

SONGS OF FREEDOM: THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY AS TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

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Open your eyes and look within
Are you satisfied with the life you're living?
We know where we're going; we know where we're from
We're leaving Babylon, we're going to our fatherland.

■ Bob Marley, "Exodus", 1977

The music of Robert Nesta Marley, the late Jamaican musician who introduced both reggae music and Rastafarian religious beliefs to an international audience, combines a "feel good," slow-paced rhythm with a militant call for justice and freedom from oppression. Born in the lush countryside of Jamaica, he moved at a young age to the crushing squalor of Trench Town, one of Kingston, Jamaica's most hopeless "government yards" where he, like other "Rude Boys" abandoned formal education for the promise of the street gangs, only to discover music as his way out of life among the "sufferahs." Bob Marley has been called a prophet, a psalmist for the Rastafarian religion, an advocate for an African homeland for the descendants of slavery still struggling to develop a sense of identity in what he called "Babylon," a peace-maker, a trouble-maker, a musical genius, and the first Third World superstar. Marley was a complex man housed within an apparently simple guise. His speech sounded, to the uninitiated, like the ramblings of a "pothead" (ganja, or marijuana, was a part of both his religion and his philosophy), yet contained revelatory and revolutionary truth for those who had ears to hear. The brief quotation from his 1977 hit song, "Exodus" is a case in point: it calls the hearer to self-examination and self-development while also pointing metaphorically toward a vision of an African exodus from their exile in the "Babylon" of western slavery and oppression back to the "fatherland" of Africa.

Marley's music and lyrics were his ways of going about what he called "me Faddah's business." (White 2000, 306) He believed Jah (the Rastafarian name for God, which is shortened from the name Jehovah) gave him his music and that through this gift he was placed on the earth to call his people to work toward justice and freedom: "'It is not me say these things, it's God... if God hadn't given me a song to sing, I wouldn't have a song to sing.'" (Sheridan 1999, 80). His songs contain themes drawn from the Bible, from Jamaican folk-lore, from the African Diaspora, from the mean streets of Kingston, from the "superstitious" world of "Duppies" and "obeyahmen" (White 2000, 24), from a commitment to African unity, and, ultimately from a vision of One Love and One World.

The paper explores some of the ways Bob Marley used his musical voice to bring about change in the contentious, poverty-stricken world of post-colonial, newly independent Jamaica. He demonstrated how one can combine religious faith with political activism and militancy to transform the situation of some of the most desperate people in the Western world. His use of language, metaphor, rhythm, symbol, and even ritualized action became one of the most influential forces in popular music during the 1970s and early 1980s, not only in Jamaica and the Caribbean, but in Africa, New Zealand, Great Britain, and throughout the Third World. What is striking about the music of Bob Marley as transformative education is the variety of forms of resistance that can be identified in his lyrics, his musical form (reggae), and the message he delivered through this music to the disenfranchised of the world. As an organizing device for presenting Marley's music, Gregory K. Stephens' discussion of a "hybrid third space" of intersubjectivity and "mutually created language" will be employed (Stephens 1996, 4-5).

Creating Mutual Language

Gregory K. Stephens' dissertation, *On racial frontiers: the communicative culture of multiracial audiences* (presented to the University of California, San Diego in 1996), examines the functions of language and other forms of communication within multiracial communities. He uses Bob Marley's family background, the syncretism of Rastafarian religion, and Marley's music as illustrations of how this multiracial system of communication develops and functions. Stephens claims that multiracial or multicultural audiences engage in a form of *intersubjective* communication to achieve a "mutually created language" that allows understanding to emerge from the exchange of symbols and gestures. Referring to the work of R. Rommeveit, Stephens states, "Communication aims at transcendence of the 'private' worlds of the participants. It sets up what we might call 'states of intersubjectivity'." (4) These states of intersubjectivity, then, allow members of the audience to, at least temporarily, "transcend the trappings of their respective cultures" to hear each other by means of a new language through what he calls "the co-creation of a third space." (5)

I have argued elsewhere that a *hermeneutical community* is intersubjective in nature, and that the process of interpretation, whether of a text or of a conversation, consists of two partners in dialogue engaging not only the claims being made by each partner, but also engaging a shared subject matter to allow a new truth to emerge from the dialogue. (W. A. Smith 1993) The dialectical structure of Hegel's *thesis* engaging (and being engaged by) *antithesis* becomes the occasion for the emergence of *synthesis*, which is always something new: a "third space" that emerges from the intentional engagement of the two partners in dialogue. It is important to note that the emergence of this "third space" does not require, nor does it necessarily involve, the canceling out of the two dialogue partners. Rather, each partner is at least potentially changed as she or he sincerely engages in the process of understanding through the dialectical, intersubjective process.

Likewise, Stephens argues that the kind of multiracial communication he is addressing in the dissertation aims at developing what he calls "mutually created language" that is freed from the limitations that might come from two different cultures, each of which operates out of its own language and metaphorical system. (18) It is within this "third space," which transcends the

“private” and exclusive domains of the individual partners, that meaningful dialogue is possible. Such a “space” is not arrived upon easily; it requires a commitment to the other and to the kind of community that can nurture a sense of mutuality, respect, and listening. To paraphrase George W. Bush, “It’s hard work.”

This creation of a third, intersubjective “space” is characteristic of transformative education, which seeks to mediate shared experience, rather than engaging in what Stephens calls “mere instrumental coercion and domination.” (13) Jack Mezirow claims that discourse “requires only that participants have the will and readiness to seek understanding and to reach some reasonable agreement. Feelings of trust, solidarity, security, and empathy are essential preconditions for free full participation in discourse” and that this kind of discourse is constitutive of transformative education. (Mezirow 2000, 12)

Bob Marley’s religion, his increasingly militant commitment to freedom and justice, his bi-racial family background, his combination of “in your face,” challenging lyrics with easy, almost happy melodies, his blending of African, biblically based, and Rastafarian themes, were all devices employed in service of transformative education and creating a musical “hybrid third space” where freedom might be experienced. The next section of the paper describes Marley’s use of this means of communication and its role in transformative education.

