heaven") as the scene of spiritual consummation. This

22This view is not always extended to women, however, who may be regarded as morally weaker than males and in need of masculine supervision in order to avoid the pitfalls of vanity. According to most writers on Jamaican Rastafarians, the male view of the proper female role within the movement is limited to submissive companionship and motherhood, and women are generally excluded from meetings, reasonings and smoking sessions. As Yawney suggests, however, this could be seen more as the maintenance of traditional Jamaican masculine attitudes than as a specifically Rastafarian ideology (Yawney 1978: 120-123) -- in Montréal, women seem to have (or demand) a greater presence in musical and other activities than in Jamaica. Nevertheless, the androcentric symbolism of Rastafari certainly does not discourage such chauvinism.
distinctive politicized eschatology is commonly thematized in Rastafarian discourse, for example in the Bob Marley's song "Get Up, Stand Up":

we're sick and tired of your ism-schism [i.e. divisive ideologies]
dyin' and go to heaven in Jesus' name
we know and we understand
that mighty god is a living man;

and further, in another verse:

some people think great god will come from the sky
take away everything, and make everybody feel high
but if you know what life is worth
you will look for yours on earth
and now you see the light
you stand up for your right.

While Jamaican popular music has its own tradition of secular social commentary -- traced by some writers (Johnson and Pines 1982: 62; Reckord 1977: 6; Clarke 1980: 52-53) to the moralistic satirical songs of the earlier Burru style, from which Rastafarian drum rhythms are thought to have developed -- the Rastafarian conception of the inseparability of the spiritual and the material aspects of human existence has exercised considerable influence over the construction of socially-conscious reggae lyrics, particularly in the development of themes of liberation in the music.
A "literalist" view of the symbolism of redemption is a prominent feature of conscious lyrics, especially with regard to the trope of movement that is being examined here. The metaphor treating "conscious" life as progressive physical movement, often set within a moralized geography (involving the polar opposition of Babylon and Africa/Ethiopia/ Mount Zion), is central to the discourse of Rastafari as it appears in reggae texts. When considered as a social group, Rastafari itself is usually called a "movement" by its adherents. A millenarian vision of the repatriation of blacks to Africa or Ethiopia from Babylon, conceived as the consummation of a historical process foretold by Marcus Garvey, is often articulated in images of journeys of different scales. The first lines of Johnny Clarke's song "Moving On to Zion" state this theme with exemplary simplicity: "we are moving on to Zion,/ we are moving out of Babylon." The narrative of this collective journey of "Jah people" from captivity to freedom is frequently elaborated in epic, Biblically-derived images as an aspect of the Rastafarians' identification with the exiled Israelites, as exemplified in these lines from Bob Marley's song "Exodus":

we gonna walk/ through the roads of creation [i.e. the earth]
we the generation/ trod [walk] through great tribulation...
open your eyes/ and look within
are you satisfied/ with the life you're living?
we know where we're going/ we know where we're from
we're leaving Babylon/ going to the father's land

in this Exodus/ movement of Jah people....

While the historical development of Rastafari (at least since the late 1960s) has entailed a divergence of views among adherents regarding the immediate practical significance of the promised return to Africa (see Nettleford 1970: 65-78), the metaphor of historical action as physical movement towards a geographical destination remains current in Rastafarian-influenced discourse. This is apparent in the secular definition of Rastafari offered by the poet Michael Smith (see above, p. 45) as involving a consciousness of "which part [one's people] supposed to be heading as a people" (Smith 1985: 45): in this statement, the "movement of Jah people" to the promised land of Ethiopia is interpreted as historical progress towards a collective goal of a more or less utopian character.

The trope of historical movement that characterizes the lyrical discourse of conscious reggae may also be elaborated.  ___

23 Certainly, repatriation is not a central topic of discussion among the Rastafarians I have encountered in Montréal.
on the level of individual action. Here the focus is not so much on progress toward a destination as on the process of daily existence conceived as a journey. Many reggae texts celebrate the movement of the conscious "natty dread*" (i.e. Rastafarian) engaged in vigorous locomotion on a more local scale, "stepping" proudly through Babylon aided by Jah's strength and guidance, avoiding the pitfalls of vanity and denouncing the ways of wicked men. The lyrics of Bob Marley's "Natty Dread" present one such narrative, especially in a verse in which the Rastafarian, exiled "twenty-one thousand miles from home," moves steadily with each sung line through the Kingston ghetto from First Street to Seventh Street. A similar trope is involved in the adaptation of Psalm 23 in Sugar Minott's "Chant a Psalms":

"y-ea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil/ for Jah is with me my strength/ he guide and he keep me on."24 Such narrative schemes are evidently related to conventional metaphors in more general use equating life with a journey: for example, a common Jamaican phrase used in taking leave of someone is "walk good," and Rastas often wish each other (divine) "guidance" as they go their separate ways.

