# Positive Vibration?: Capitalist Textual Hegemony and Bob Marley

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This paper addresses the transmutation of popular Caribbean music as a direct consequence of its transnationalisation, meaning here its movement beyond its regional source of creative origin under the corporate, capitalist auspices of multinational record companies. It is implicitly asserted that the analytical criteria usually applied only to scribal texts are equally relevant to the contextual interpretation of music. The paper is largely concerned with issues of power and ideology which determine recorded aural textual and cultural representation. The corporate manipulation of Bob Marley's music, and the aesthetic and political implications of its Western cooptation for the contemporary Caribbean are discussed in this context. One of the principal propositions is that the transformative impact of international record industry capitalism on the articulation and representation of the Caribbean musical text has been grossly underestimated within the region. Accounts of major market penetration frequently celebrate increased commercial stature by displacing it from stark capitalist contexts and realities which often counterbalance its positive potentialities. The industry's impact is characterised by a

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consolidation of Western cultural imperialism through commoditisation of Caribbean music, and the application of the resultant economic profits to sustain the hegemonic imbalance in the global political economy[1] thereby reinforcing Caribbean marginalisation.

Such marginalisation is characterised by an acute lack of political influence in global decision-making fora, and enormous economic dependency upon international financial institutions which undermines Caribbean sovereignty and autonomy. Its cultural facet involves, among other elements, undue reliance on Western arbiters regarding the value and representation of regional creativity.

Before assessing Bob Marley's work in the context of the global recording industry's capitalism and cultural influence, some functional definitions of «text» and «hegemony» are essential. References here to the aural text of music are not limited solely or specifically to its lyrical constituents and their various possible meanings, but primarily the instrumental framework within which the lyrics exist and are articulated. It is argued here that the overall textual character of music is determined by the variable foregrounding and subsumption of creative elements in the recorded representation.

The references to Gramsci's concept of hegemony in this paper generally apply to sociopolitical circumstances in which subordinate classes appear to actively support

> and subscribe to values, ideals, objectives, cultural meanings, which bind them to, incorporate them into, the prevailing power structure.[2]

Consequently, the subordinated ultimately consent to the existing social system since the dominant classes achieve a naturalisation of «systems of class relations.»[3] Hegemonic theory, however, transcends analyses of class division and polarisation. As has been critically observed, Gramsci's great contribution to the study of culture is the understanding that culture is inseparable from relationships of power.»[4] His cognisance of the inextricable connectivity between representations of power is echoed in Ngugi's contention that

> for a full comprehension of the dynamics, dimensions and workings of a society, any society, the cultural aspects cannot be seen in total isolation from the economic and political ones.[5]

The ramifications for the emergence and maintenance of Caribbean musical counter-discourse are serious since hegemony suggests that

«conflict is contained and channelled into ideologically safe harbours.»[6] In the context of popular music, the Gramscian model identifies hegemony functioning as undisguised cultural co-optation disarming textual incisiveness:

> ...the attempt would be made simply to incorporate the music safely within the domains of leisure and recreation. With the music thus contained, any progressive edge of subversive meaning would become background to the dominant (ideological) functions of popular music —entertainment and relaxation in the service of consumerism and the reproduction of labour power. In the extreme, the idea of revolution itself would become a mere posture in the hegemonic landscape.[7]

So through cultural hegemony, the revolutionary potential of music is defused by the inherently capitalist ideologies of the transnational record industry.[8] The superstructural (ideological) implications of Gramsci's formulation and their direct relationship to the structure (economy) will be strongly emphasised in this paper. «Authenticity» as applied here, relates to the original form of artistic representation by the creator of the work. The term is not used here to impose monolithic, static or one-dimensional parameters upon Caribbean cultural expression. While the innate eclectic fusion which gave birth to reggae is acknowledged, external cultural and economic forces are identified as reducing the congruence of the internationally commodified form with its root components.

Much appears to have been taken for granted regarding the career and work of Bob Marley which seemingly subsumes possibilities for critical reassessments and alternative readings. Basically, many of us unquestioningly accept his iconic status without considering that economic and cultural forces external to his creative instinct have exerted enormous influence on his musical representation and expression. As Carolyn Cooper suggests, «Raw talent would not have been enough without the operations of international capital.»[9]

This paper does not seek to diminish Marley's considerable commercial and artistic achievements. It does attempt, however, to employ his work as exemplifying and establishing precedents for the mass-market commodification of Caribbean culture in the global recording industry.[10] It also attempts to deconstruct some myths of artistic and ideological purity which often characterise retrospective analyses of Marley's work, and impede evaluation in broader contexts. While this paper represents

an indictment of Western entertainment capitalism and not of Marley, it challenges arguably unbalanced previous accounts of his career by emphasising the economic context within which his creativity flourished.