The “Hybrid Third Space” in Bob Marley’s Music

A close examination of the “public” Bob Marley suggests a person who was intuitively aware of the power of symbol. He seemed to intentionally employ symbols of resistance in a variety of ways to communicate his belief that Jah had called him to bring about change on behalf of the suffering people of his native Jamaica; this original commitment eventually became extended to a commitment to liberation for all of the world’s oppressed citizens. Maureen Sheridan states, “Marley’s unfinished mission was to change the mindset of the poor and downtrodden, and lead his people to a better place.” (Sheridan 1999, 134) In this section of the paper, attention will be given to Marley’s religion, music, and lyrics/language, all of which make use of the creation of a “hybrid third space” that transcends the limitations of traditional communicative devices.

Rastafarian Religion as a “Third Space”

From around the age of eighteen years until the end of his thirty-seven years of life, Bob Marley was committed to Rastafarian religion. He was introduced to this distinctively Jamaican religion through two different sources of influence: a young, local singer named Rita Anderson, who became his wife in 1965, and Joe Higgs, who taught Marley and the other members of the original “Wailing Wailers” (“Bunny” Livingston and Peter [MacIn]Tosh) both the basics of musical harmony and Rastafarian principles. (White 2000, 150; Dawes 2002, 27; Sheridan 1999, 10) He later learned the “finer points” of the religion from Mortimo Planno. (Worth 1995, 39)

The roots of Rastafarian religion begin with the harsh realities of the Caribbean slave industry. Colonial Jamaica was a stratified society: white, mostly British expatriates controlled the country’s wealth and owned most of the land, while blacks (both native Jamaicans and African

slaves) provided the majority of the land's labor. The latter group brought with them an African world-view that was shaped by the horrors of slavery: "it is a faith rooted in a long tradition of resistance and hope that shaped the culture of Jamaica and the African diaspora." (Dawes 2002, 20) David Steven Worth claims Rastafarians "practice a religion which is the result of the long history of oppression of which they believe themselves to be the victims, African cultic practices, and Christianity." (Worth 1995, 1) But it was the memory of slavery that was constitutive of Jamaican self-identity:

The haunting legacy of slavery permeates every fiber of Jamaica's being. You can watch it in the walk, hear it in the talk and feel it in the feisty rhythms that blare from every street corner. It is the bottomless well from which almost all of the island's creative expression flows. As (Marley's song, "Slave Driver") says, "every time I hear the crack of the whip my blood turns cold." (Sheridan 1981, 35)

The debilitating effects of the slave system and of the extreme poverty that succeeded slavery once it became outlawed were more than the physical demands of the work they were forced to endure. The slave trade and resultant poverty were also a form of cultural oppression. The ones suffering under these successive systems found their escape from this dehumanizing experience through song, storytelling, secret meetings (like the "Brush Arbors" in the U.S.), and language. (Worth 1995, 2)

African Cultic Practices

Authens Jennifer Smith's 1997 MTS thesis for Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary examines the African roots of Rastafarianism and of Marley's music and sees the African world-view, brought to Jamaica through the violent Middle Passage, as centering religious experience in personal spirituality, rather than the material-centered, rationalistic religions of the Western-European world. (A.J. Smith 1997, 9) She states the "internal, intellectual, emotional, and cultural guidelines of Soul form the bedrock of Rastafari." (30) It is the inner witness of spirit or soul, rather than doctrine, that is at the heart of African religions and this world-view is essential to Rastafarianism as well. In Jamaica, the African religious world-view took the form of Cumina (similar to the Haitian religion known as *voudun*, or "voodoo"), in which the world was seen as inhabited by spirits (both beneficial and demonic): "In rituals we called the spirits, and the spirits came and renewed us." (17) The "evil" spirits were called by a variety of names, but "Duppy" was one of the most common, and generally referred to a disembodied spirit or "haint." Timothy White explains: "Obeah is the practice of exploiting the power of 'duppies,' or spirits of the dead, to harm or help people and influence events. A myalman, however, has the ability to thwart or neutralize the evil wrought by duppies." (White 2000, 24) Bob Marley was considered a modern day Myalman, or "Duppy Conqueror" (also the name of one of his better known songs). (25) As Kwame Dawes says the "duppy conqueror" is "one who manages to defeat the duppies of the world. Duppy conquerors were therefore people gifted with the ability to handle the spirits of the dead and to defy them." (Dawes2002, 92) It seems clear Marley stood in the tradition of his maternal grandfather, Omeriah Malcolm, who held that same distinction within the community of Nine Miles in St. Ann's Parish.

African cultic practices from the African diaspora in Cumina included dance, drumming, spirit possession, and spiritual healing. (A.J. Smith 1997, 23) The basic purpose of each of these elements of worship was the same: to enable the connection of the individual worshiper's spirit with Spirit, of the personal soul with the collective Soul of Africa (which Smith calls "Zamani", 16.) Music, dance, meditation, healing herbs were all regarded as means to being possessed by the spirits and entering into a trance in which the spirits could communicate with him or her. They became standard features of African religions in Jamaica.

Christianity in Colonial Jamaica

In the early 1860s, Christian missionaries launched a concerted effort to convert Jamaicans to Christianity. But rather than achieving a wholesale exchange of a Christian metaphysic in place of the existing Cumina/Myal world-view, Jamaicans engaged in a form of intersubjective dialogue among the religions, producing a variety of cult groups that were uniquely Jamaican and neither purely African nor purely Christian. A "hybrid third space" emerged on the island in the religious groups known as Pukumina and Revivalism. (25) While the white plantation owners were practicing a British-flavored form of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism, the Christian "converts" among the slaves were worshipping a Jesus and a Holy Spirit and a Creator God that possessed characteristics very similar to the older African spirits and worshipping in a style of cultic practices that stressed direct access to and experience of God through trances and spirit possession. (Stephens 1996, 230)

The interaction between African cultic practices and Christianity in Jamaica, in short, created a new religion that emerged out of a syncretistic blending of religious cultures. In a sense, this new "third space" was a form of resistance that enabled African Jamaicans to hold onto their African heritage in a creative synthesis, despite the loss of identity that slavery and oppression tried to instill among them. Two of the early Jamaican Christian churches were the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Native Baptist Church, both of which represented this hybrid form of religion.