Within the genre of conscious lyrics, these two levels of

24 The Psalms are a favourite source of lyrical material for roots reggae songwriters (cf. Clarke 1980: 154-155), who will often adapt them to suit their own expressive purposes.
narrative action are closely related. A pattern of identifications that connect the divinity, community and individual within the Rastafarian conception of moral action entails a metaphorical projection of the personal narrative trajectory onto the scale of collective action, especially in terms of the power considered to enable such progress.

Joseph Owens remarks that some Rastafarians he encountered during his research in Kingston would give their names simply as Rasta or Rastafari (1976: 10), and this reflects a typical identification of the individual with the movement as a whole and with the divinity whose name it bears. Rastafarians may also address each other as "dread" or "Rasta" in greetings and casual conversation. The self-knowledge that is the basis of commitment to Rastafari involves the situation of the individual within a group ("1-n-I") that claims a special relationship to Jah, and in reggae texts the activities of the individual "dreadlocks" are often presented as exemplary of the power or strength of Rastafari, conceived as a people moving inexorably toward its objective.

It may be recalled that Jah Bones in his statement on reasoning (quoted above, p. 26) writes of the "powah" of wisdom as that which "gives Rasta strength and makes him formidable"; immediately after this he adds that "like his Father, Rasta is a conquering lion" (1986a: 49). Such a
focus on strength is not merely a dead metaphor for spiritual potency: Rastafarians do in fact typically stress the importance not only of moral "strength of character" but also of physical health, strength, and agility in everyday life (see for example Black Uhuru's "Fit You Haffe [must be] Fit"), linking such vitality with the divine power in which they participate. This is a component of the generally positive attitude that is self-consciously demonstrated by Rastas at every opportunity, and can be enacted in any number of fairly mundane ways such as lifting heavy musical equipment, engaging in impromptu exercises or dance moves during conversation, displaying skill in riding a bicycle, and so on.

The metaphorical assimilation of social power and individual physical strength provides a crucial symbolic link between the domains of individual and collective activity in the lyrical discourse of roots reggae. Metaphors of captivity, struggle and liberation in reggae texts are typically presented in terms of physical force and bodily exertion, as when Gregory Isaacs sings "hey Mr. Babylon, take the [hand]cuff from off the bredren's hand" ("Handcuff") or in Junior Byles' "Beat Down Babylon": "I-n-I go beat down Babylon... I-n-I must whip dem wicked men." This focus on the physicality of social experience constructs the individual body as the site of collective struggle,
transforming the movements involved in the musical process into gestures of historical significance. Moreover, the concept of "inspiration" that figures in statements concerning the affective experience of reggae (see my discussion of the text of "Good Feeling" in Chapter III) involves the notion of a vital, creative force, directed by divine guidance, manifesting itself in the worldly activity of the participants. The "feeling" associated with reggae is thus conceived as a form of strength both moral and physical, as suggested by this statement on reggae dancing made by Bob Marley to an interviewer in 1975: "... you can dance the whole night and it keep you in a mood. You know what I mean. You love yourself when you dance reggae music. You proud of yourself, [so] that you come like you [are] born again!" (in Whitney and Hussey 1984: 92).

An important aspect of this power as it is treated in Rastafarian discourse is its fundamentally confrontational nature, when conceived in terms of the dichotomous "us versus them" scheme characteristic of the Rastafarian social vision. This is most evident in the special adjective associated with the power of Rastafari: "dread." Jah Bones writes: "in Rasta everything can be classed as 'dred' (my spelling). 'Dred' is power or 'powah'. It is great, hard as opposed to soft, and, of course, everything that is frightening or fearful is 'dred'" (1986a: 48). The power of
Rastafari is described as terrible in its opposition to the iniquity of Babylon, whose agents are considered to recognize and fear it; it is thus relevant that the most clear public symbol of affiliation to Rastafari is considered to be the long uncombed hair known as "dreadlocks" (indeed someone who wears this hairstyle may be referred to simply as a "dread").

This emphasis on strength in moral confrontation is epitomized in the common theme of the Rastafarian as a "conqueror" in encounters with the forces of Babylon, central to songs like Bob Marley's "Duppy Conqueror" or Culture's "See Dem Come": "Jah Jah see dem [Babylon] a come/ but I-n-I a conqueror." The production of reggae itself can also be viewed in this manner, allowing for frequent statements claiming that reggae is "taking over" the entertainment scene; proud declarations that reggae has "gone international" can also be construed as assertions of the prevailing strength of this cultural form. In the role of conqueror, the Rastafarian presented by reggae texts (who in the performance of reggae music is often identified with the singer) participates in the continuing survival of Jah's chosen people through a history of tribulation and prefigures their ultimate liberation from captivity, while identifying with Haile Selassie's role as "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah".
Conclusion

While not all reggae texts (or even all conscious lyrics) will explicitly invoke Rastafarian symbolism, metaphorical associations such as those outlined above are prevalent in the texts of much classic Jamaican and international reggae, and form a sort of conventional symbolic framework for the production and appreciation of roots reggae. I have focused on themes of progress and strength because they constitute central tendencies in conscious lyrics, which while emphasizing the deplorable realities of poverty and oppression still promote a "positive vibe" in adopting a general stance of resistance toward the social "pressure" they describe, an attitude defined as a mental and physical orientation shared by those participating in the musical process.

