

# Public Bodies: Virginity Testing, Redemption Songs, and Racial Respect in Jamaica

By

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## RESUMEN

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En este ensayo, Thomas explora los debates dentro de la esfera pública en relación a dos controversias suscitadas en Jamaica durante el verano del 2003, respecto al conflicto entre los términos de ciudadanía cultural y representaciones públicas del ser jamaicano, conflictos cuyas dinámicas raciales y de género se constituyen transnacionalmente. Específicamente, ella demuestra que una noción de género, ya basada en términos de raza y clase, se despliega para la concreción del estado-nación y de las ideas acerca de la ciudadanía legítima, especialmente durante periodos de intensa incertidumbre ("crisis") para los jamaicanos dentro y fuera de Jamaica. Ella argumenta que los debates acerca de la prueba de la virginidad y la estatua de la "Canción de Redención"—que fue creada para conmemorar la emancipación y demostrar un deseo de parte de los jamaicanos dentro y fuera de su país por el "respeto racial"—es un reconocimiento que debido a las viejas jerarquías internacionales de trabajo, poder y raza, las nuevas movilizaciones motivadas por la globalización, no redundan en una clasificación racial. Después de examinar las cartas al editor en los diarios mas importantes, la autora encuentra que éstos medios proveen de un espacio de acción para una conversación nacional que permite a los jamaicanos, donde quiera que estén, jugar un rol activo en la co-construcción de la nación. Thomas muestra que ellos reproducen, y a veces marcan, las fronteras de la nación, aunque su propia dispersión espacial sostenga el potencial de de-construcción de esas mismas fronteras.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Jamaica, estatua de la "Canción de Redención," desnudez pública, género, trabajo. KEY WORDS: Jamaica, "Redemption Song" monument, public nudity, gender, labor.

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THOUGH IT IS ONE OF THE LARGER ISLANDS in the Caribbean, Jamaica is nevertheless a small place. It is, however, a small place that boasts two major daily newspapers—one of which is the oldest consistently published newspaper in the Western hemisphere, and both of which are published online—as well as a number of smaller daily and weekly publications targeted to various sectors of the population. There are also several radio call-in shows aired throughout the day. Unlike television or the Internet, radio in Jamaica is a global medium that privileges the local (in this case, the national space) even when people call in from overseas. Similarly, when Jamaicans in Diaspora write e-mail letters to the editor in both daily newspapers, they are usually addressing issues that have emerged in Jamaica, not those they face where they are living. As a result, the level of participation in locally-developed public debates is very high, both directly as Jamaicans across the country (and throughout the Diaspora) write letters to the editor or call in to the radio shows, and indirectly as they use the radio shows and newspapers as stepping stones for their own kitchen table, veranda, and rum shop deliberations. What I am trying to get at is that Jamaicans, wherever they are, are always ready to add their two cents to a good local controversy.

During the summer of 2003, two such controversies took over public discussion in print and on the airwaves. The first surrounded a parliamentarian's proposition that girls under sixteen years of age undergo virginity testing—a proposition that followed on the heels of another member of Parliament's suggestion that women who had more than two children outside of marriage be sterilized. The second had to do with a statue titled "Redemption Song," erected at the entrance to Emancipation Park in Kingston, which was designed to commemorate the abolition of slavery. The public debates that raged around these two controversies are fascinating for the fault lines they expose. Examining these debates makes crystal clear how differences along the lines of gender, generation, class and educational background shape people's varied responses to issues that emerge in the public sphere.

But this is not all. These controversies emerged during a moment when there was a heightened level of "crisis talk" in Jamaica. By this, I mean that discourse regarding the extraordinary level of crime and violence, the various failures of politicians, and the lack of economic opportunities had become ubiquitous both in the public sphere and in private discussions, leading many to insist that "Jamaica mash up completely." Teresa Caldeira has called this kind of discourse the "talk of crime," the "everyday conversations, commentaries, discussions, narratives, and jokes that have crime and fear as their subject" (2000:19). This is a kind of talk, she argues, that is contagious, and that is not only expressive but also productive—of opinions and perspectives as well as landscapes, public space, and social interactions. There is a long history of crisis talk in Jamaica, and it has typically bubbled over when there have been significant

transformations in the political economy of labor within and beyond “the rock.” Because these are transformations that generate intense doubts and uncertainties regarding the future, crisis talk has typically produced intensified attention—on the part of governmental and civic leaders—to two dimensions of social life in Jamaica. One has to do with the gendered dynamics of the social body (and especially the strength and nature of working-class families), and the other with the public representations of Jamaican-ness that circulate both locally and in internationally.

That these dimensions are related is an argument I hardly need to rehearse here. Several scholars within and beyond anthropology have interrogated the links among gender, state formation, and nationalism, and have demonstrated that colonialism as well as both anti- and post-colonial nationalisms are projects implemented through the production of “appropriate” gender relations and sexualities.<sup>1</sup> Their insights have revealed (1) that gender norms are not merely effects of broader processes, but actually constitute these processes in the first instance, and (2) that gender norms are not static, but rather change in relation to evolving labor needs and ideas about femininity and sexuality transnationally. We also know that gender does not stand on its own, but is intimately articulated with other social categories—especially race, class, and religion (Brodkin 2000; Williams 1996; Mahmood 2004)—and as such, always shapes more general struggles over the production of political, economic, and social subjectivities. These struggles ultimately have to do with the power to define the nation and cultural citizenship, and in Jamaica they have been indexed through the various binaries that mark the social, spatial, economic, and political distance between elites and non-elites—“upper class” versus “poorer class,” uptown versus downtown, brown versus black, ladies versus women.

In this essay, I explore the hubbub over reproduction and black bodies in public space in order to show how crisis talk is mapped onto black women’s bodies in particular. I demonstrate that a notion of gender that is already raced and classed is deployed to concretize the nation-state and ideas about legitimate citizenship, especially during periods of intensified uncertainty (“crisis”) for Jamaicans within and beyond Jamaica. I do this through an examination of letters to the editor in the major dailies to make a secondary argument—that the papers provide a venue for a national conversation that allows Jamaicans, wherever they are, to think about themselves as connected to the territorial space of Jamaica.

In other words, this essay is not solely intended as an analysis of discourse, but also aims to shed light on what in many ways is the quintessential instantiation of Benedict Anderson’s notion of imagined communities (1983). However, where Anderson was concerned with the reading communities that developed around newspapers to create national publics, here we are confronted with nation building in transnational space. That is, one of the results of new technologies is that Jamaicans “in Diaspora” can write themselves into the national space, not just to keep

connected, but also to play an active role in the co-construction of the nation. In doing so, they reproduce, and sometimes sharpen, the borders of the nation even as their own spatial dispersion holds the potential to deconstruct those very borders. This is a paradox that has been explored in the literature on transnational migration (see especially Basch et al. 1994, Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Laguerre 2005). As Michel Laguerre has observed for the Haitian case, diasporic political engagement and activism “establishes a disconnect between the state’s fixed boundaries and the nation’s flexible territorial expansion” (2005:207). This generates a constant circulation of available political figures between Haiti and its Diaspora that is facilitated by a diasporic public sphere that has expanded its reach through new technologies. In this case, it reflects the dynamic articulation between racial formation and processes associated with globalization—processes that have been profoundly uneven and contradictory, and that have resulted in the intensified polarization of capital, labor, and consumer markets between and within countries (Trouillot 2001).