Rastafarianism

One of the several distinctive syncretistic religions to develop in Jamaica—and the religion adopted by Bob Marley—was called Rastafarianism. The religion, which can be dated with an origin in the 1930s, combined themes from traditional African cultic practices, Christianity, veneration of Africa (and—more specifically – Ethiopia), and a rejection of the oppressive culture they called "Babylon." Kwame Dawes claims:

Rastafarianism drew upon a long history of Afrocentric belief systems that flourished in Jamaica and the rest of the diaspora for more than three hundred years before the advent of the religion.... The song of the exile looking back to the homeland with nostalgia and desire was always part of the culture of slave societies throughout the New World. (Dawes 2002, 21)

As a result of this centuries-old culture of African identity and the effects of slavery, Rastafarianism "became the religion of choice for the disenfranchised and forgotten people of

the shanty towns, which were, in the first flush of the island's independence, more than ready for a new Messiah, especially a black one." (Sheridan 1999, 12)

Marcus Garvey and Pan-Africanism

Marcus Garvey was a Jamaican preacher and entrepreneur who combined an apocalyptic faith with a sense of African identity to found the Universal Negro Improvement Association, which advocated the creation of a free, new black state in Africa. (Bob Marley.com 2005, <http://www.bobmarley.com/life/story/part1.html>) Garvey is regarded as the first prophet of Rastafarianism and was among the first persons to promote the idea of a "Black Christ." David Steven Worth claims Garvey "argued that, while God had no color, it was human for people to see everything through 'their own spectacles.' Thus, he said it was human and right, for Blacks to see God as Black." (Worth 1995, 13) While there is some dispute to the claim that Garvey originated the prediction, "look to Africa, for the crowning of a Black King; He shall be the Redeemer" (White 2000, 6), it is clear Garvey was the one responsible for popularizing the prophecy in Jamaica and throughout the African diaspora. Garvey constantly advocated for a repatriation of Africans to the continent of Africa and created a steamship line, the Black Star Line (which ultimately proved to be a sham), to provide the transportation for the "back to Africa" movement for which he was such an enthusiastic spokesperson. The failure to provide the ships for this purpose led to his arrest on fraud charges.

Some of Garvey's rhetoric suggested an anti-White bias, and it is clear from many of his speeches that Garvey was ardently anti-Semitic. Garvey and his supporters began to identify those who oppressed their people as "Babylon." While it seems likely that, in early Rastafarianism, "Babylon" was equated with Whites, it took very few years of the development of the religion to identify "Babylon" with Western society in particular, and with those who oppress others wherever that oppression might be found in general. (Worth 1995, 2-3)

Ras Tafari Makonnen, Haile Selassie I

Garvey's prediction of the emergence of a Black king appeared to have been fulfilled in 1936 when Ras Tafari Makonnen, the son of Menelik II, succeeded his father to the throne as king of Ethiopia., and was given the title *Negus Negast* ("King of Kings.") Taking the official name Haile Selassie I, the new king claimed ancestry as a descendant of King Solomon of Israel. Garvey's followers immediately accepted Haile Selassie I as the Black King out of Africa Garvey had predicted. (<http://www.bobmarley.com/life/story/part1.html>) The name of the religion, Rastafarianism, is taken from the new king's name: Ras Tafari.

Bob Marley, like other devout Rastafarians, was rarely found without a Bible in his hands and, like other devout Rastafarians, he was required to read at least a chapter a day from his Bible. (Boot and Goldman 1982; Stephens 1996, 315) The primary biblical text used as evidence of Haile Selassie's divinity and status as the Messiah was Psalm 68:31: "Let bronze be brought from Egypt; let Ethiopia stretch out its hands to the Lord." This was the text that appeared in sermon after sermon by Garvey and his followers, claiming that the salvation of Africans, and the true "chosen people", was to be found in Ethiopia. In addition to this frequently quoted

passage, several passages from Revelation and from the more apocalyptic passages in Isaiah became the biblical warrant for the Rastafarian claim that Ethiopia was destined to become the “new Jerusalem, the city set on a hill.”

Selassie reinforced this biblical claim by insisting that he was directly descended from the line of Solomon. According to the *Kebr Negast*, the Bible in the Amharic language of the Ethiopian elite (which Rastafarians claim to be the earth’s oldest and most original language, thus making *Kebr Negast*, --in Jamaica, it was called the “Holy Piby”-- with its Black God and savior the original, uncorrupted Bible), Solomon had an affair with Queen Makeda, the Queen of Sheba, who converted to Judaism due to the influence of Solomon’s Wisdom. (Stephens 1996, 237-8) The son that was born as a result of their affair, Menelik I, was sent to Jerusalem to be educated by Solomon’s Egyptian sages and took with him, when he returned to Ethiopia, Israel’s Ark of the Covenant, thereby making Ethiopia the true Zion.

Common Themes in Rastafarianism

David Steven Worth identifies a number of common beliefs that all Rastafarians share. (Worth 1995, 21-30). First, he claims, all Rastafarians believe Haile Selassie is divine in some sense of that term. There are numerous understandings about what that claim means (whether Selassie is Jah, or God, or is Christ, the Redeemer, for example.) Marley was a member of the “Twelve Tribes of Israel” sect within Rastafarianism, who believed Selassie was Christ, who had returned to earth and had already begun initiating the Kingdom of God on earth, centered in Zion/Ethiopia. (19) This kind of “realized eschatology” became one of the distinctive teachings of this set of the Jamaican religion.

Second, all Rastafarians see Ethiopia to be of religious significance. Ethiopia represented the hope for African unity and, ultimately, for the unity of all nations (since Ethiopia was regarded as the birthplace of humanity; thus all humans are essentially Africans.) The east African nation became the idealized symbol of an independent, Black nation, despite social and political problems there over the years of the Twentieth century. (Dawes 2002, 19) Marley’s songs contain frequent references to Ethiopia as Zion and as the destination of the African Exodus he sought.