It is being asserted here that Island Records' presentation of Marley and his work since 1972 features highly significant instances of textual reconfiguration, dictated by Western capitalist imperatives, which have intervened in the articulation and representation of the original cultural texts.[11]

Implicit here and throughout this paper is the idea that even explicitly counter-hegemonic texts —such as Marley's— are not immune to ideological mediation and defusion by the capitalist forces which facilitate their access to discourse. As Cushman suggests, «In its diffusion, reggae music was transformed from a form of cultural criticism into a cultural commodity.»[12] Furthermore, in this industry based on economic power, a relationship exists between such commodification and ideological appropriation. Hence,

> understanding the political economy of the music business is essential for an understanding of popular music and there is a rough correspondence between the «commercialisation» of popular music and its «cooptation.»'[13]

Paul Gilroy describes the general approach of Island Records, and in particular its head, Chris Blackwell, towards the representation of black musicians in the Western market, suggesting that «having adjusted their music and image to the expectations of white rock audiences» the company proceeded to «sell them as pop stars. The example of Bob Marley provides the most acute illustration.»[14]

The very signing in 1971 of the Wailers to Island was based not only on a desire to broaden reggae's audience, but was «an attempt to anticipate trends in the rock market....»[15] Thus, they were signed largely on the basis of Western market conditions. Moreover, reggae was at this time a singles-based medium, whereas the Western market was dominated by the album format. In order to achieve textual conformity for reggae, Blackwell spearheaded its movement from individual short-story mode to cohesive narrative compilation, based on long-term capital oriented goals. Simon Jones explains that

> Blackwell's decision to market reggae as an album music and to establish the Wailers as more profitable transnational artists heavily

> shaped the production and packaging of the Wailer's debut LP for Island *Catch a Fire*.[16]

He also sought to establish a group image and consciousness in reggae where none had previously existed. He was, in effect, channelling the Wailers to conform to Western market dictates in the manner most likely to generate capital. Most significantly, Blackwell's role in the album's post-production, according to Davis, saw him «emerge as interpreter and translator of Bob Marley's prophetic music to the world at large.»[17]

From the outset, Blackwell determined to culturally and commercially recontextualise the Wailers music (and image), perceiving that to achieve broad-based multi-market crossover, reggae «would have to be produced,promoted and packaged like any other pop or rock music.»[18] Thus, in this sense, the group was to become culturally homogenised. Notably, the seemingly anomalous retention of the group's explicitly political messages was in fact wholly congruent with Blackwell's commercial objectives, involving exploitation of their rebellious image.[19] So for several reasons, *Catch a Fire* was «arguably the most important album in reggae music»[20] at the time, and significant for Caribbean music generally.

The original recordings for 1972's *Catch a Fire* took place in Kingston, Jamaica, performed and mixed by the Wailers themselves. But this original representation became subject to textual reconfiguration in London under the supervision of Blackwell, who sanctioned and personally conducted remixing and editing of the Kingston sessions, including the recording of overdubs. The material was deemed inappropriate for the white audience towards which the album was to be commercially directed, thus necessitating the textual editing which arguably weakened the creative authenticity of the work by introducing musical statements divorced from its cultural context. According to Hebdige, Blackwell

> brought Marley's voice forward and toned down the distinctive bass. He also added some flowing rock guitar riffs recorded by British session men to the original tape.[21]

The transformation brought about by Blackwell was not merely a minor, cosmetic modification, but a reformulation of the text of reggae in which the elements considered most appealing to the Western rock audience were foregrounded at the expense of its primary Afro-

Caribbean characteristics. The overdubs and other post-production surgery performed on the original Jamaican tracks ignored any necessity for retaining a holistic textual authenticity. Jones suggests that

> As part of this process, session musicians were brought in to overdub rock guitar, tabla and synthesizer parts over the Wailers' music. In addition, Blackwell accelerated the speed of the Wailers basic rhythm tracks by one beat, thinking that a quicker tempo might enhance the music's appeal to rock fans. Afro-American influenced rhythms and back-up vocals were also employed to lend a «cosmopolitan» flavour to the music.[22]