The debates about virginity testing, forced sterilization, and “Redemption Song” that appeared in the newspapers, therefore, bring into relief ongoing struggles over the terms of cultural citizenship and public representations of Jamaicanness—struggles whose racial and gendered dynamics are constituted transnationally. I argue that these debates index a desire on the part of Jamaicans “at home” and abroad for what I am calling “racial respect,” an acknowledgment that due to old international hierarchies of labor, power, and race, the new mobilities afforded by globalization don’t redound to racial classifications. Working-class Jamaicans can’t mobilize themselves beyond blackness and its attendant stereotypes regarding humanity and sexuality. Racial respect would require a reformulation of the terms of social reconstruction. That is, black working-class women’s bodies can no longer be the primary sites of reformist projects aimed at reconstituting the social body of the nation.

## Crises

### *Virginity Testing and Sterilization*

On Tuesday, July 29, 2003, in response to the release of a report outlining the pervasiveness of sexual and other abuse in children’s homes in Jamaica, Opposition parliamentarian Ernie Smith proposed virginity testing on girls under sixteen. “I am proposing mandatory medical examinations of all schoolgirls returning to school to determine if their virginity is still intact,” he stated (*Jamaica Observer* 2003a). Smith was supporting Sharon Hay-Webster, Member of Parliament for South Central St. Catherine, who had suggested that young unmarried women undergo compulsory sterilization if they have more than two children. Hay-Webster argued that with the intensification of poverty and unemployment, and no drop in the number of

unplanned pregnancies, policy measures needed to be taken in order to prevent people from increasing the burden on an already over-burdened state. "We possibly need to look at state control of parenting," she stated, "and maybe we need to look at tubal ligation of mothers who come in with a second or third child and can't take care of them" (*Jamaica Gleaner* 2003a).

Parliamentarians Sharon Hay-Webster and Ernie Smith's proposals calling for the compulsory sterilization of women and virginity testing were met with a fair amount of public censure. Human rights groups Jamaicans for Justice, Women's, Inc., and Women's Media Watch issued sharp critiques of the proposals, arguing that they not only violated people's privacy as well as the principles of equality, freedom, and democracy, but also exhibited a bias consistent with broader gender ideologies in Jamaica that needed to be tackled head-on. These and other organizations advocated that public education programs be made available to schoolgirls to provide better information regarding reproduction and contraception, and that the typically older men who take advantage of young girls be prosecuted under already existing laws. Joyce Hewitt, coordinator of public education and legal reform at Women's Inc., went a step further to suggest that since the responsibility for unplanned or unwanted pregnancies does not lie exclusively with young women, "if they are considering surgical procedures for the ladies then they should consider vasectomy and lobotomy for the men" (*Jamaica Observer* 2003b).

This, indeed, was the tenor of several letters to the editor published in the *Jamaica Gleaner* and the *Jamaica Observer*, many of which were posted by Jamaicans living overseas. "Castrate the men," one letter writer argued from Canada. "Now, there is a solution to poverty," the writer continued, "and whatever else ails the Jamaican society" (Rankine 2003). Another letter writer lamented, "Again it is the poor girls, who are already abused, who are targeted for further humiliation and abuse . . . When will we begin to make a public example of men who have had sexual relations with girls under the age of consent and got them pregnant?" (Falloon 2003). Letter writers typically insisted that education, not sterilization, was the most effective way to combat teen pregnancy. "When is the last time you saw a [University of the West Indies] female graduate with three to four children hanging around her skirt tail?" asked "Blue Falcon" via Hotmail, "Maybe we need to start the education process in the House of Parliament!" (2003). Sylbourne Sydial, leader of Facilitators for a Better Jamaica in London, the United Kingdom, extended this argument to indict Jamaican leaders for their bankruptcy of vision. "Instead of dealing with the core sickness," she offered, "they are going for the symptoms . . . What should be tackled is the core sickness in our society of joblessness, lack of hope in certain sectors, developing our nation to be self-sufficient" (2003).

These letter writers were pushing government representatives to see the teenage pregnancies resulting from sexual abuse and the high percentage of Jamaican children

born into poverty not as problems in a vacuum, but as symptoms of broader structural and educational inequalities. Yet this was not the first time that the state in Jamaica tried to intervene in these broader problems by policing the sexuality of working-class black women, thereby attempting to control the ways families are formed among poorer Jamaicans and to inculcate a commitment to the culture of respectability. The Moyne Commission report after the 1938 West Indies-wide labor rebellions identified working class family formation as a challenge to economic and political development, and in 1944, Lady Huggins, the wife of the then Governor of Jamaica, initiated the infamous Mass Marriage Movement.

By the 1930s, the already poor living conditions of the Jamaican lower classes had become exacerbated by the global economic depression. Intensified poverty and unemployment, a reduction in wages, the return of Jamaicans who had migrated to work overseas throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a frustration over the lack of substantial land reform, and increased workers' mobilization all led to the labor rebellions that erupted at the Frome sugar estate in April of 1938. Fearing increasing instability in the region, the colonial government sent a delegation to probe the causes of discontent. The report of this West Indian Royal Commission (the Moyne Report) initiated several important shifts in post-World War II colonial policy. Together, these shifts reflected the growing influence in Britain of Keynesian economic policies that suggested, among other things, that societies could be reformed without altering their basic socio-economic or political structures (Bakan 1990; Bryan 1990), and inaugurated the move toward self-government in Jamaica.

The 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act reoriented colonial development initiatives toward the implementation of social welfare policies—policies buttressed by academic research—that were geared toward bringing the West Indies in line with a “universal ‘modern’ practice” (R.T. Smith 1996:81). An important aspect of this project had to do with emphasizing the formation of “modern” conjugal families comprised of a male breadwinner and his dependent housewife. This unit was seen as the motor not only of social development, but also of economic development because familial conditions were now viewed as affecting labor productivity, absenteeism, occupational aspirations, training and performance, attitudes toward saving, birth control, farm development, and programs of individual and community self-help (M.G. Smith 1966). The social ills of poverty and underdevelopment came to be blamed on the family, or seeming lack of it. Thus, the high rates of illegitimate births, the “loose” family organization, and the “careless” upbringing of children in the West Indies cited in the report of the Moyne Commission became utmost concerns, and family formation developed as a key emphasis of post-War policy (Reddock 1994; M.G. Smith 1966; R.T. Smith 1996). This emphasis would pose special problems in the West Indies where, during slavery and throughout the 19th century, black women performed agricultural and other forms of work, and

where there is little evidence that legal marriage was generally accepted as the fundamental basis of family formation or household composition among the mass of the population (Beckles 1989; Mair 1975; Senior 1991).