The participatory character of the resistive gesture in reggae performance is stressed by Becky Mulvaney, who points out that a common style of roots reggae dancing resembles a "slow, confident walking stride" in place, creating "the image of an unmovable force" (Mulvaney 1985: 58). Viewed in this way, the dancer attuned to the "feel" of the music is participating physically (through his or her iconic representation of the basic narrative action thematized in the lyrical discourse) in a collective movement that is defined by conscious lyrics as purposeful, inexorable and
triumphant. "Only dread will come over [prevail]," "I know Rasta will win," and other such declarations are common in reggae, articulating a faith that informs treatments of all righteous social struggles in reggae texts: the strength of the community (or communities) celebrated by conscious lyrics, and associated by them with the positive vibration of the reggae event, is one that is viewed as inevitably victorious over forces of wickedness. In the Montréal context, this is clear also in the emphasis on reggae music as a force overcoming cultural and racial divisions within a cosmopolitan urban community: for example a press release produced in 1992 by an association of local reggae bands, ARMMUR (Association du reggae montréalais/ Montréal's Union for Reggae), asserts that "reggae music is a universal source of inspiration which unites our differences [sic] of colour, classes, nationalities, and languages, making it very vital to our modern society."

Within the reggae musical event, the association of communal power with the individual's bodily movements is thus effected in relation to a narrative "grid" situating the unified community of participants as the ultimately prevailing force in a dynamic historical confrontation with forces of oppression. The next chapter will address the
theme of historical knowledge as it figures in the discourse of reggae songs, as a constituent of empowering "consciousness."
VI. TEACHING HISTORY: Conscious Lyrics As Historical Discourse

The reconstruction of history in terms of the symbolic/narrative schemes I have described in the preceding chapter is considered to be a crucial aspect of the special culture promoted by Rastafari, and is particularly central to the "message" of conscious roots reggae. Reggae texts of this type do not typically involve empirically-detailed analyses of the past, though reference may be made to specific personages and events; rather, they focus on the continuity of past historical experience with the present, and celebrate the survival and projected victory of those who have been subjected to domination at the hands of Babylon. A notable example is Bob Marley's ballad, "Redemption Song," in the opening lines of which the singer rhetorically concentrates this historical experience in his own persona: "old pirates, yes they rob I,/ sold I to a merchant ship/ minutes after they brought I/ from the bottomless pit/ but my hand was made strong/ by the hand of the almighty/ we forward in this generation,/ triumphantl." Such historical consciousness is an important dimension of the "roots" culture that is considered by Rastafarians to constitute the social power of their movement. In this chapter I will outline the salient characteristics of conscious lyrics as a historical discourse, before moving on to look at two
examples of such texts in songs performed by Montréal groups.

The historical vision of roots reggae is typically articulated in opposition to that put forward by conventional Eurocentric historical discourse, which is viewed as suppressing the full truth of the bloody process of conquest, "piracy" and domination on which Babylonian (roughly, Western) society is founded. This position is taken by Bob Marley in "Get Up Stand Up" when he declares that "half the story has never been told," and exemplified by Burning Spear in "Columbus": "Christopher Columbo/ is a damn-blasted liar." The aim of conscious reggae texts is to put things right by loudly broadcasting the "sufferer's" half of the story. While here I deal mainly with reggae's treatment of the past, it should be recalled that the lyrics of "rebel music" are also concerned with the representation of present social conditions and "sufferation" from a similar perspective, as in the text of Toots and the Maytals' "Time Tough" analysed in the passage from Linton Kwesi Johnson cited earlier.