The textual difference of *Catch a Fire* in transcending the traditionally featured elements of Jamaican music is succinctly identified by Anglo-Jamaican dub poet, Linton Kwesi Johnson. He suggests that through the Wailers debut «a whole new style of Jamaican music had come into being. It has a different character, a different sound... what I can only describe as 'International Reggae.'»[23] While acknowledging the creation of an internationally marketable hybrid form of reggae with its eclectic incorporations, Johnson does not evince awareness of the direct textual intervention implemented by Blackwell. He does, however, clearly identify the significant textual departures of the Western representation of the work on *Catch a Fire* from the established tenets of reggae recording doctrine. He observes that

> Instead of concentrating exclusively on a bottom-heavy sound with the emphasis on drum and bass, you had on this record more of a "toppy" mix, a lighter sound. The emphasis is more on the guitar and other fillers. On no other Jamaican reggae recording... was such a clear cut attempt made to incorporate the modern electronic sounds of metropolitan music.[24]

Despite initially low sales for this debut album —only 14,000 copies in England —the post-production established a mode of representation characterising Marley's career with Island in which «The addition and remixing of instruments became a permanent feature of Island's production of all the group's subsequent albums.»[25]

A benchmark for the extent of textual reconfiguration which manifested itself on the Wailers' Island debut is the response of the group's hard-core Jamaican fans, many of whom reportedly «felt that *Catch a Fire's* murky gloss represented a sellout to a Babylonian music cartel....»[26]

The events surrounding this album raise concerns regarding the actual extent of Marley's participation in the textual reorganisation of his work, both then and subsequently. He was reportedly present during the guitar overdubs for *Catch a Fire*, and the overall reshaping of the project appears to have been at least partially collaborative.[27] If, then, Marley actively participated in commercial revision of his reggae texts to enhance internationalisation, economic incentives must certainly have figured prominently, and issues of cultural cooptation resurface even in this context of apparent artistic empowerment. Despite Marley's collaborative input on *Catch a Fire* and probable inclination toward a degree of creative compromise, it is being argued here that the ultimate *economic* power to determine the commodified recorded textual representation rested with Blackwell and was hegemonically exercised to great long-term effect.

A highly pronounced instance of ideological divergence between artistic and commodified representation in Marley's career surrounds the 1974 album, *Natty Dread*. The album was actually originally titled *Knotty Dread*, and the implications which emerge from the conceptual differences between the two titles acutely delineate both the pronounced distance between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic positions, and the power dynamics of the Western record industry. While linguistic questions might be raised regarding the probable aural indistinguishability in Jamaican parlance between «knotty» and «natty,» it is the significance of the word choice in the context of its international commodified representation from which cultural and ideological distinction arises.

The original title of this third Island album by Bob Marley was taken from the Wailers' Jamaican 45 release and, moreover, was conceptually rooted within Jamaica's sociocultural context, as seen by Marley.

> The word «knotty» implied for Bob a wild jungle Rastaman, a natural, thoughtful man... Knotty was *dread*, a cultural agent provocateur, spreading psychic terror through Jamaican society....[28]

> «Knotty» implied a sense of uncompromising Rasta militancy and race-consciousness symbolised by the extolling of locks.[29]

The title's alteration to «the more ambiguous Natty Dread... involved a subtle, but critical, shift in meaning.»[30] The contextual change effected cooptation premised on blatantly commercial considerations.

> To Bob, as he told a friend, the word 'natty' described some Rasta in a nice new cream serge suit with well-groomed locks, not the ropey street locksmen that Bob knew.[31]

> «Natty» had connotations of «hip» style and being «fashionable» in white parlance.[32]

In effect, the «dreadness» of the album title, like the music itself, was made by Chris Blackwell more culturally compatible with Western norms and became ideologically diluted by this mediation process. Despite the fact that the change of album title was a complete shock to Marley, he merely considered it one among many undesirable, but inescapable vagaries of the music business. Nonetheless, a potently anti-establishment statement in the original title became a harmless affirmation of the status quo, typifying a process whereby «cultural texts directed against dominant classes and groups come to serve as legitimate promoters of interests of dominant classes and groups....»[33]