Nevertheless, programs were designed to address the Commission's concerns, one of which was the infamous Mass Marriage Movement. This movement was an island-wide campaign designed to halt what was seen as alarmingly rampant promiscuity among lower-class Jamaicans by sponsoring the marriages of consensually cohabitating couples and others whose sexual relations seemed to warrant marriage. At its peak in 1946, the Movement increased marriage rates in Jamaica from 4.44 per thousand to 5.82 per thousand. But by 1951, the annual marriage rate and illegitimacy ratios had returned to their earlier levels, and by 1955, the Mass Marriage Movement had petered out completely (Smith 1966: xxiii). It is often anecdotally noted that after marrying, many of these couples actually broke up. The failure of this movement was attributed to the erroneous assumption that marriage had the same meaning and value among different social strata. This led to a conviction that there was a need for systematic sociological studies of patterns of family formation among black lower-class Jamaicans, among whom promiscuity, marital instability, "defective" paternity and child socialization, and high rates of illegitimacy were all thought to be connected. The idea here was that sociological research would not only provide insight into these "problems," but would also generate blueprints for policy-oriented solutions that would ultimately facilitate Jamaica's transition from British Crown Colony to internal self-rule.

The appointment of T.S. Simey as the first Social Welfare Adviser to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies, a post created by the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act, reflected a move in this direction. A sociologist by training, Simey adopted the Frazierian position that the social and economic conditions of slavery had precluded the development of stable nuclear families. He also identified the contemporary "disorganization" of West Indian family life as the cause of lower class Jamaicans' continued marginalization as an economically and socially depressed group. His survey of social conditions in Jamaica set the pattern for future family studies by classifying mating practices along a continuum, and by arguing that there seemed to be a close correlation between color, occupation or economic level, and family type (1946). This argument ultimately led to the formulation of a model of social stratification whereby differences in cultural practice were ranked hierarchically according to social positions and roles, though ultimately integrated through a common value system that positioned idealized "respectable" middle-class whiteness at its apex (Braithwaite 1953; R.T. Smith 1956, 1967; cf. M.G. Smith 1962, 1965). While the theoretical positions advanced within these early studies have since been significantly modified,<sup>2</sup> their importance lies in the belief, current at the time, that the successful implementation of land settlement

policies, as well as other public health, housing, and educational programs, was contingent upon the existence of a cohabitational nuclear family unit.

Toward this end, Simey supported the work of Jamaica Welfare, an organization established in 1937 by Norman Manley (founder of the first nationalist political party in Jamaica) after supporting banana workers in a legal dispute with the United Fruit Company. Jamaica Welfare sent cadres of representatives throughout the country to encourage land reform, the development of small-scale industries in rural areas, and community uplift (Marier 1953). Simey ultimately incorporated Jamaica Welfare into the funding structure of the Colonial Development office, and it became the Social Development Commission. At the same time, one of the first activities of the Colonial Development and Welfare Office staff in 1941 was to visit the mini-New Deal programs developed by the Roosevelt administration in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, visits that were organized by the Rockefeller Foundation. Unlike Britain, the United States did not adopt a welfare approach to its overseas territories, preferring instead to emphasize population control policies and institutionalize home economics education. By the mid-1950s, based on research conducted in Puerto Rico and Jamaica funded by the U.S. Conservation Foundation (Blake 1961; Stycos and Back 1964), the dominant thesis was that overpopulation was the main reason for the region's economic problems, and the Puerto Rican model (sterilization among lower class women) was put forward as a viable solution to these problems elsewhere in the West Indies (Reddock 1994: 213, 224).

The context within which these studies were conducted was one in which people were captivated by both the possibilities and challenges offered up by impending political independence, and the need to socialize Jamaicans into a sense of belonging and civic responsibility. Forty years later, the context has changed quite a bit. The last two decades of economic crisis have eroded many of the immediate post-independence gains in health and nutrition, literacy and education, employment and social services, gender empowerment, and political stability (Barrow 1998; Dupuy 2001). Structural adjustment programs have mandated repeated currency devaluations, which, alongside privatization drives, have resulted in an extraordinarily elevated cost of living and an increase in poverty. Unemployment has escalated, especially among women and youth, and crime rates have skyrocketed, especially those related to drug trafficking and domestic violence. These processes have been propelled by particular ideologies about gender relations, and have had particular gendered effects.

During the 1980s, national development strategies targeted female labor on an unprecedented scale. Women ultimately displaced the traditional male working-class as priority plans for economic development were based on the expansion of free trade zones, offshore data processing, and tourism (Ford-Smith 1997). Moreover, women have come to represent the bulk of Jamaica's internationally mobile labor force. Since 1965, when immigration restrictions in the United States became less



stringent, migration from Jamaica (as from the West Indies more generally) became increasingly female-driven. Like earlier Jamaicans who settled in the urban United States, these women have tended to concentrate within the industries of personal and professional services and government employment. More recently, they have been recruited as teachers and health care workers. Because women now make up the bulk of students at the University of the West Indies, because women's migratory labor is now fuelling Jamaica's remittance economy, because successful higglers are garnering significant market shares and therefore defining consumer trends among lower-class Jamaicans, and because dancehall has created new spaces in which black women's bodies are displayed and celebrated (Cooper 1993; Niaah 2004; Ulysse 1999), it is no longer possible or feasible to privatize women's labor and public personae. Within the context of contemporary globalization, calls for virginity testing and forced sterilization—the latest attempts to dis-alienate the social body through gendered reconstructions—were immediately denounced, almost ridiculed. They were pounced on as misguided, last-ditch efforts by ineffective politicians to implement short-sighted solutions to long-standing problems that had at their root the long-term effects of economic and social inequality within and beyond Jamaica.

#### *Redemption Song*

While there was substantial public outcry regarding the virginity testing and sterilization proposals, and considerable debate about the underlying issues, this discussion was quickly eclipsed by the uproar over "Redemption Song"—a statue created by artist Laura Facey Cooper and unveiled by Prime Minister P.J. Patterson on July 31 to commemorate Emancipation Day 2003. The statue stands at one of the busiest intersections in New Kingston, the heart of Kingston's commercial district, marking the entrance to Emancipation Park, a six-acre tract of land that the National Housing Trust spent J\$100 million (US\$1.6 million) renovating in 2002 as part of the Prime Minister's ongoing attempts to commemorate those who endured slavery. Prior to its revitalization, the land went largely unused except as an occasional entertainment venue. Now, with creative landscaping that includes three fountains, a stage, and a fitness trail, and with an ice cream truck and kiddie rides nearby, Emancipation Park has become a well-used public space, home to concerts as well as political protests, fitness enthusiasts as well as tourists.

The statue itself features bronzed figures of a nude male and female resting on a concrete basin as if emerging from a pool of water.