Third, Babylon “is a name which refers to any evil force, any institution or system of thought which is anti-progressive, investing in the oppression and the division of people throughout the world.” (Mulvaney 1990, 5) Early Rastafarians limited the term Babylon to the White oppressors in Jamaica, but Marley represents the extension later Rastafarianism made to include all forms of oppression and injustice.

Fourth, the religious source behind these beliefs was the Bible. Rastafarians were not biblical literalists. Rather, they believed the Bible was to be read critically, with their own experience of the inner witness of the spirit and a tradition of inter-personal discussion of Scripture called “reasoning” assisting one’s understanding of the Bible. Rastafarians have historically been attracted to apocalyptic passages of the Bible and insist that the Bibles used by the Western world have been corrupted to reflect a Caucasian God and Christ. Gregory Stephens claims,

“They used the Bible to argue for political freedom; with an explicitly black and secondarily multiracial emphasis. Ethiopia was their Zion, and their God was ‘a living man,’ and a black man at that—which they regarded as a distinctly numinous ‘God within.’” (Stephens 1996, 225)

Fifth, Rastafarians draw upon African traditions of spirit possession and herbal remedies through the “sacramental” use of “ganja” (also known as marijuana, herb, and kaya.) Rastafarian teaching claims ganja was an herb found growing on the tomb of Solomon and the source of his great Wisdom. The smoking of ganja was believed to induce a trance to help Rastas see truth and to increase their understanding of Jah. As Worth reminds us, the ritualized prayer, “Glory be to the Father and to the maker of creation. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end: Jah Rastafari: Eternal God Selassie I” preceded the smoking of ganja and the succeeding “reasoning” in which Jah’s message was received and discussed. (Worth 1995, 23) Rastas considered the smoking of ganja to be the “most natural way to worship God.” (Monges 2001, 9)

Sixth, Rastafarians eat only *ital* (vital) food. Foods that symbolize death are avoided: meat of any kind, which “makes a cemetery of the stomach” (25) was forbidden. Most Rastafarians follow a vegetarian diet, with a preference for organically-grown food coming from their own gardens. Another form of this *ital* food is adherence to the same dietary restrictions found in *kosher* traditions of Judaism. Many Rastas believe that, “if Ital were a universal phenomenon, a power shift in favor of the common people would occur.” (24) Thus, an *ital* diet was an act of resistance. The *ital* diet was directed toward living a positive, life-affirming lifestyle that worked toward justice and resisting oppression. The *ital* diet also required avoiding both alcohol (probably a result of the connections between the rum industry and the history of slavery, especially in Jamaica) and tobacco products

Seventh, Rastafarians wear their hair in knotted ropes called “dreadlocks.” The hairstyle has always been intended to shock middle-class and upper-class Jamaicans, whom they believed to be trying much too hard to “pass” for Whites. The name “dreadlocks” comes from the word “dread” and its connection with fear. “Dreadlocks” are a visual form of resistance to the “Babylon system” which they believe corrupts and intends to keep the poor in a situation of poverty.

Finally, Rastafarians developed a distinctive language that combined English, African dialects, Creole, French *patois*, and other linguistic influences in another example of intentional resistance and protest to the ways of “Babylon.” In a manner consistent with Rasta attempts to emphasize a positive, life-affirming lifestyle, they changed many common words with negative connotations so they made positive statements (for example, “understand,” which suggests submission to another, was replaced by “overstand”; “oppress” was replaced by “downpress”, which they considered more descriptive of what oppression does to a person.) Another common linguistic device was the use of “I-words.” Marley’s frequent use of “me” when referring to the first person singular was not simply the result of an uneducated, non-English speaking background. It was also a form of resistance. “I” was reserved for Jah, whom they understood to be within the Rasta community as well as present in the form of Selassie when he was alive. Since “I” is a homophone of “eye”, “I-words” were related to sight and the insight that a Rasta might receive

from “reasoning” with Jah. Thus many common words used by Rastafarians were altered to begin with I (such as *ital* food, rather than vital food.) Rather than saying “we”, Rastas would typically say “I and I,” which could mean both “the two of us” and “I and Jah,” since Jah was understood to be present when two or three Rastas were together. (30) This transformation of language included the pronunciation of the name of the one some considered the Messiah and others considered Jah himself (as a “living man”): Emperor Haile Selassie I. Rather than calling him Haile Selassie, the First, Rastas preferred to say Selassie I, with the letter “I” a homophone of eye. (Dawes 2002, 330)

Marley became the most prominent international spokesperson for Rastafarianism through his musical fame. Rastafarian claims about Jah, Selassie, Ethiopia as Zion, and Black repatriation to Africa (which he saw as a new Exodus) are pervasive in his lyrics. One of his best known songs, “War” is essentially an extended quotation from a famous speech condemning racism Haile Selassie made before the United Nations in 1968. (Sheridan 1999, 62-63) Marley’s song “Crazy Baldhead” (a “baldhead” is a person who cuts his hair short or wears her hair styled, rather than natural—thus not a Rasta) had the double meaning of calling Rastas to resist the ways of “Babylon” in hair style while, at the same time, “the depths of his passion for Rastafari echoes in every word, and the political importance of the sentiments expressed are underscored dramatically by Al Anderson on lead guitar.” (Sheridan 1999, 64)

Marley’s Music as Resistance and a “Third Space”

Bob Marley’s musical influences were numerous. Among the forms of popular music that contributed to his sound one can identify American R&B and Soul music (he performed with Sly and the Family Stone and Stevie Wonder and acknowledged the importance of James Brown’s music, and several of the early “Wailing Wailers” songs were “covers” of American hits by early 60s groups like the Platters.) In addition, Jamaica had a burgeoning popular music industry of its own when he was growing up in the Trench Town ghetto of Kingston. Like other “Rude Boys,” music attracted Marley as a way to escape the boredom and drudgery of life in the “yard” and also provided the hope of becoming a “hit” and rising above the life of poverty that seemed to doom the residents of Kingston’s slums.