*Natty Dread* was also notable for its highly commercial content, with the hit «No Woman, No Cry» described by one critic as «a love-song aimed directly at the pop charts....»[34] While Marley also witnessed the overdub procedures on this album, Chris Blackwell maintained his supervisory status, determining the textual reconstruction.[35]

The Wailers' fifth Island album release, *Rastaman Vibration*, drew responses which underscored the general incongruity of commercial success with critical acceptance and provoked further considerations of Western textual influence. Commercially it was a major success in both the United States and England, where remarkably large advance orders were registered.[36] But Davis suggests —perhaps controversially —that the 1976 release «was also the first Wailers album to be widely considered disappointing by Wailers fans.... [T]he new album seemed unmilitant, formulaic and a little contrived.»[37] While most of the album eschewed overtly political discourse, others perhaps felt that the political significance of «War», which utilised the text of a 1968 speech by Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, was adequate recompense for the album's overwhelming commerciality. Nonetheless, the clear implication here is that the textual character of Marley's work had altered in a manner which privileged Western economic imperatives. As Jones points out,

> Albums such as *Exodus*, *Kaya* and *Uprising* included a greater proportion of love-songs and softer melodies designed to appeal to the widest audience possible.[38]

Although these albums were not entirely dominated by romantic themes, the presence of even three or four such songs in a Marley collection starkly contrasted the greater concentration on overtly political concerns in the early albums. The love songs and lighter material assumed an even greater prominence through being released as singles.[39]

Thus, Marley's commercialisation effected a form of narrative discontinuity from the themes and mood characterising his earlier textual articulation. Negative reaction to *Kaya*, which was notably mixed like a rock record, appears to have been particularly strong. Davis suggests that the album's ten tracks recorded in London had been remixed into a mellow pastiche of love songs and easy-skanking dance tunes, with barely a hint of Bob Marley's familiar defiance and rebellion. Bob Marley was widely accused of going soft and selling out.[40]

Marley explained the dominance of *Kaya's* «themes of love, doubt and dance» by pointing towards an intentional avoidance of both the appearance of profiting by exploiting mass social suffering, and of thematic stasis.[41] Seen in the context of the then recent assassination attempt on Marley, one might also posit that he avoided creating more enemies by temporarily sidestepping overtly political issues. In addition, the romantic emphases of both *Exodus* and *Kaya* were influenced by Bob's ongoing extra-marital relationship with the 1976 Miss World, Cindy Breakspeare.[42] The criticisms of sentimentality and commercialism levelled at Marley over *Kaya* are seen by one critic as typically dichotomous for «international artists who at the outset demonstrate any degree of public commitment to political and cultural consciousness.»43

The expansion of Marley's thematic focus during this phase in which formerly marginal love concerns were made more central raises several questions. Prominent among these are the extent to which commercial factors might have influenced this development, and the actual gender implications of his lyrical texts exploring the politics of love relationships.

Although this emphasis may not have been a premeditated commercial strategy, it undoubtedly broadened Marley's audience by counterbalancing overtly political intensity with less disturbing and challenging, even innocuous matters. Hence, the nature of this focal shift enhanced Marley's marketability by capitalising on his own aura of sexual potency, making his image as applicable to amorous conquest as it was to sociopolitical rebellion. The immediate commercial success of *Uprising* versus the moderate sales of its thoroughly politically

focused 1979 predecessor *Survival* illustrates the market value of such duality.[44]

The Euro-American audience has continually demonstrated a propensity for adopting reggae oriented material on the basis of its aesthetically pleasing surface qualities rather than for explicitly political content. A cursory survey of the hegemonic landscape reveals that major chart successes by reggae artists and pseudo-reggae songs by white pop artists utilise elements of the music's syntax while simultaneously divorcing it from the political polemics of Rastafari.[45] Under these circumstances, the emergence of love issues in Marley's texts accomodated the commercial conditioning of the Western audience.

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As Cooper notes, Marley displays a notable ambivalence to the female figure in songs from *Exodus*, *Kaya*, and *Uprising*.[46] His lyrical characterisations range from positive partnership in love's oneness («Is This Love») to indictment of slavish indulgence in life's carnal and material pleasures («Pimper's Paradise»). Ultimately, the revolutionary nature of Marley's political lyrics is not similarly reflected in his consideration of love relationships which seems to signify maximum commerciality in his career.