The figures stand over 3.5 meters tall, and under them on the base are etched the words first uttered by Marcus Garvey and then immortalized by Bob Marley, "none but ourselves can free our mind."<sup>3</sup> Facey Cooper's design—which cost J\$4.5 million (US\$75 thousand) to build—won first place in an open competition judged by a committee of leading figures in Jamaica's arts scene that included David Boxer,

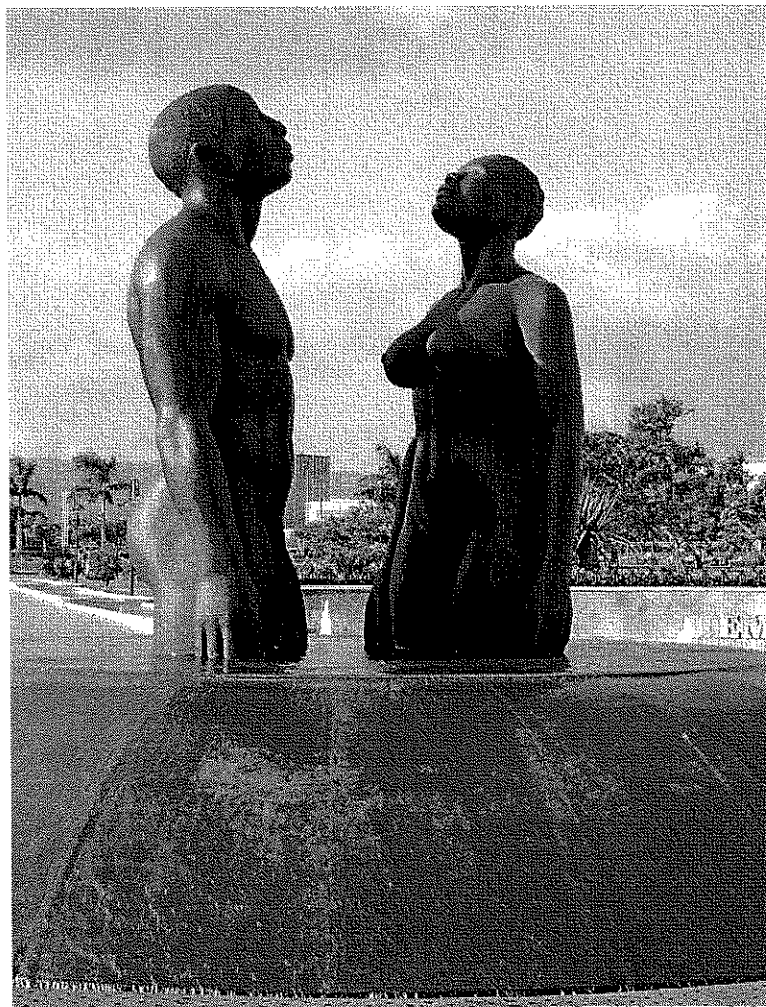


Figure 1 Laura Facey Cooper's "Redemption Song" in Kingston, Jamaica: Prayerful or Pornographic?

Photo by John L. Jackson, Jr.

the Curator of the National Gallery, and Rex Nettleford, then Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Founding Director of the National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica, and cultural consultant on countless national committees and international boards.

Letters to the editor and columnist commentaries on the statue appeared almost daily in the newspapers through the entire month of August and into September, and debates raged on the radio call-in shows. At the end of October, sentiments on the statue still ran high enough for the Reggae Studies Unit of the University of the West Indies to host a forum discussion among reggae artists, intellectuals, and other



Figure 2 Entrance to Emancipation Park in the heart of New Kingston's business/hotel district.

Photo by John L. Jackson, Jr.

interested individuals at which the predominating sentiment toward the statue was hostility. Though there were some who saw hope in the statue, who felt it embodied strength, vigor, and pride, by the end of August, there had been enough calls for the statue's removal that an opinion poll was conducted in early September. Despite the ongoing vociferous opposition to the statue, the poll ultimately revealed that the majority of voting age Jamaicans actually felt the statue should stay at the entrance to Emancipation Park (Observer Reporter 2003).<sup>4</sup> As a light-complexioned Jamaican, Facey Cooper herself came under fire, with several people suggesting that since her "whiteness" would prevent her from having a visceral identification with slavery and emancipation, her monument would naturally lack a powerful resonance among those who would purportedly identify with people who had been enslaved:

Being white, instead of placing the theme of Emancipation in the very specific context of the enslavement of African peoples now living in Jamaica, she has universalized it, making it a generic emancipation in which she can also participate . . . *Redemption Song* does not speak to most Jamaicans . . . It does not express the Jamaican experience using symbols that Jamaicans find understandable, approachable, *ours* (Graham 2004:178, 175).

Ultimately, the statue was compared—unfavorably—to well-received liberation struggle monuments in Barbados, Guyana, and Haiti. What was all the fuss about?

## Contexts

One of the ways states become social actors in everyday life is through the development of national cultural narratives, and these narratives have been highly contested throughout the post-emancipation period in Jamaica. As part of their push toward political independence, mid-20th century anti-colonial political and intellectual elites promoted new ideas about cultural citizenship. I have already given examples of how gender relations and family formation figured prominently in their attempts to engineer cultural practices in the service of economic development and political stability. Yet many also worked within the sphere of symbolic representation, cultivating the notion that previously denigrated Afro-Jamaican beliefs and practices should be valued and institutionalized as the foundations of Jamaica's national cultural identity. They thus established various community based arts organizations and festivals, part and parcel of the social welfare work and democratic political nationalism, current at the time, which promoted particular notions of progress and development.

For many among the political and cultural elite who gained power during the transfer from British rule, however, these notions of progress and development were not consonant with the cultural forms and institutions that Jamaicans evolved during the period of slavery. The irony, then, is that while nationalist intellectuals and activists, who were overwhelmingly middle class, sought to confer recognition upon working-class Afro-Jamaican forms and institutions by using them as the foundation of a national cultural identity, they also saw them as hindrances to political and economic development. In other words, by carving out a distinctive place for the elaboration of a cultural heritage, creole multi-racial nationalists attempted to inculcate both a cultural identity and the acceptance of hegemonic structures of post-colonial political authority. Percy Hintzen has identified these simultaneous endeavors as the two key dimensions of nationalist projects in the Caribbean. He argues that "national elites became the agents of modernity and the instruments of equality" (1997:63) through a developmental discourse that masked post-colonial relations of power and undermined "the symbolic power of ethnic nationalism," which is essentially, in his view, a discourse of race (1997:66).

Indeed, in Jamaica the tensions between various strands of black nationalism and creole multiracialism have informed cultural politics from establishment of Crown Colony rule to the present. On one hand, the early movement to promote a new (anti-colonial) vision of cultural citizenship remained wedded to British institutions and to the idea that these institutions would socialize the population within values that had, by then, been constructed as uniquely belonging to the respectable middle classes—discipline, temperance, collective work, thrift, industry, Christian living, community uplift, and respect for formal education. On the other hand, it gave symbolic primacy to historical events and select cultural practices deemed relevant to the majority of

the population. At the time of independence in 1962, this two-step emphasized the cultivation of “middle-class values,” “respectable” family structures, community mobilization, and political participation that would facilitate Jamaica’s economic growth, but also elevated aesthetic practices associated with rural black Jamaicans that had previously been denigrated by colonial authorities.