Conscious reggae is frequently described by performers as a mode of education, a means of disseminating true knowledge of social reality. However, this teaching is practiced not as the transmission of knowledge objectified in discourse,
but as a musical invocation or **making present** of a specific historical reality in the emotional experience of the listeners. Thus as Linton Kwesi Johnson notes, historically-oriented Jamaican reggae texts "lament the human suffering, the terrible torments, the toil" that mark the history of Africans and their descendants in the Americas and the Caribbean, while also expressing "strength and endurance and the determination to continue the historical struggle in the midst of so much desolation and suffering" (Johnson 1976: 405, 406). The present moment is thus defined as the point of emergence of a sustaining strength derived from this consciousness of past suffering. The transition from verse to chorus in Bob Marley's "Slavedriver" clearly shows this rhetorical structure:

```plaintext
everytime I hear the crack of the whip
my blood runs cold
I remember on the slaveship
how they brutalized our very souls
today they say that we are free
only to be chained in poverty
oh my god, [it] is illiteracy
only [a] machine to make money

slavedriver, the tables have turned
catch a fire, you gonna get burned.
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25 The names of such reggae vocal groups as the Wailers and the Wailing Souls are an example of how the notion of emotional response to difficult social conditions (i.e. in the ghetto that is assumed to be the origin of these groups) is implicated in characterizations of reggae vocalizing.
Such a view of the music is current among those involved in the production of roots reggae: a songwriter/bandleader I have worked with in Montréal has described his songs generally as an expression of "sorrow", and also characterizes the music in terms of its effects as a "weapon".

The focus of much conscious reggae on historical topics clearly derives from the Rastafarian concern with "culture" as an empowering, collective self-knowledge. For example, Burning Spear's well-known song "Slavery Days," with its repeated chorus "do you remember the days of slavery?", is evidently directed to an audience that shares a specific history with the performer, a community that itself is a testament to the endurance of a persecuted people: "some of us survived/ showing them that we are still alive" ("Slavery Days"). For the community addressed by the singer, the music -- whose bass frequencies ideally should be felt as a resonance in the body of the listener -- could function as a quasi-ritual means of embodying a shared memory of oppression, within the ambience of present empowerment that

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26The characterization of reggae music, or "roots" culture in general, as a weapon is fairly common in discourse about reggae. Indeed, at least two Jamaican musicians have used guitars with bodies cut in the shape of rifles!
is characteristic of the reggae musical event. Erna Brodber suggests as much in describing the response of young middle-class Afro-Jamaicans in the 1970s to songs such as "Slavery Days," in terms of bodily as well as intellectual habits:

It was as if a river of sentiment that had been running underground for decades had suddenly surfaced.... We were glad to hear this new sound. It relaxed us. We took off our make-up, we washed our hair and left it natural; we took off our shirts and ties and made ourselves comfortable in shirt jacks. And we understood at a personal level that for us black Jamaicans, there were two orientations: a mulatto-orientation and an Afro-orientation, the latter having been submerged in our consciousness. The persistent reggae beat -- and the lyrics it carried -- was partly responsible for awakening this consciousness. (Brodber 1985: 54)

Much of the imagery of suffering (past and present) characteristic of historically-oriented reggae texts evokes the physical experience of brutalization and captivity in Babylon, speaking of the whip and chains of the slavemaster as well as of the hunger, toil and physical violence of urban ghetto life. The discursive component of the historical knowledge articulated in such songs focuses in this way on its bodily character: in these texts the

27 The function of such "embodiment" or "incorporation" in the transmission of social knowledge, a topic usually associated with the work of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. 1977), is also explored by Paul Connerton (1989), though he does not deal specifically with the resistive potential of such practices.
hardships of the sufferer's existence are felt as "pressure" (an extremely common term in reggae texts), and the collective strength that manifests itself in the continuing survival of a "downpressed" people is likewise often treated as a physical force. As I mentioned earlier, the symbolism of conscious lyrics tends to bring about the association of musical experience with social action within a historical narrative scheme: the physical body, moved by the music, becomes the site of the historical processes that are thematized by the music.

The focus on history and historicizing representations of present social reality characteristic of classic Jamaican roots reggae is maintained in the production of conscious reggae throughout the world. While the Jamaican variety addresses a specific social situation with an assumption of the basic cultural homogeneity of the addressed audience (as in the example of Burning Spear's "Slavery Days"), non-Jamaican reggae can vary in its approaches to the representation of marginalized or suppressed historical narratives. Montréal reggae artists may maintain an Afrocentric focus in the selection of topics (indeed one could argue that such a focus is implicit in any employment of Rastafarian symbolism), but the construction of the conscious "message" does not always involve as clear an orientation toward a particular community in addressing its