Reggae music, which Marley made known internationally, is itself a hybrid musical form. It arose from ska, a fast-paced, horn-laced Jamaican form of popular music that tended to reflect local, Jamaican lyrical and topical themes and rock-steady, which emerged from a dialogue between ska and American R&B. Timothy White’s book *Catch a fire* is one of the better sources for describing Marley’s evolution from ska through rock-steady to the reggae that became his signature musical form. The huge, mobile Sound Systems that brought these forms of music to persons living in Jamaica’s slums and rural areas in the 1960s and 1970s helped make Jamaican popular music a primary means of self-identity and self-expression for the poor of Jamaica.

Reggae also became the primary musical expression for Rastafarians through the influence of prominent musicians like Joe Higgs. Higgs, who lived in Trench Town as well, taught Marley how to develop melodies, how to use harmony, and how to develop his reedy, adolescent tenor voice. It was Higgs who introduced Marley to the other two members of the original “Wailing

Wailers” (later, simply the “Wailers”), Bunny Livingston (later known as Bunny Wailer) and Peter MacIntosh (later Peter Tosh.) (<http://www.bobmarley.com/life/story/part2.html>) Joe Higgs was also one of the more prominent Rastafarians in Trench Town and alternated musical instruction with “reasoning” about the claims of Rastafarianism.

African Musical Influences

African slaves who were brought to Jamaica brought with them a distinctively African approach to music. The Maroons who settled in the mountainous interior of Jamaica as essentially a sub-culture of run-away slaves who resisted the White culture and its oppression maintained their African identities through the music of their homeland and well as their religious practices. John Miller Chernoff explains that African music is distinct from Western styles of music in several ways. First, Western music is centered on melody and intervals between notes, with the rhythm serving to link the notes together. (Chernoff 1979, 225) As he states, “In Western music, then rhythm is most definitely secondary in emphasis and complexity to harmony and melody. It is the progression of sound through a series of chords or tones that we recognize as beautiful.” (226)

African music reverses those emphases to place rhythm in the primary position of emphasis, with melody taking secondary importance. In African cultures, as well as Afro-Jamaican cultures, the drum provided the heartbeat of society as well as the ground of music. A. J. Smith’s thesis mentioned drumming and dance as two of the most prominent elements of the African world-view, including the African religious world-view. (A.J. Smith 1997, 22-3) The drumbeat served as a form of communication for the community, but it also connected the music to the internal rhythms of the heartbeat and the rhythm of breathing as well as the “Natural Mystic” of the land.

African music most frequently has at least two different rhythms going on at once, as opposed to Western music which tends to have one dominant rhythm accompanying and enhancing the melody and harmony (thus Western music speaks of “syncopation” to refer to those rhythms that differ from the “norm” of regularity in rhythmic structure.) The multiple rhythms that characterize African music begin the “call and response” character we identify with this musical tradition. One instrument or one drum offers a rhythmic statement, to which another instrument, drum or voice responds with its own counter-statement. African music is clearly untended as a conversation among those making the music. (Chernoff 1979, 227) It is difficult to determine a solo voice in traditional African music. The call-and-response, conversational nature of African provides a setting for, and encouragement of improvisation on behalf of the various musicians and voices performing it. (228) A.J. Smith quotes Peter Paris, who states that the power of Black music is its ability to deviate from the constraints of Western, Euro-centric music and to give expression to the inherently sacred expression of the inner spirit. She states, once again presenting Paris’ claims, “The African legacy of call-and-response, poly-rhythms, rhythmic counterpoints, melodic and harmonic sophistication, and slurred and flat notes speak the special language of Soul.” (A.J. Smith 1997, 18)

Likewise, reggae music is a musical form that is dominated by the bass and the drums, rather than the guitar solo (the most prominent role for the guitar is a strumming, rhythm guitar, almost

always played on the up-beat, rather than the down-beat of a song) or even the voice of the singer. Listening to a reggae song like Marley's "Get Up, Stand Up", the bass provides the main beat and the major melody of the song, with emphasis on beats one and three, while the drums counter with a heavy bass drum beat on two and four (the "one drop" that characterizes reggae music) and rim shots and use of the cymbals to drive along another rhythm that syncopates and improvises around beats one and three. The guitar plays a double stroke on the up-beats of two and four, while the voices provide yet another rhythmic statement. The tempo is not rushed, but rather laid back and comfortable, which contrasts with the content of the lyrics, which contain a plea for action toward freedom and justice. Reggae is music of resistance and defies the world-view of "Babylon." It is intended to share the experience of suffering of the poor of Jamaica and the Third World and to call the "sufferahs" to solidarity with each other in the struggle for freedom, which Marley believed was the will of Jah. Similarly, his song "One Drop" draws an analogy between the "one drop" rhythm of the drums as the heartbeat of reggae and the "bassline" of unity on which Marley hopes to build within the community. (Stephens 1996, 320): "So feel this drum beat as it beats within/ Playing a rhythm resisting against the system/... fighting against ism and schism."

Contrasts Between Music and Lyrics

One striking element of Marley's music is that virtually all of his songs have an upbeat, happy, bouncy feel to them. When listening to his reggae one gets the feeling that God is in heaven and all is right with the world. The phrase, "No problems, mon" comes immediately to mind. It is easy to smile and nod when listening to the musical statements of his songs and to be caught up in the sheer "listenability" of the music. But when one pays attention to the lyrics of those same bouncy, happy songs, one is struck by the militancy, the calls to action, and the consistent call for justice one finds in those same seemingly benign songs. This is not happy-go-lucky, pot-induced, "safe" music; it is transformative pedagogy, intended to engage the people to take action against all forms of oppression and injustice. The primary audience for reggae was originally the residents of Jamaica's most desperate communities, and Marley's music became a clarion call to stand up and fight for their freedom and for their rights.