Elsewhere, I outline the connections between broader political and economic initiatives and the tensions between creole multi-racial nationalism and diverse black nationalisms over time (Thomas 2004). Here, I will just mention that while the government’s legitimation of aspects of Jamaica’s African cultural heritage broadened the public space in which notions of national identity could be debated, the actual process of privileging particular elements of Jamaica’s African cultural heritage also marginalized alternative visions. The attempt to inculcate soon-to-be-ex-subjects with a sense of national belonging and loyalty that would naturalize new relations of authority validated a particular kind of citizen and a specific vision of cultural “progress” and “development” that prioritized creole multi-racial integration around the model of nationalist “respectability.” But this was not the only vision of progress available to Jamaicans at the time of independence or afterwards. Competing understandings of Jamaican identity and political struggle have been rooted in a sense of racialized (and to a degree, transnational) citizenship. These competing understandings are what shaped the diverse reactions to “Redemption Song.”

Jamaicans who didn’t appreciate the statue tended to root their opposition in the nudity of the figures. Taking offense to nudity, here, operated on several levels. Many Jamaicans were offended because they understood their foreparents as having been humiliated in their nakedness. They thus felt the statue was disrespectful. As John Campbell wrote from Miami, “Did our ancestors stand naked for slave masters and fellow slaves to view them in their nakedness in public? For God’s sake, couldn’t they at least cover their private parts? Shame, shame, shame on all of you who allowed this to happen” (Campbell 2003). Others agreed. Antonnette Thomas wrote, “When I think of emancipation from slavery, I think of being able to wear clothing, finally!” (2003). And Stephanie Bygrave, a 37 year-old self-employed woman in Kingston offered her opinion to columnist Claude Mills: “Dem shoulda cover them up with a loin cloth or something. What the artist is saying about black people? And why dem couldn free up them mind inna dem clothes?” (Mills 2003). Several letter writers, therefore, advocated that the statues be clothed, or that foliage be strategically placed nearby.

Others were worried about how “outsiders” would respond to the statues’ nudity. A Jamaican woman living overseas argued that the statue “merely reinforces the stereotypes of black people as sexualized beings,” and asked, “What does it say to people who link sex and tourism in the Caribbean?” (Mills 2003). Celia Jackson of Kingston felt that the figures were inappropriate for children’s viewing, stating

that it was “poor taste to have a sculpture with male and female genitals exposed and so exaggeratedly erected in a public place” (Jackson 2003). The statues also prompted an extended debate on the size of the penis and the extent to which it was representative of the average Jamaican man. Some suggested that the size of the flaccid penis might make some men feel intimidated and insecure as to their own endowment, while others expressed concern that “the emphasis on the genitals of the man could have the effect of reinforcing stud like mentality in the psyche of our males” (Richards 2003).

Some letter writers linked the nudity of the statues to a decline in local (Jamaican) values and a tendency to follow foreign fashion. “We are also losing our values, respect, culture, discipline, way of life, and want to follow the rest of the world, going down the negative road,” one writes, “This is not our culture, style, or taste. I expect to see these kinds of things when I travel to Italy and other European countries” (Campbell 2003). Echoing many other concerned citizens, Ricardo Smalling of Kingston wondered why “we look at a magnificent work of art and all we see is sex . . . our ability to reason seems to be tied to sex and sexuality and everything has to be lowered to that level” (Smalling 2003). C. Kelly of Portmore agreed, arguing that the statue only adds to the “growing lack of respect shown to each other,” which is embodied through the omnipresence of sex and sexuality (Kelly 2003).

Several saw the objection to nudity in the statues as hypocritical for this very reason. “Listen to the language of our entertainers. Look at the dresses worn by some of our young and not so young girls. Nothing is left to the imagination,” Marilyn Delavante wrote to the *Gleaner*. “Consider the behavior of so many who exhibit vulgar and explicit behavior, she continued, “add to this the immoral sexuality of men who abuse under-age girls and women” (2003). Delavante’s sentiments—which again invoked the ongoing concern regarding sexual abuse of teenage girls—were echoed by Christopher Burns, who asked “Why is it that we embrace readily the slackness of the dancehall and the vulgarity of the dirty dancing, yet react with shock at another form of (lifeless) art?” (Burns 2003). This reference to dancehall reflects the widespread popular debate that surrounds the music and associated culture of contemporary youth. Because many dancehall lyrics have diverged from “conscious” reggae’s emphasis on social critique and redemption, instead reflecting a ghetto glorification of sex, guns, and the drug trade, middle class observers have often referred to dancehall derisively as “slackness” music. In particular, they have seen dancehall fashions and women’s highly sexualized dance moves as vulgarly degrading to Jamaica’s moral fiber. Their everyday judgments of working-class Jamaican women who spend enormous amounts of money and time getting ready for dancehall sessions rather than, purportedly, investing in their own or their children’s educational and occupational advancement, again reflects an impetus to reassert the culture of respectability by circumscribing the mobility of black female bodies. These judgments also reflect an ongoing concern, a fear even, among certain

middle- and upper-class Jamaicans regarding the power of lower-class popular cultural production to shape both behavior and public perceptions of Jamaica and Jamaicans. Cultural critic Carolyn Cooper has used the dancehall trope of the “border clash” to identify these kinds of discursive scenarios (2004). She has argued that border clashes exemplify the “ideological conflicts between competing value systems in Jamaica” (2004:35)—conflicts that are rooted in class and color hierarchies—and moreover, that they continue to emerge in the public sphere mainly because elite Jamaicans fail to take popular culture seriously as a means of expressing and enacting an alternative world view among poorer Jamaicans.

That many of the responses to the nudity of the statues seemed to break down along class lines in this way became clearest in the deliberations about whether Jamaicans could accept nudity as art. On August 6th, the *Gleaner* issued an Editorial in defense of the statues, in which editors asked whether “prurience, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder” (*Jamaica Gleaner* 2003b). They went on to suggest that the strong negative responses to the statue disguised “a deep, unconscious guilt in the psyche of those who express shock at the sensuality of the figures rather than delight in the symbolism the artist envisioned.” Furthermore, like several letter writers, the *Gleaner* editorial pointed out that “representation of the naked human figure has been an art form since the beginning of time,” citing Michelangelo’s “David” in particular. The editorial concluded by arguing that there should be “restraint and more mature reflection on the artistic merits of the work” (*Jamaica Gleaner* 2003b).