audience: in Montréal certainly, a significant portion of the reggae audience is not constituted by descendants of enslaved plantation workers, as is the case in Jamaica. To conclude this chapter I will examine the texts of two songs performed by Montréal reggae groups in terms of their thematic affiliation to the genre of "conscious lyrics."

A. Conscious Lyrics in Montréal: Two Examples

The association of roots reggae performance with the empowerment of marginalized or oppressed communities (especially those claiming African descent) through the development of historical consciousness remains strong even in the domain of "international" reggae, where the mass audience is not expected to be culturally or racially homogeneous. In Montréal, most concert performances by reggae groups take place in nightclubs, and a culturally diverse audience is considered the norm. The nature of the lyrics composed by these performers might be expected to differ from those intended primarily for Jamaican audiences, considering the form's emphasis on the definition of the participants in the music as a united community. The discussion that follows will examine the lyrics of two songs on historical themes by Montreal groups in order to indicate the strategies that characterize these "international" reggae texts.
Who is to Benefit?

My analysis in Chapter III of the lyrics of "Good Feeling" showed their rhetorical emphasis on the unification of the participants in a focused, active and powerful community. While this basic definition of the "people of reggae" (to use Jah Bones' term) can be associated with groups of different scales and natures -- poor Jamaicans, Africans or any marginal "downpressed" groups worldwide, all conscious people -- depending on the perspective adopted, the focus seems ultimately to be on the creation of a feeling of one love, or moral unity and strength, in the face of historical tribulation. As an example of the flexibility of the historical perspective of conscious reggae, I will cite another song text by the composer of "Good Feeling"; this song was developed for a specific performance produced to benefit a Native (Mohawk) political support group based in Montréal, and afterwards became a permanent feature of the band's repertoire.

Who is to benefit/ the Mohawk
the tribe of first born
people have been oppressed
yeah, oh, believeth in Jah

who is to benefit,/ who is
who is to benefit,/ who
when it's beneficial
not artificial
who is to benefit
the tribe of first-born,/ in South Africa
native ancients,/ in all walks of life
they're in the ghetto inna Canada
they're in the ghetto in America
they're in the ghetto inna England
they're in the ghetto inna Nicaragua
they're in the ghetto in the islands
they're in the ghetto inna Australia

aborigene earthright
native birthright
African earthright

for you no got no luck inna your justice
and you got no peace
and you say where is the right
(gimme some) structural equality
freedom of speech
a so we see, a so we see....

(Inusaso, "Benefit")

The theme of this is on the global unity of the "people who have been oppressed," on the comparability of their situations as victims of colonial depredation: each "tribe of first-born" whose "native birthright" has been stolen is entitled to "benefit." The juxtaposition of "native birthright" with "African earthright" indicates the use of the African theme as a trope for the treatment of the situation of all groups struggling to regain what is properly theirs: the position of all these groups is the same relative to the world-historical confrontation with Babylon that I have suggested to be a central organizing metaphor in conscious reggae. While the affiliation with a particular "roots" culture is maintained (the singer is a Rastafarian of Jamaican origin), the situation of Africans is presented as one of many such struggles of "native
ancients/ in all walks of life." The global perspective is clear in the parallel construction of the third section listing the "ghettos" to which these populations have been banished.

Compared to many texts of classic Jamaican reggae, the rhetorical positioning of the participants in this text is defined less consistently in terms of the shared history of the audience and singer: the section in which the oppressed are addressed as "you" seems to place the audience as participants in the struggle for justice and rights, but the phrase "a so we see" that immediately follows it implies that the unification of the listeners is effected through their common knowledge or "vision" of this global situation. The message of this song could be characterized as an assertion of solidarity, another version of the theme of unity and collective strength that runs through so many reggae texts.

As I have implied in dealing with other metaphorical schemes that inform the discourse of conscious lyrics, a single generalized thematic orientation can take on a number of levels corresponding to variations in the relation of audience and performers; while this discourse follows Rastafari in placing exclusive cultural communities at the centre of its social vision, it also stresses the principle
of the moral equivalence of each group and the commonality of historical experience that allows them to communicate.

The Slaveship is Coming From Africa

The Montréal group Jahlele, which for much of its career had no Jamaican members (the singer/lyricist is Ghanaian) and which generally plays to "mixed" audiences, has recorded a song entitled "Slaveship" on a historical theme that is typical of roots reggae:

The slaveship is coming from Africa
down, down, down to Babylon (backing: Ba-by-lon)
the slaveship is coming from far, far, far away
repeat

how many people lost their lives
how many people you throw in the sea
how many people you rape inna ship
how many people survive this trip (backing: how many people)