Gilroy offers an interesting defence of Marley's commercialisation, suggesting that there was a conscious cross-cultural and black diasporic imperative guiding his acceptance of manipulation by the transnational record industry. He states that

> There are good reasons to support the view that this foray into pop stardom was a calculated development in which he was intimately involved, having realised that the solidification of communicative networks across the African diaspora was a worthwhile prize. The minor adjustments in presentation and form that rendered his reggae assimilable across the cultural borders of the overdeveloped countries were thus a small price to pay.[47]

But Gilroy's proposition that Marley's commercial acquiescence was guided solely by a long-term agenda of achieving diasporic unity is surely only a partial representation of the scenario. The capitalist bases of the record industry and the economic fruits reaped by both Island and Marley in consequence of the music's assimilability are wholly de-emphasised in Gilroy's critique.

Furthermore, the autonomy of Chris Blackwell in making major creative and marketing decisions seems incongruent with ideas of Marley being «intimately involved» in either the textual or promotional (as opposed to compositional) strategies which secured his market success. As has been demonstrated earlier, the textual reconfigurations were hardly «minor adjustments.» This is not to suggest that Marley was somehow blissfully unaware of record industry politics, but his recognition of prevailing circumstances does not appear to have translated itself into efforts to control representation beyond the stage of basic recording.

There is little evidence to dispel the impression, iterated by Davis, that Island supervised the production of «Marley's music for the international marketplace with a crispness and precise attention to detail that some complained was robbing the Wailer's reggae of some of its raw spontaneity and soul.»[48]

The posthumous phase of Western corporate promotion of Marley's work is characterised by an astutely calculated raiding of the vaults for previously unreleased material. Island seized upon at least five albums worth of unissued songs which are still being exploited as a means of extending economic gains by sustaining and mythologising Marley's musical status as a legend.[49] Even the release of material which Marley had considered unsuitable for public exposure is unpreventable, since the Western publication of these texts is facilitated through its economically-based cultural imperialism.

Of the many posthumous releases, the most significant in the context of this paper is also the most comprehensive Marley compilation to date, *Songs of Freedom*, released in August 1993, and particularly noteworthy for the inclusion of three previously unreleased songs said to have been «discovered in the private vaults of Rita Marley....»[50] (This scenario interestingly mirrors the «lost tapes marketing strategy» employed in the posthumous corporate exploitation of Jimi Hendrix, whose music heavily influenced at least one of Marley's guitarists, and Bob himself).[51] One of these three songs, the single «Iron Lion Zion,» recorded in the early

70's, has been substantially and controversially remixed in a manner which removes it from its original temporal context in an attempt to inconspicuously transplant it into the Nineties.

Remarks in a recently published interview with former and original Wailers member, Bunny Wailer, illuminate Island's perennial textual strategy of reformulating Marley's work, as represented in «Iron Lion Zion.» Bunny Wailer vigorously asserts that his vocals (as well as those of the late Peter Tosh) were on the original version of the song, but were subsequently removed from the final mix for *Songs of Freedom.* In reference to the newly «discovered» items, he states,

> those songs were Wailers songs that were there in the can because maybe Chris (Blackwell, head of Island Records) turned it down for the *Catch a Fire* album or something like that. And he just held them there and he just did what he did.[52]

Wailer further states that he created the vocal harmony arrangement for the song and that Island's deviation from the original representation is «totally illegal.»[53]

The circumstances of textual intervention surrounding «Iron Lion Zion» forcefully underscore the impression that both the release and reconfiguration of Marley's posthumous material is not motivated by benign, aesthetic considerations, but by strictly capitalist concerns (made even more apparent since Island's 1989 takeover by Dutch-based transnational Polygram, for over $300 million).[54] Even after the compilation of *Songs Of Freedom's* 78 songs, over 200 more Marley compositions and performances remain available for commercial exploitation, although «few of them could be classed as genuine unreleased rarities.»[55]

The central contradiction of reggae's commercial success through Bob Marley is poignantly highlighted by John Storey, who demonstrates how the counter-hegemonic stance of Rastafari in popular music fuels the hegemonic forces which facilitate its dissemination. He suggests that

> What we have here is a paradox in which the anti-capitalist politics of Rastafari are being «articulated» in the economic interests of capitalism: the music is lubricating the very system it seeks to condemn.[56]

Despite the adoption of an oppositional stance, «the politics of Rastafari are expressed in a form which is ultimately of financial benefit to the dominant culture (i.e as a commodity which circulates for profit).»[57]