Many others echoed these sentiments, concluding that opposition to the statue revealed a sense of continued mental and social enslavement, and that black men and women in Jamaica were “still unable to accept themselves as beautiful” (Gallimore 2003). Marva Chambers of Kingston called for more open-mindedness. “Why is it that we as a people can only tear down and never see or appreciate the positive side of anything that has happened in this country?” she asked. “Is it that we are so afraid of our own nakedness, or is it that after 41 years we have not been truly emancipated?” (Chambers 2003). Kevin Young, writing from Florida, refuted the idea that latent Eurocentrism was behind opposition to the statue, arguing instead that “misguided conceptions of morality” and a “lack of appreciation for artistic expression”—in short, ignorance—was to blame (2003). George Witter, writing from England, concurred. “If this ‘masterpiece’ was created by an American, European, or anyone else except a Jamaican,” he wrote, “it would be treated as brilliant modern art” (Witter 2003). Multimedia producer Tommy Ricketts took this notion one step further to argue that “There are many persons who are not ready to deal with emancipation and this is a Talibanish trait in highly religious countries, like Jamaica. Anywhere else in the world intelligent people would appreciate this” (quoted in Harold 2003). Cultural critic Narda Graham, in response to these kinds of comments, explained

why many Jamaicans would have seen the statues' nudity not as "art," but as an offense to public decency:

Some commentators have suggested that since Jamaica has a highly sexualized culture, it is surprising that Jamaicans should be disturbed by nudity in public art. In fact, the opposite is true. It is exactly because we are a highly sexualized culture that nudity in art is shocking to many, since for a large number, nudity equals sex—not purity, rebirth, freedom, or nobility . . . Therefore, most Jamaicans do not expect or wish to see anatomically precise nudity on a public piece of art (2004:175).

Others explained the opposition to "Redemption Song" by seeing it as just one more example in a long history of "middle class misrepresentation[s] of struggle" (Harold 2003), and by taking issue with the tone of intellectuals and artists who ridiculed those Jamaicans who didn't appreciate the artistic merits of the statues. Letter writer Dwight Smikle described this patronizing tone in the following manner: "We are in the great house and we know what is best for you. You after all are just ordinary Jamaicans and we are the refined ones who can appreciate the fine work of art that we have given to you" (2003). Similarly, *Observer* columnist Lloyd Smith argued that the statue was "thrust on the nation by the Patterson administration with a certain degree of contempt for the Jamaican people who are still being seen by many of our politicians, the intelligentsia, the upper middle class, and the last vestiges of the plantocracy as illiterate ignoramuses who do not know what is good for them" (Smith 2003). And Carolyn Cooper, who dedicated a series of newspaper columns to criticizing various aspects of the statue, condemned the paternalism that infused middle class and elite's dismissiveness of those Jamaicans who did not appreciate the statue:

In its consolidation of the myth of mindless African physicality the monument is, at core, a reification of enslavement, and an excellent example of what the Jamaican artist, Omari Ra, wittily describes as an 'apesthetic.' The selection of this monument, which so thoroughly offends the sensibilities of a substantial number of the African Jamaican population, by a small panel of experts out of touch with popular opinion is a validation of the right to rule of the 'out of many, one' elite. Indeed, this contemptuous image of 'emancipation' may be read as a re-enactment of the politics of the Abolitionist Act which paid compensation to slave masters for the loss of services to which they were presumed to be entitled (Cooper and Donnell 2004:7–8).

Here, Cooper invokes an elite-controlled public sphere that continually recalibrates the axes of social differentiation to its own advantage. Annie Paul, cultural



critic and Caribbean art historian, elaborates on the aesthetic implications of these recalibrations:

This public space is configured as a supposedly neutral, colourless, raceless, secular sphere which while claiming to erase all difference actually privileges a Euro-American worldview in which despite the racial background of the majority of Jamaicans it is most unnatural to talk of an African or black aesthetic and most natural to look to European and American heritage for fitting antecedents (Paul 2004:130).

These critics were responding to what they saw as a lack of respect given by cultural elites to the cosmologies of poorer, black Jamaicans, and in particular, to their ideologies regarding publicly displayed nudity in a commemorative statue that in their view was supposed to have emphasized the role of black Jamaicans in the abolition of slavery. Further, at issue here was a clash of class-related understandings not just of aesthetics (Bourdieu 1984), but also of historical causality. Complaints about the seeming “passivity” of the figures reflected an underlying concern with agency. The prayer-like posture seemed, to many, to evoke the idea that British policy-makers, influenced by the moral arguments of abolitionists, bestowed emancipation upon passive Jamaicans. It did not, in other words, symbolically represent slaves taking their own freedom by burning fields or running away. As prayerful supplicants, the statues instead portrayed the newly liberated slaves as innocent children entering a new life as freed people with unencumbered hearts and bodies, a portrayal that also stemmed from the class paternalism commentators decried. Moreover, underlying people’s discomfort with the statues’ nudity was their own critique of primitivism—not only were they certain that as rebels torching sugar estates or runaways forming maroon communities, it is unlikely that slaves would have been naked, but they were also convinced that had the figures been representing middle-class “brown” Jamaicans, they would have been clothed.

It is worth noting here that the bulk of the nudity discussions focused on the male figure. This is in part because the black female body is always a public body, always visible, always metaphorically naked. As we saw in the case of the virginity testing and sterilization proposals, it was the black female body that was open to a policy gaze. The kinds of gendered reformist projects I discussed earlier present female bodies to be controlled, tested, and sterilized, while they render the black male body invisible. Black female teenagers should undergo virginity testing, black women should be sterilized, but the black men who are also integral to sex and reproduction are hardly mentioned or sanctioned. This silence, in effect, covers up the male body. But with “Redemption Song,” the male body was in full view, laid bare to speculation and controversy, and its presence in the public sphere raised up a storm. Thus the statue, which both emerged from and generated “crisis” discourse

having to do with notions of cultural citizenship, publicly exposed the double standard regarding gendered bodies found in many of the letters that protested the virginity testing proposal. It did so by making the black male body the center of debate. Yet, the crisis discourse that centers the black female body when the objective is control and nation building is undergirded by the same logic as the crisis discourse that centers the black male body when the objective is representation. The two cases, then, provide a kind of negative image for each other.

As well, the debates about virginity testing and the Emancipation statue revealed something about what is important to Jamaicans transnationally. Because the Caribbean was initially developed in relation to global circulations that began to emerge in the late 15th century, and because migration has long been undertaken as a strategy for individual, familial, and national development, Jamaicanness far exceeds the "place" of Jamaica and, as I mentioned earlier, alternative visions of citizenship have challenged nationalist commonplaces regarding territorial rootedness and local authority. Indeed, Charles Carnegie has argued, "particular historical and structural conditions have produced cultural predispositions toward imagining community in global terms and enabled a matching cultural circuitry for building translocal images" (2002:80). Concerns about the figures' nudity and purported passivity resonated in a global sphere in part because of the daily humiliations faced by many Jamaicans in Diaspora as a result of racial discrimination and xenophobia. Thus, Jamaicans in Diaspora were moved to contribute to debates that solidified the place of Jamaica, even as that place exceeds its boundaries.