how many children were born inna ship (so many people)
how many people you beat inna ship (how many people)
how many people you throw in the sea (so many people)
oh no

(Jahlele, "Slaveship")

Through the remainder of the song this chorus and verse are simply repeated in alternation, with minor variations. In this text, the rhetorical use of the present tense in the chorus, the image of the slave-ship moving down* (a negatively-valued orientation in Rastafarian discourse) from Africa to Babylon, and the repetitive parallelisms of the
verse suggest that the text is concerned, like the Jamaican examples I have cited, with the activation of a certain affective attitude towards the past experience of the captives rather than a simple presentation of historical information. It is notable, however, that the communal aspect of this experience is not made explicit in the text, and indeed this might be expected considering the culturally heterogeneous composition of the group and of the typical Montréal audience. The "Afrocentric" historical vision is maintained as the central theme of the performance, but the positioning of the community of musical participants in relation to this past is less clearly constructed by the lyrical discourse.

While most of the discussion in this study has centred on textual features of reggae music, to understand this song in terms of modalities of communication it is necessary to go beyond the text and look to the more analytically-elusive musical qualities relating to the singer's expressive delivery of what he has characterized as the "sadness" of this song. At the formal musical level this quality of sadness could be located in the descending minor-key melodic lines of the chorus and, in the verse, in the emphasis on verbs describing the actions of the "slavemasters" (these come at the end of the lines and are relatively prolonged); on the other hand, it also relates to the material (or
bodily) aspect of the vocal performance, the "grain of the voice" that conveys "sadness" in combination with conviction and energy to the audience.

Also, while the lyrics of "Slaveship" present a sort of lament for those subjected to the terrors of the middle passage, the instrumental "riddim" to which the vocalizing is set is centred on a rapidly-paced bass-guitar pattern (of repeated sixteenth-notes with a single rest half-way through the bar), giving the song an energetic uptempo feel that suggests constant movement. Though the lyrical theme of movement relates to the lamentable progress of the slaveship, the musical movement of the instrumental component\(^{28}\) involves dancers -- and in "live" performances, the musicians -- in a controlled, coordinated movement that is associated, in the terms of reggae culture, with positive qualities of strength and vitality, inspiration and power. This affective experience, rather than more exclusive considerations of race or social origin, would appear to be the dominant factor in the definition of the community participating in the music.

\(^{28}\)The music is in fact adapted from a classic Jamaican song called "The Drifter."
VII. CONCLUSION

My discussion of the "conscious" lyrical discourse associated with roots reggae has concentrated on the rhetorical stance of the performing vocalist vis-à-vis an audience that is, in a certain sense, to be organized into a unified ritual community. Whether the implied audience of the reggae song text is defined as black Jamaicans (as in the case of Burning Spear's "Slavery Days") or in the more universal terms characteristic of international reggae, the aim of the musical performance is to move them to dance, to elicit a collective, focused involvement in the sounds of the music. At the same time, the lyrics of conscious reggae songs generally define this experience in terms of a relationship of moral unity among these participants in the musical process, implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) identifying their involvement in the music with collective engagement in the cultural struggle against injustice and oppression.

This strategy, while obviously related to the specific social and cultural circumstances in which the music originally emerged, is not unique to Jamaican reggae. It constitutes an integral aspect of the aesthetic form wherever it is practiced in its "roots" variety: basic lyrical themes relating to solidarity and resistance are
elaborated in terms of pliable metaphors that are readily adaptable to different social contexts of performance. The "message" of roots reggae should thus be regarded not strictly in terms of transmitted information, but as involving the establishment or orientation of social relationships among the performers and audience who come together around (or within) the music. It is a form of social knowledge that is felt as much as thought by those who participate in it.

Of course, the discursive "argument" of conscious reggae always coexists with a musical component, and in fact relies on this non-discursive element of performance as a frame of reference for the interpretation of its message. Throughout my discussion, the notion of the affective experience of music has figured as a kind of substrate, on which the rhetoric of the reggae text focuses and which it works to define. In the central metaphors of "feeling" and "vibrations," the sonic aspects of reggae performance are related to the operations of a shared mystical power, actualized within the context of the musical event as controlled, coordinated bodily strength, and metaphorically associated with the historical progress of the "sufferers" towards liberation. The music in its totality is treated as a mode of communication, addressing the subjectivity of the participant in terms of an orientation (or better an
attitude) that is at once corporeal, emotional and
cognitive: the words and sounds of conscious reggae are
intended to "speak" to the body, heart, and mind, as it