Paradoxically, while reggae acts as a force for counter-hegemonic change, it simultaneously economically consolidates the power base of the status quo.[58]

In a more general and recent context this paradoxical position was inadvertently reiterated in remarks by a prominent Jamaican staffer at Sony Music (home of several dancehall performers including Shabba Ranks):

> People are beginning to see the power of this (reggae) music. To pull on a world economy with a product empowers the country. It's like having an oil well that the world is ready to pump.[59]

Note the alarming contradiction: The country (Jamaica) is theoretically empowered through the dissemination of its popular culture, yet it is the world which is extracting the «oil,» reaping the economic benefits. This raises serious quetions, which cannot be fully addressed here, about the implications of recent dancehall signings by major labels. The overall scenario reinforces the idea that «access to discourse is always linked to material —meaning in a capitalist global order, economic— power.»[60] What is being implemented by the record industry is an incorporative rather than exclusionary racism,[61] all the more lethal because it creates illusions of power which more easily defuse revolutionary potential.

Gilroy's assessment of Bob Marley, which was criticised earlier for its assumptions of conscious creative complicity in a cultural context understating capitalist imperatives, does nevertheless highlight important positive career achievements:

> Whatever the ambiguities in Marley's music and mode of presentation, he provided a heroic personality around which international mass marketing of reggae could pivot.
>
> By consolidating reggae's position on the charts outside novelty categories and becoming a star, Marley created a new space in pop.[62]

It must also be said that Marley's career was not marked by an uninterrupted, linear decline into lyrically and musically unconscious commercialism. The 1979 album, *Survival* strongly contradicts such a proposition in its incisive reiteration of the «compulsive unity of populist anti-imperialist politics and Rasta themes»,[63] and cohesive,

hard-edged music so characteristic of the early albums preceding Marley's commercial breakthrough. Thus with *Survival*, he achieved a *rapprochement* with the more militant segments of his audience, while simultaneously fulfilling the economic imperatives of the record company. As Garofalo suggests,

> commercial success and artistic quality are not mutually exclusive, nor does commercialisation necessarily preclude an artist from contributing to a culture of resistance.[64]

While Marley can be said to have made such a contribution, for which he has been described as «the most politically influential recording artist of the twentieth century»,[65] a general correlation may still be drawn between his commercial success and the dilution of his lyrical and musical militancy. Perhaps, though, his major achievement is the creation of an enduring musical message successful in conveying artistic, cultural and ideological meanings despite the extensive commoditisation which it has undergone.

Caribbean audiences usually view Bob Marley and his music as treasured cultural possessions, and the recorded representation of his work as authentic. While one can argue that in some sense this remains so, the persistent reformulation, amendment, and commercialisation of his music suggests that we have been listening to an alien, appropriated, inauthentic representation.

But, in conclusion, our principal consideration is whether the long-term political, cultural and economic implications and actual consequences of Bob Marley's career for Caribbean music constitute a sufficiently «positive vibration.» The argument embodied in this paper hopefully demonstrates that Caribbean people are being «remixed» out of autonomous cultural representation on the world stage, having creative exclamations defused and subsumed by a simultaneously foregrounded and historically resonant Western hegemonic agenda.

Transnational record industry exploitation of Caribbean music should not, therefore, be examined in isolation since it reinforces, at several levels, international power structures inimical to regional development and decolonisation. Gutzmore suggests that Chris Blackwell (to whom he deprecatingly refers as Whitesick) demonstrated «the ability to mobilise and manipulate African-Caribbean cultural and financial resources which flowed to Europeans....»[66]

While some analysts may contest what appears in this paper as neo-Marxist economic reductionism, and point to the simultaneous influence of other, less easily defined factors contributing to this transcultural phenomenon, the economic element remains pivotal in this discussion.

Thus, in considering the hegemonic power wielded by the Euro-American based record industry, there should be no underestimation of either the power of mixing differentials to reinterpret a musical text or of the assimilative aspect of cultural imperialism to transmogrify and reinscribe Caribbean cultural texts.

The seemingly paradoxical dominance of Western critical perspectives in this analysis occurs not as an oversight, but as a conscious means of compensating for the relative marginalisation of commodification consciousness in Caribbean cultural criticism. In any event, all observations drawn upon here are demonstrably evident upon individual textual and contextual analysis, and thus remain valid regardless of their geopolitical source.