This is not new. Ever since the late 19th century, migratory Jamaicans have been central to the consolidation of diasporic nationalisms. Initially, Jamaican men traveled beyond the country's shores to build the Panama Canal, to construct railroads or work in the emerging banana industry in Costa Rica, to develop Cuba's sugar industry after World War I, and, after 1943, to perform various kinds of agricultural labor in the United States. As a result of these intra-regional and international circulations, at any given moment during the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, an average of one-quarter of the working-age male population was "in foreign." While migrated men often faced racial and class subordination abroad, the experience of migration and participating in a regional labor force also provided them with access to a wider range of ideas and experiences than those locally rooted in Jamaica.<sup>5</sup> Panama, Costa Rica, and Cuba were fields that bred many new leaders within Jamaican popular movements such as Marcus Garvey, Alexander Bedward, and the three founders of the Rastafari movement. It was not only popular leaders, however, who were politicized by their migratory experiences, but also middle class Jamaicans, especially those who landed in the Jim Crow United States (James 1998; Watkins-Owens 1996). For many of these Jamaicans, it was their first experience of an arbitrary racial discrimination that was unmitigated by their educational and

social status (as it would have been at home). The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 also catalyzed an increased sense of ethnic, racial, and pan-Caribbean identification among West Indians in the United States. In fact, the first Jamaican nationalist organization was founded in 1936 not in Jamaica but in New York City, the main port of entry for the first wave of West Indian migrants who were not agricultural laborers.

While women did not figure as migrants as extensively as men until the late 20th century, their working lives were also changing during this period, as the fragmentation of rural holdings during the last two decades of the 19th century led many women to leave agricultural work (where they predominated until the 1880s) to seek other employment avenues. Meanwhile, the development of the banana industry in the late-19th century catalyzed the growth of a middle class, which itself created a demand for new services, including domestic work. When domestic service work was at its peak in 1943, many rural women migrated to urban areas to seek jobs within this industry. As maids within middle-class households, these newly urban women were confronted with a considerably diminished autonomy, and were also subjected more directly to class and racial discrimination (Austin-Brooks 1997). This restructuring disadvantageously incorporated black lower-class women more squarely within colonial hierarchies of color, class, gender and culture in terms that devalued their customary political, economic, and socio-cultural roles.

While the emergent nationalist movement in Jamaica attempted to forge a local sense of Jamaicanness that, despite struggling against these hierarchies, nevertheless reproduced aspects of colonial racial and gender ideologies (in part, through its emphasis on the domestication of women's work and its consolidation of middle class authority and leadership), many working- and middle-class Jamaicans were increasingly developing a diasporic consciousness that not only provided the potential for organized "political" movements from multiple loyalties and locations, but also generated a notion of Jamaican culture and economy that spanned territorial borders. These two different visions of community would struggle for supremacy throughout the second half of the 20th century, and this struggle also shaped public discourse around the controversies I outline here.

Ironically, while several commentators ended up noting with great disappointment that a statue meant to unite the population had actually divided it, in a way, the statue did unite Jamaicans—but not in the way many would have anticipated. Instead, Jamaicans were united in a common conversation about the sorts of images that should appropriately reflect Jamaicanness. It provided a venue through which people recreated the space of the nation, and insisted on the legitimacy of the nation-state in the face of a global situation they feel increasingly powerless to transform. That this was a unity that was not harmonious is clear.

The divisions that haunt Jamaican society—not only “on the rock” and in the Diaspora, but also between those “on the rock” and those in Diaspora—are always lurking not too far beneath the surface. As a result, they are ready to publicly erupt in response to provocations big and small, and especially, as I have noted, during periods when significant transformations in labor practices force a renegotiation of the relationships between nationalist consolidation and global political and economic trends. The public debates that raged about nudity, racial agency, gender relations and sex that were instantiated through the proposals for virginity testing and embodied by the emancipation monument reconstituted and concretized Jamaican specificity even as they seemed to reflect its dissolution, addressing the most pressing issues facing Jamaicans today. They were about the place of racial respect in relation to nationhood.

### Conclusions

I have used the term “racial respect” here as a kind of counterpart to respectability, intentionally invoking the anthropological work on cultural duality that emerged in the 1970s, just as the hopefulness generated by the political independence of many Caribbean territories began to wane. Cultural duality has been one of the dominant tropes through which researchers have identified central tensions within Afro-Caribbean societies. Because Peter Wilson’s ethnography of Providencia (1973) positioned values at the heart of his analytic model, and cultural duality as the definitive core of the social system, his account is, in many ways, both the most seminal early ethnography of West Indian cultural duality and the most contested. His argument was that Caribbean societies should be approached and analyzed according to two opposed themes—beliefs—value systems: reputation and respectability. He contended that these two systems lived in the structure of these societies and also within the minds of individuals, and that they provided the basis upon which social roles were evaluated.

Respectability, as Wilson defined it and as I have been using it throughout this essay, is rooted in the system of stratification imposed by the old colonial social order. It was reproduced through the teachings of the colonial church, and was associated with “whiteness,” British culture, and formal authority. Reputation, on the other hand, was defined as the response to colonially-induced dependence. It was egalitarian, “black,” and based upon individual achievement measured by and against the performance of one’s peers. As such, reputation was seen as a leveling device within systems where socioeconomic mobility was rare for more than the very few. However, Wilson argued, because reputation was a solution to the scarcity of respectability, its realization sometimes involved acts that, in the view of the

respectable, were anti-social or characteristic of poor illiterate people. He maintained that the conflict between respectability and reputation was a dialectical struggle that took place between whole groups and in the minds of single individuals, and that it was resolved differently at different moments in the life cycle. Moreover, he argued that lower class recognition of middle-class respectable values was as much a part of the tension between the two systems as was their far more frequent rejection of those values in practice (Sutton 1974).

Wilson also claimed that women were more concerned with respectability and men with reputation, and that therefore men and women participated in different, though overlapping, value systems. In fact, he alleged that because women enjoyed preferred status during slavery, they were more committed to an "alien value system" (1973:148). The evidence he provided for these claims revolved around the different ways men and women socialized publicly. In his ethnography, women's social lives centered on the church and kinship networks while men's were based in friendship crews. Finally, Wilson argued that the system of reputation, because it championed equality and therefore embodied the "true" nature of Caribbean societies, could (and should) become the dominant system through, for example, women's eschewal of colonial values and educational curriculum reform.

Critiques of Wilson's formulation have been copious. Several scholars have argued that by misreading the sexual division of labor that arose on the plantations, and by focusing only on the male response to colonial domination and locating the production of counter-cultural values in male activities, Wilson was unable to see that women also engaged in activities and held values that were independent of, and often opposed to, those represented by the dominant colonial system (Besson 1993; Sutton 1974).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, because Wilson's study did not address how relationships between ideology and social structure changed over time, it missed the role of power and economic dependence in shaping the overall social system, and therefore developed a limited (and reactionary) perspective on the role of the church, education, and marriage in people's lives (Sutton 1974). As a result, he wrote about the two value systems as if they were freely selected by social actors, instead of examining the ways the two systems were integrated into a single cultural order, as well as how power relations between men and women were tied to structures of both meaning and hierarchy (Douglass 1992; Yelvington 1995).