were. This coordination of different levels of subjectivity
-- including the trans-individual level of the participating
community -- in terms of a symbolic grid derived from
Rastafari constitutes the "consciousness" that is generated
by roots reggae music.
APPENDIX 1: Glossary

BABYLON - the present oppressive social system, controlled by "wicked men," or any of its manifestations; the geographical location of this oppression, as opposed to Zion (q.v.) or Ethiopia (q.v.). This usage could refer to Jamaica or to European-dominated society in general. Also, the term is frequently used to refer to the police as representatives of this system. Rastafarians situate themselves in unequivocal opposition to Babylon.

CONSCIOUS - an adjective applied to a Rastafarian or to the lyrical text of a reggae song (and by extension to the whole musical product, or to roots reggae in general). It indicates a clear vision of reality, knowledge of the truth as revealed by Rastafari, and (in lyrics) a focus on ethical, social, or political issues from a Rastafarian or Rasta-derived perspective.

CULTURE (see ROOTS) - the set of ritual and social practices characteristic of Rastafari, considered to be "authentic" African forms, albeit creatively constructed out of cultural remnants surviving the diaspora and centuries of repression in Jamaica.

DOWN ("dung" in the usual orthography for Patois) - a negatively-valued position of defeat or destruction (as in "chant down Babylon"), also suggesting captivity and oppression: Babylon (q.v.) is "dung deh" (as in "no good down there"), while Mount Zion (q.v.) is "high." The word "oppression" (pronounced as "up-pression") is often transformed to "downpression" to reflect its negative connotations. In general Jamaican usage someone is "kept down" (i.e. frustrated) by enemies. "Jam-dung" has been used as a name for Jamaica, emphasizing its status as a location of "down-pression."

DREAD - an adjective describing the "terrible" power of Rastafari in confronting Babylon (e.g. "Jah dread," "fire dreadder than dread"); see pp 66-67. It can also be used in referring to the bad quality of life in Babylon ("times well dread"; "it a go dread inna Babylon"). As a shortened form of "dreadlocks", this term is used to refer an individual Rastafarian, whence also "natty dread" (see following).
DREADLOCKS - the long uncombed hair often worn by Rastafarians, also called simply "locks," sometimes "dreads" or "knots" (to "knot/nat up" or "dread up" meaning to grow locks). I have heard songs referring to the Rasta as a "gorgon," obviously referring to this hairstyle and the power it signifies. "Flashing" locks is a favourite gesture of cultural affirmation in Rastafari, consisting in removing one's hat and shaking one's locks vigorously.

ETHIOPIA (see ZION) - the spiritual centre of the Rastafarian symbolic world; the original home of Black people (Ethiopians) and ultimate destination of repatriation; the country that was ruled by Haile Selassie (q.v.) or Africa as a whole (the latter usage sometimes justified by appeal to the language of the King James Bible).

FORWARD - a positive orientation in Rastafarian discourse, along with "up" (q.v.); this is the direction in which Jah people move in history towards redemption. "Forward!" is sometimes heard as a cry of appreciation at reggae performances.

HAILE SELASSIE I (see JAHH RASTAFARI) - the black king supposedly prophesied by Marcus Garvey before the latter left Jamaica for the last time: God. Many hold recognition of the divinity of Selassie to be the single criterion distinguishing true Rastafarians from non-Rastas and sympathizers.

Rastafarians derive many of their epithets for the divinity from Selassie's names and titles (cf. Owens 1976: 119-124): Ras Tafari was his name before coronation, and his official titles (King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah) are often listed in referring to him. "Him," when used in the Bible to designate God, is often interpreted as "H.I.M." for "His Imperial Majesty"; "Jesus" is often changed to "Negus" ("Negus Negest" meaning "King of Kings" in Amharic). The word "selah" that ends many of the Psalms is also taken to refer to Selassie.

The "Dread Talk" pronunciation of the name accentuates the "I" (q.v.) sound that is so significant in Rasta interpretations, even reading the roman numeral as /ai/. "Haile" in the Patois pronunciation is homophomous with "highly" and "Iley" (a Rastafarian word for marijuana); however, the name may also be read as "hail" (greet or praise).
HIGH - a positional term of positive spiritual significance, especially as in the Patois pronunciation it is homophonous with "I" (see following entry), as in "Mount Zion high," "Selassie I the most high," "ites" (heights).

I, I-n-I - Dread Talk singular and plural first-person pronouns used in any case as substitutes for the Patois "me" or "we." These pronouns have philosophical significance: they have been interpreted (cf. Owens 1976: 65) as reversing the "subservience" of conventional Patois, which generally uses "me," the "objective" form of the singular, in all cases. Also, since "I" is often interchangeable with "I-n-I" when the speaker is focusing his or her status as a Rasta, they imply a certain "trans-individual" subjectivity in discourse.

The sound /ai/ is of great importance in oral discourse and is used as a principle of organization linking a wide range of terms: its visual appearance also associates it with the roman numeral I and thus with the concept of unity (or "I-unity"). Terms with positive connotations in Rastafarian culture are often constructed using this sound in the initial syllable: a few are noted in the entries that follow.

IJOREN (cf. SUFFERERS) - a Dread Talk version of "children" or "brethren," this term refers to "Jah children," the wide community of (usually black) victims of oppression in Babylon. The term involves a characteristically Rastafarian focus (at least from the 1960's) on the youth as a progressive social force. The "I" implies an identification of the speaker with this community, though in utterances it usually appears in second- and third-person cases.