One major difference between reggae and both ska and rock-steady was that the earlier musical forms tended to limit themselves to commentary on local and community-based issues, like gang warfare in the "yards" or upon "love and sex" themes. Reggae deals more intentionally with universal themes like justice, African unity, and the spiritual life celebrating the presence of Jah. Marley's slow musical "shuffle" is intended to tone down the often militant, incendiary content of his lyrics to achieve a kind of musical balance that one finds missing in a contemporary form of resistance music like "gangsta rap." Reggae does not only encourage resistance lyrically; the contrast between its musical approach and its lyrical content is an intentional choice of resisting the conventions of popular musical forms. Even as seemingly innocent a song as "Jammin'" which has become such a popular dance tune and party song over the years states "No bullet can stop us now," with its note of defiance in the face of death. It is no accident that this was the song he was performing at the "One Love Peace Concert" in 1978 when he called the contentious leaders of Jamaica's two major political parties on stage and forced them to join hands in a sign of unity. (McCann and Hawke 2004, 80) This performance combined the

entertainment value of the tune itself with a faith in Jah, a call for personal responsibility and self-development, and an overt act of political activism.

Marley's Lyrics as Transformative Education

Kwame Dawes' 2002 book suggests what has become the consensus judgment of those who have studied Marley's music: *Bob Marley: Lyrical genius*. The depth and significance of his prodigious collection of songs (especially impressive since he died of cancer in 1981 at the young age of 37) reveals an artist with an uncommon sense of language, metaphor, and symbol. This section of the paper presents an examination of the lyrics of some of Bob Marley's more representative songs, and will be organized around two themes: Rastafarian message and liberation from oppression. Because so many of his songs blend a variety of themes, the organization of this section is not perfect. Marley was a complex thinker and his lyrics frequently operate on several levels of meaning. Selections from the songs being presented are included here, with the full text of each song included in the Appendix.

Rastafarian Message

The number of Marley songs with an explicitly religious subject matter is substantial. His Rastafarian faith is pervasive from the time of his conversion at the age of eighteen, but is clearly more pronounced following his surviving of an assassination attempt in 1976. The Rastafarian themes in his music can be subdivided into songs about Jah/ Selassie, songs about a return to Africa or Zion, songs about the evils of Babylon, and songs about cosmic or supernatural evil.

Songs About Jah

Among the numerous songs with this theme, four that deserve some attention include "Jah Live," "So Jah Seh," "Give Thanks and Praise," and "War." There is no doubt that his faith in Jah was central to the transformative message of Marley's music. In virtually every concert Marley performed, he would begin the concert with a reading from the Bible, which would be followed by his shout, "JAH!" The crowd would respond, in unison and in full voice, "RASTAFARI!" (Dawes 2002, 330)

"Jah Live"

"Jah Live", which appears on the *Songs of Freedom* boxed set, was written in response to the death of Selassie in 1976. Following news reports in the *Daily Gleaner* that reported the death, Marley and the Wailers took to the recording studio, where Marley stood silently taking in the news. When he put on his headphones and began singing into the microphone, he sang about his faith in the immortality of Jah:

Selassie lives! Jah-Jah lives, children!
Jah lives! Jah lives!
Fools sayin' in dere heart,

Rasta yar God is dead
But I and I know ever more
Created shall be dreaded and dread...

The song became an instant hit and, when a reporter asked him about the song, despite the death of Selassie, Marley replied, “Yuh cyan’t kill God.” (White 2000, 270-1)

“So Jah Seh”

This song from *Natty Dread* (1975) carries a clear Rasta message and the unmistakable lyrical and rhythmic imprint of Bob Marley’s writing style, even though different authorship is actually credited on the song. The lyrics combine biblical phrases with old Jamaican proverbs, “patois color and pop hooks.” (Sheridan 1999, 59) Marley was locked in disputes over royalties for his songs at the time, and as Ian McCann and Harry Hawke report, Bob “offered the word of God as proof that his kids, and by extension, the other children of the poor shall not starve for want of the monied classes’ charity.” (McCann and Hawke 2004, 67)

“Give Thanks and Praise”

This song seems likely to have been written shortly after the attempt on his life. The purpose of the song was to witness to Marley’s faith that Selassie I was the legitimate Prophet who stood at the end of biblical history: “Noah had three sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth/ And in Ham is known to be the Prophet.” He then continues the song with a prolonged personal testimony to his love for Jah and what that faith has meant in his life. Kwame Dawes argues “The declaration, repeated twice, is that the Prophet—namely Selassie—has arrived, and his arrival has eternal significance (‘through all these ages’ and ‘through all these stages.’)” (Dawes 2004, 329) This song, as much as any other in the later part of his career, offered an extended personal witness to his deep abiding faith in Jah.

“War”

When Haile Selassie spoke to the United Nations in 1968 about racism, Rastafarians everywhere were convinced he was speaking directly to their personal experience. At the suggestion of his good friend Alan “Skill” Cole (the famous Jamaican football or soccer player), Marley put Selassie’s words to music under the title, “War.” The opening part of the song states:

Until the philosophy which holds one race
Superior and another inferior
Is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned
Everywhere is war, me say war.

That until there is no longer first class
And second class citizens of any nation
Until the colour of a man’s skin
Is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes

Me say war

That until the basic human rights are equally
Guaranteed to all, without regard to race
Dis a war.

One may clearly see a deep appreciation for the powerful words from Selassie's address in the lyrics of the song. "War" connects the role of Marley's religion in the development of his political activism and growing militancy. He truly believed that oppression anywhere, in Angola, Mozambique, or South Africa was the same as the fight his people in Jamaica had been waging for centuries, and that Jah was on the aide of justice and an end to racism.

Songs of a Return to Africa/Zion

One could list several songs in this category. Two representative songs are "Africa Unite" and "Exodus."