Notwithstanding Wilson's significant mis-reading of both the history of West Indian gender relations and the ways the material and ideological dimensions of peoples' lives are constituted by—and constitutive of—these relations, his attempt to demonstrate how duality operated at both the individual and societal level remains key to understanding the political implications of black lower-class cultural practices and aesthetics. A more rigorous examination of how gender, race, and class articulate to form a single social field in Jamaica, however, would require

that we situate his concern with nation building within a global frame of reference, both historically and in the present. Within the context of mid-20th century nationalism, privatizing women and cultivating respectability within the domestic sphere was part of a more general concern with state formation and development. During the post-World War II period, when the nation was extolled as the most sovereign and modern form of social organization, this concern with state formation was, by extension, a push toward cultivating respect within an international public sphere.

Jamaican nationalisms at the beginning of the 21st century, however, are no longer primarily rooted in this kind of vindicationist respectability. In part, this is because the influence of the sector of the professional middle classes who gained state power at independence as cultural and political brokers in the lives of poorer Jamaicans began to decline after the 1960s. By the mid-1990s, the intensification of transnational migration and the increased political, economic, and social influence of the United States had created a situation in which many black Jamaicans were able to bypass middle class leadership, reaching their goals instead by capitalizing on newly developed niche industries, and on their own networks of family and friends in Jamaica and beyond. These shifts have bolstered the autonomy of working-class Jamaicans, giving them relatively greater ability to eschew conventional middle class modes of respectability and to define progress through their own cultural idioms and innovations (Robotham 2000; Thomas 2004).

Yet the righting of old racial wrongs is still a critical concern because it is unfinished, and it is a concern that is expressed through the idiom of respect—itself a term of address among working class Jamaicans that asserts a shared (and equal) humanity. The respect that is sought here is the recognition that processes of racialization have been integral to the elaboration of ideologies concerning gender and humanity (or the lack thereof), that imperialism and racial ordering have shaped global movements past and present, and that conceptualizations of citizenship have been both imagined and institutionalized in racial terms, terms that themselves emerge from and create configurations of class, gender, and sexuality. In other words, “respect” would entail a validation of racial subjects still confronted with the legacies of slavery and colonialism, and the recognition of the integrity and legitimacy of a class-coded set of cultural practices and values that diverge from those “respectable” practices that have been (and in many cases, still are) promulgated by political and cultural elites, middle-class professionals, and most religious communities as the proper foundation for citizenship. As the plethora of letters from Jamaicans in Diaspora decrying the virginity testing and sterilization proposals and complaining about “Redemption Song” suggests, this respect is all the more urgently necessary in the contemporary moment in which “Jamaica”

evokes stereotypically gendered and racialized expectations related to service, tourism, and the drug trade.

On one hand, therefore, globalization has generated an increased power in the public sphere for lower-class black Jamaicans to define cultural citizenship on their own terms. The decline in the strength of the creole nationalist state has diminished the power of its disciplinary domesticating arm. Popular cultural norms, values, and practices have therefore taken greater space in many national imaginaries, marking a refusal of class paternalism and a decline in the hegemony of respectability paradigms as the arbiters of modern progress. In Jamaica, this has dislodged the centrality of particular configurations of social value that maintained rigid links between color, class, and cultural capital. Yet, the contemporary global situation exerts a different kind of discipline with different effects that are often discussed in terms of "crisis." The decreased ability of the Jamaican state to meet the social, educational, and occupational needs of its citizens has articulated with the reassertion of racial hierarchies internally and national hierarchies globally, hierarchies that are still acutely experienced as part of an old global imperial order that, rather than waning, has actually intensified (Sassen 2000; Trouillot 2001). Because racial hierarchies have not disappeared, and because racial discrimination is still acutely felt not only at individual but also structural levels, racial vindication is still as critical a project as it was when DuBois identified the "color line" as the twentieth century's most important "problem." That this is a project that is implemented in complex and diverse ways—ways that often confound analysts and activists alike—reflects not only the persistence of racial distrust, but also a changed generational vision, one in which "uplift" is often felt to be as constraining as "downpression."

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Here, I am thinking, in particular, about the insightful work done by Ann Stoler (1989, 2002), Partha Chatterjee (1989), Aihwa Ong (1990), M. Jaqui Alexander (1991, 1997), Andrew Parker et al. (1991), Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón and Mino Moallem (1999), and Diana Taylor (1997). For an excellent early review essay on gender and state formation, see Silverblatt 1991; more recent work includes Rofel 1999; Abu-Lughod 2004, Navaro-Yashin 2002.

<sup>2</sup>For a cogent review of the literature on the theoretical shifts within studies of West Indian family and kinship practices, see Barrow 1996, 1998.

<sup>3</sup>This inscription was subsequently removed because Facey Cooper had not sought copyright permission to use Marley's lyrics from the song "Redemption Song," recorded in 1980 for the album *Uprising*, distributed by Island Records.

<sup>4</sup>That a poll should have been conducted regarding the possibility of removing the statue was not surprising, given that there has been precedent for this kind of action. In 1981, the Jamaican government commissioned artist Christopher Gonzales to create a statue commemorating reggae icon Bob Marley. Just before its unveiling in 1982, Gonzales' statue, which represented Marley emerging from tree roots, was removed because it was "criticized as an inaccurate and an 'inappropriate' representation of the renowned musician both by members of Marley's family and by members of the public" (Mains 2004:189). The government then commissioned "a safer and 'more realistic' piece" (Mains 2004:189) designed by Alvin Marriott to stand outside the National Stadium, and Gonzales's work found a home first within the National Gallery, and later at music mogul Chris Blackwell's north coast beach development, Island Village.

<sup>5</sup>By arguing this, I do not mean to suggest that a more global exchange of ideas *began* in the late nineteenth century, as instances of prior cross-territorial interactions between people of African descent are well documented. For example, black Baptists from the Thirteen Colonies were among the thousands of black loyalists and slaves who arrived in Jamaica toward the end of the American Revolution (Pulis 1999), and Haitians were among those advocating for colored Jamaicans' political rights after emancipation (Heuman 1981). What was different about these interactions at the turn of the twentieth century was their scale.

<sup>6</sup>Dan Miller has advanced a similar argument based on his ethnographic research in Trinidad (1994). He suggests that it is equally plausible to locate reputation in the influences of the colonial power, and particularly in the leisure activities of colonial males—what he calls the "culture of mistresses" (1994:263). In this view, he argues, a female-centered search for a respectability based on the formation of stable descent groups with long-term ambitions for family development and the cultivation of property are true markers of resistance given the history of slavery. Though this analytical possibility is seductive, it maintains the problematic assumption that women and men are associated with mutually exclusive spheres of social life.

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