INITY (cf. ONE LOVE) - a version of "unity," designating the communal state of those brought together in Rastafari, as in this common adaptation of Psalm 133: "behold how good and pleasant it is for bredren to dwell together in Inity."

I-RATION - this term could be described as a version of either "creation" or "vibration." Thus it can refer to the universe (as in God's creation) or the present historical moment seen in terms of the will of Jah; it can also denote a kind of "positive" force (vibration), with close associations to divinity, that is generated in Rasta "interaction rituals" such as reasoning (g.v.) or chanting (cf. Jah Bones 1986a: 49). All these meanings will of course be connoted by any use of this term.
IRIE - an "I-word" of uncertain etymology, used to describe good feelings of all sorts (spiritual, emotional or sometimes even sexual); often used as a greeting.

ITAL - a version of "total," which can also be interpreted as a version of "natural." This term refers to rule-governed practices relating to the preparation of food and marijuana. Ital food is vegetarian (but including fish), and usually salt-free. An Ital spliff (marijuana "cigarette") is one rolled without tobacco. "Ital vital" is a phrase sometimes heard in reggae songs.

ITES - a version of "heights" (see HIGH), referring to a positive mental or spiritual state of inspiration, such as may be reached by smoking marijuana. Also used as a greeting.

JAH (RASTAFARI) - God; a name for Haile Selassie. The etymology of "Jah" is obscure: it may be derived from "Jehovah." Ras Tafari was Selassie's name before his coronation. For Rastas, God is a "living man" residing in Zion (Ethiopia), and they identify themselves with him as such (see RASTAFARI). Prayers and blessings are commonly punctuated by a loud call of "Jah!" to which those in attendance respond "Rastafari!".

NYABINGI - a gathering of Rastafarians, usually in a rural location, usually involving extended sessions of reasoning (g.v.), drumming, singing ("chanting"), and dancing. These may also be called "groundations." The term can also be used to designate the distinctive rhythms of Rastafarian drumming. See Reckord 1977.

ONE LOVE (see INITY) - a state of moral and social unity, associated with a pleasant, positive feeling. The word can be used as a salutation in parting. Cf. Bob Marley's song "One Love": "one love, one heart/ let's get together, and feel alright."

RASTAFARI (see JAH) - God; any Rastafarian (often shortened to Rasta); the philosophy and way of life of Rastafarians. This term is indicative of a certain identification of Rastafarians with Jah, in terms of participation in incarnated divinity. The word may be phonetically dissected to yield "for I" (mine), or "far eye"; it is usually
pronounced with a lengthened intonation of the vowels and a stress on each syllable.

**REASON, REASONING** - verb and noun forms designating a kind of ritualized philosophical discussion popular among Rastafarians (see above, pp 22-26, and Owens 1976: 185-187).

**ROOTS** (see CULTURE) - a term of approval referring to cultural practices, focusing on their "authenticity" and continuity with African culture; the term often appears in the phrase "roots and culture." It can also be used as a greeting. "Roots" is usually associated with notions of depth (cf. the title of Johnson and Pines 1985, *Deep Roots Music*), firmness, and strength.

In reggae, "roots" is used to designate a style characteristic of Rastafarian-produced or -influenced Jamaican music of the seventies and early eighties, and now prevalent in much international reggae. It indicates a certain "roughness" in sound (as opposed to a "slick," polished product), a focus on the drum and bass in the musical mix, "conscious" or "culture" lyrics, a relatively slow tempo, and (now that tracks played on "computer" and drum machine are common) the use of human musicians.

**SUFFERERS** (see IDREN) - the impoverished masses (of Jamaica or the world); victims of colonial domination; also the "captives" of "modern slavery."

**UP** - a positive orientational term in Rastafarian discourse. In Patois (as in Standard English), "up" is often incorporated in phrasal verbs, as in "fill up": in Dread Talk, this appears in culturally significant phrases like "live up" (according to the ways of Rastafari) and "dread up" (grow dreadlocks, become a Rastafarian). Righteous living could be termed "upful livity." Resistance may be metaphorically described in terms of getting up, standing up, or rising up, especially in reggae texts. For this reason negative words containing the "up" sound may be transformed: for example, "op[up]-pression" becomes "down-pression."
ZION or MOUNT ZION (see ETHIOPIA) - the dwelling place of Jah and the rightful home of Black people (who are sometimes identified by Rastas as "Israelites"); the final destination of repatriation, and thus of Rastafarians. Zion is opposed as a location and state of being to Babylon (q.v.), and is viewed as a kind of Utopia or Paradise.
Appendix 2: Discography

Association du reggae montréalais/ Montréal's Union for Reggae (ARMMUR)


Black Uhuru

Fit You Haffe Fit. Brutal. RAS Records RAS 3015, n.d.

Burning Spear

Christopher Columbus. Hail H.I.M. Tuff Gong (Jamaica), 1981.

Byles, Junior


Clarke, Johnny

Moving On To Zion. Originally Mr. Clarke. Clocktower LPCT 0108, n.d.

Culture

See Dem Come. Two Sevens Clash. Shanachie 44001, n.d.

Inusaso


By the Power. unreleased, (c) 1992 Joel Neil.
Inusaso

Good Feeling. unreleased, (c) 1992 Joel Neil.

Isaacs, Gregory


Jahlele


Marley, Bob


Minott, Sugar

Minott, Sugar


Shabba Ranks


Sister Carol


Toots and the Maytals


Wailer, Bunny

REFERENCES


Jah Bones. 1986b. Reggae Deejaying and Jamaican Afro-Lingua. in Sutcliffe and Wong, 52-68.