# NOTES

1. Keith Negus, Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the *Popular Music Industry* (London: Edward Arnold 1992) 14.

2. John Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (Athens: U of Georgia P 1993): 119.

3. Thomas Cushman, «Rich Rastas and Communist Rockers: A Comparative Study Of the Origin, Diffusion and Defusion of Revolutionary Musical Codes,» *Journal of Popular Culture* 25.3 (1991) : 18-19.

4. William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America* (London: Verso, 1991) 10.

5. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Moving The Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*, (London: James Currey, 1993) xiv-xv.

6. Storey, 119.

7. Reebee Garofalo, «How autonomous is relative: popular music, the social formation and cultural struggle,» *Popular Music* 6.1 (1987) : 89.

8. Cushman discusses this phenomenon comprehensively in his article.

9. Carolyn Cooper, *Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender and the 'Vulgar' Body of Jamaican Popular Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1993): 5.

10. Simon Jones, *Black Culture, White Youth: The Reggae Tradition from JA to UK* (London: Macmillan, 1988): 61.

11. The Island era of reconfigured Marley material is predated by Johnny Nash's exploitation and dilution of several Marley songs on his 1971 hit album, *I Can See Clearly Now.* While the Wailers provided part of the instrumental backing, Marley's vocals were (naturally) not a feature of these texts. In addition, the final product which included many overdubs by session musicians on the Wailers basic contributions was reportedly considered by Marley to have been overproduced. Stephen Davis, *Bob Marley* (Vermont: Schenkman, 1990): 91, 98.

12. Cushman, 38.

13. Garofalo, 79.

14. Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black In The Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 169.

15. Jones, 62.

16. Jones, 63.

17. Davis, 99; Sebastian Clarke, *Jah Music: The Evolution of the Popular Jamaican Song* (London: Heinemann, 1980) 107.

18. Dick Hebdige, *Cut 'N' Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (London: Comedia, 1987): 79.

19. Hebdige, 79; Jones, 65.

20. Rebekah M. Mulvaney, *Rastafari and Reggae: A Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1990) 100.

21. Hebdige, 80; also see Davis, 104.

22. Jones, 64.

23. Davis, 109.

24. Davis, 109-110.

25. Jones, 64.

26. Davis, 118.

27. Timothy White, *Catch a Fire: The Life of Bob Marley* (New York: Henry Holt, 1992), 234, 236.

28. Davis, 138.

29. Jones, 65.

30. Jones, 65.

31. Davis, 138.

32. Jones, 65.

33. Cushman, 18.

34. Jones, 67; Paul Gilroy, «Steppin' out of babylon —race, class and autonomy,» Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70's Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982): 298.

35. Davis, 132.

36. Jones, 67; Davis, 163-164.

37. Davis, 163-164.

38. Jones, 67.

39. White, *Catch a Fire*, 336-340. This section of the Bob Marley Island discography illustrates both the frequency with which the «love songs and softer melodies» were released as singles, and their proportion on respective albums.

40. Davis, 196-197.

41 Davis, 197.

42. Davis 184-185, 196; White, *Catch a Fire*, 287.

43. Mulvaney, 101.

44. Davis, 228.

45. Cushman, 36; Lise Winer, «Intelligibility of Reggae Lyrics in North America: Dread In A Babylon,» *English World-Wide: A Journal of Varieties of English* 11.1 (1990) : 36. Cushman cites pop-reggae hits by Blondie, The Eagles, and especially The Police as examples of appropriation of the musical text minus its philosophical import. He also notes that newer reggae bands (e.g. Ziggy Marley & the Melody Makers) are «more often products of the Western culture industry....» (37).

46. Cooper, *Noises*, 127.

47. Gilroy, *Union Jack*, 169-170.

48. Davis, 211.

49. Davis, 254.

50. Melinda Newman, «Island Brings Out Marley Box In Style,» *Billboard* August 8, 1992 : 10. The album contains 78 songs recorded between 1962 and 1980.

51. John McDermott with Eddie Kramer, *Hendrix: Setting The Record Straight* (New York: Warner, 1992) 319; Davis, 132; Charles Shaar Murray, *Crosstown Traffic: Jimi Hendrix and post-war pop* (London: Faber, 1989): 96.

52. Bunny Wailer, interview with Roger Steffens, *The Beat* 12.3 (1993): 44.

53. Wailer interview, 44.

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