"Africa Unite"

This song from 1979, begins, "Africa, Unite/ 'Cause we're moving right out of Babylon/ And we're going to our Father's land." Drawing from Psalm 133, he continues, "How good and pleasant it would be/ Before God and man, yeah/ To see the unification of all Africans, yeah./ As it's been said already,/ Let it be done, yeah./ We're the children of the Rastaman./ We're the children of the higher man." Because Psalm 133 is a "song of ascents", Zion is implied in the call for unification. (Stephens 1996, 318) Maureen Sheridan states, "Reggae's Messiah stated on many occasions that his message was for the whole world, but his heart was in Africa." (Sheridan 1999, 98) The earlier Rastafarian message that Jah was going to lead all Africans back to their African homeland began to give way to a much more universal message by the end of Marley's life. He reasoned that, since all of humanity originated in Ethiopia, all of the world's citizens were Africans. The drive for repatriation to Africa became a call equated with Israel's Exodus and Exile traditions and, by extension, a message of hope for Christians as well.

"Exodus"

Shortly after Marley was shot, he performed as scheduled at the "Smile Jamaica" festival Michael Manley's People's National Party (PNP) had scheduled just before the 1976 Presidential elections. Following the appearance in Jamaica, Marley left the island for an extended time, returning only briefly for a few concerts. His album *Exodus*, from which this song is taken was a huge critical success. *Time* magazine declared it the album of the century and praised it for "drawing inspiration from the Third World and then giving voice to it the world over." (McCann and Hawke 2004, 82) The central theme of the song is the end of the suffering of all Jah's people. It draws on the image of Israel's Exodus story and the formative power of that event in the life of Israel. The repeating line in the song is "Exodus, movement of Jah people. Move! Move! Move! Move!" Marley calls for Jah to send another Moses to lead the people across the

Red Sea, and for Jah to “come break down ‘pression, rule equality, wipe away transgression, set the captives free.”

As Gregory K. Stephens claims, “The return to Africa, in Marley’s vision, represented not a quest for racial purity, but a return to a more humane philosophy. Africa was Marley’s utopian horizon: a place to escape from the ‘atomic misphilosophy’ of the ‘Babylon system’ and a model of a sustainable way of life structured upon ‘earth rhythms.’” (Stephens 1996, 296) A part of Marley’s message, here as in other songs, is that it is incumbent upon his audience to become engaged in the movement of peace, love, freedom, and unity. He is challenging his hearers to become involved in the movement back to a metaphorical Ethiopia, if not a literal one. He drew upon his own experience of Exile to create a vision of a return to the Promised Land of Zion for all “Jah people.”

Songs About the Evils of Babylon

In Marley’s use of rhetoric, Babylon stands for all oppressors, from White plantation owners in Jamaica, to multinational corporations who bring their wealth into Third World countries, only to leave the country with the results of their pollution but none of the wealth, to the rulers of South Africa and Rhodesia who lead by the policy of apartheid. Marley believes that Jah calls upon those who follow Rasta principles to resist injustice and oppression in any form. He used his music, and the increasingly public and international voice his music provided him, to advocate both resistance to the evils of the “Babylon system” and participation in the movement toward freedom. The two songs that best represent this religious theme are “Chant Down Babylon” and “Babylon System.”

“Chant Down Babylon”

This tune, originally written for the *Uprising* album but eventually included on *Confrontation* (1983), was first called “I Believe in Reggae Music.” From the opening of the song one can hear the radical tone of Marley’s writing when he calls for his audience to “burn down Babylon.” But the tone soon changes to “chant down Babylon” as he presents his call to use chant, dance, and music to transform and disarm the evils of Babylon. Maureen Sheridan says, “Music is ultimately a stronger agent of change than any other medium—the reason why Marley was such a threat to the establishment.” (Sheridan 1999, 124) Ian McCann and Harry Hawke suggest that “Chant Down Babylon” reflects the Rasta “grounations” (community-wide “reasonings” and “revivals”) in which “chanting to drums and any other instruments that were available while under the influence of meditation-inducing ganja was a bonding process, both within the community, with God, and with the earth.” (McCann and Hawke 2004, 100)

“Babylon System”

Maureen Sheridan states, “In its widest interpretation, ‘Babylon’ is the world system... of inequality and injustice. In its narrowest sense it is ‘the vampire sucking the blood of the sufferah’—the Jamaican police.” (Sheridan 1999, 97) The song challenges the audience to resist the variety of ways the system of oppression and injustice conspires to keep them down: “We

refuse to be what you wanted us to be—we are what we are, and that’s the way it’s going to be. Talking ‘bout my freedom.” (Boot and Goldman 1982, 6) Marley encourages his hearers to use the Rastafarian/ African method of chanting as a way of calling Jah’s presence among the people who are struggling for freedom. He employs biblical metaphor to compare the current movement for freedom with the way Israel blew down the walls of Jericho. (Stephens 1996, 298) This song does not simply challenge the evils of Babylon; it advocates tearing down the Babylon system. Kwame Dawes claims, “Babylon... is committed to one task and one task only: to fight against the Rastaman.... For those who loved his music and understood their affiliation to be against Babylon, they accepted the logic that those who spoke against Babylon and acted against Babylon were, by dint of their choice, Rastas at heart.” (Dawes 2002, 249) Likewise, Gregory K. Stephens identifies the “Babylon System” as the system itself not a particular color. This destructive way of life (Marley would call it a way of death) replicates itself through institutional structures. Marley is objecting to the dehumanizing use of religion and intellectual institutions, not to worship or intellectual growth. (Stephens 1996, 326)

Songs About Cosmic Evil

Marley may have grown up in the shanties of Trench Town, but he was born and lived into his pre-teen years in the countryside where he was surrounded by traditional African spirituality and cultic practices. Even after his fame began to grow, he regarded himself as a simple farmer. The world-view of rural Jamaica was inhabited by spirits of the dead that could provide safety for one, but could cause considerable evil as well. The earlier discussion of the African religious world-view has established the term “Duppy” as a major cosmic reality for Jamaicans of African descent. Two of Marley’s songs that reflect the deeply ingrained traditions of the supernatural that Marley maintained throughout his life were “Duppy Conqueror” and “Natural Mystic.”

“Duppy Conqueror”

The “Duppy” in Jamaican culture had as its primary reference the malevolent spirits that could mean trouble for Rastas and others. But it also had implications for white people with their “blanched faces” and for “the ghost of the colonial authority that would not go away.” (Dawes 2002, 92) The “Duppy Conqueror”, then was one who was not paralyzed by fear of threatening authority, whether that authority was otherworldly or the system that kept the poor poor and without a voice. The song amounts to Marley’s promise that he is not going to be intimidated by a “bullbuck (bully) Duppy”, whether the “Duppy” is a “haint” or social or religious authority intent on maintaining the “Babylon System.”

“Natural Mystic”

Kwame Dawes says “Natural Mystic” is “a song that gains its mysterious edge both from the way the music snakes up on us and from the lyrical insistence that what is happening around us is something deeply mystical.” (Dawes 2002, 192) Dawes continues his discussion of the song, saying it “represents what I have now come to call the essence of the reggae aesthetic, or at least how it was explored by Marley.... The mystic was that which could not be explained easily by man, and the mystic was largely locked in the natural order of the universe.” (194) According to

Worth, Marley's line: "there's a natural mystic blowing through the air, can't keep them down; if you listen carefully now you will hear" indicates that mystic knowledge is "ancient and enigmatic knowledge, the knowledge of Jah." (Worth 1995, 77) One does not need the kind of intellectual, rational knowledge that characterizes Western philosophy and religion; one needs only to "listen" carefully to the kind of communication that is available only to those "with ears to hear." One clearly does not need dogmas, "isms and schisms;" one need to know Jah.

Songs of Justice, Freedom, and Hope

The second major category of lyrics among the corpus of his songs is those songs that have justice, freedom, and hope as their major themes. This category refers to Marley the prophet, the militant political activist, and the spokesperson for societal transformation in a deeply contentious nation. The songs that will be discussed in this section fall into three categories: freedom from the evils of slavery, resistance to injustice, and calls for unity.

Freedom From the Evils of Slavery

Three of Marley's songs, from different eras of his writing career, address his condemnation of slavery and its legacy that takes form in other examples of oppression.: "Slave Driver," "Buffalo Soldier," and "Redemption Song."

"Slave Driver"

The lyrics to this song provided the title of the first reggae concept album, 1972s *Catch a fire*: "Slave driver, catch a fire so you can get burned." Sheridan claims that the legacy of slavery is the fundamental reality of self-identity for Jamaicans of African descent. "Slave Driver" drives home the haunting point when Marley sings, "every time I hear the crack of the whip my blood runs cold." (Sheridan 1999, 35) The injustice and inhumanity of slavery is not simply a thing of the past for Marley and for other Jamaicans. The reality of slavery affects him bodily every time he is reminded of its gruesome effects. Marley sees the continued presence of pervasive poverty to be the contemporary form of the same lack of regard for human dignity and rights that led to a culture of slavery. Thus, even though the poor have been emancipated from slavery, they are still enslaved by a system that considers them second-class citizens or expendable "cogs" in a faceless, blind corporate wheel of industry: "they may say that we are free; only to retain this poverty." (Worth 1995, 99)

"Buffalo Soldier"

One of Marley's best known songs, at least in the United States, "Buffalo Soldier" was included on 1983's *Confrontation* album. The story behind the song is a group of former slaves who were employed by the U.S. Army to fight the Native Americans of the Great Plains. The title "Buffalo Soldiers" came from the way the Native Americans described these unusual soldiers, whose kinky, dark hair reminded them of the hide of a buffalo. Marley draws metaphorical comparison between the fate of the "Buffalo Soldiers" and Jamaica's "sufferahs." Like the "Buffalo Soldiers", his people had been stolen from Africa and brought to America. Like the nappy hair

that gave the soldiers their name, the Dreadlocked Rastas were easily identifiable as “different” from the norm of society. And, like the “Buffalo Soldiers,” the Rastas are a group whose history has never been adequately told. (Dawes 2002, 320) The cover design for the album also gives a hint at Marley’s message in *Confrontation*: Marley appears in stylized form in a drawing of St. George doing battle with the mythical dragon. Marley saw himself as a soldier of Jah’s justice against the evils of slavery, and this posthumous album presents that message in several symbolic ways. Marley saw his music as the only hope for liberating Jah’s people from the slave system.

“Redemption Song”

“Redemption Song” was the last track on the last album recorded and released before Marley died of cancer in 1981. It may be seen as a fitting conclusion to the last recording he produced and oversaw. It is a striking expression of his commitment to his music as a form of transformative education. Dawes says, “‘Redemption Song’ would confirm Marley’s commitment to the task of teaching and leading his people out of a world marked by oppression and hopelessness and into a world of survival.” (Dawes 2002, 311) The song begins with a direct reference to the Middle Passage and the slave trade that helped form Jamaica’s African heritage: “Old Pirates, yes, they rob I./ Sold I to the merchant ships / minutes after they took I from the bottomless pit./ But my hand was made strong by the hand of the Almighty./ We forward in this generation triumphantly.” But in the second verse, he shifts from the physical degradation of slavery in the 17th and 18th centuries to talk about the mental slavery that continues to oppress long after slavery has been officially abandoned. It is the various forms of mental slavery that are doing a similar degree of damage on the collective and individual psyches of Rastas and others who suffer under oppression and hopelessness: “Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery,/ None but ourselves can free our minds.” It becomes the responsibility of those continue to suffer this emotional captivity to begin to take the steps necessary to accomplish their own liberation. Thus, the chorus says, “Won’t you help to sing these songs of freedom? ‘Cause all I ever had, Redemption Songs/ Redemption Songs.” McCann and Hawke claim “Redemption Song” is “perhaps Marley distilled to his essence—the spiritual side at least....casting aside fears of man’s vain and warlike science for a belief in a greater power, no more elegant appeal on behalf of any religious belief was ever constructed.” (McCann and Hawke 2004, 98)

Resistance to Injustice

Marley saw injustice in contemporary events as well as in the historical event of slavery, and dedicated himself and his musical voice to helping persons stand up to injustice and resist it wherever it was met. Three of his better known songs express this theme well: “I Shot the Sheriff,” “Get Up, Stand Up,” and “Small Axe.”

“I Shot the Sheriff”

There are many people in the U.S. who first heard of Bob Marley when Eric Clapton recorded this Marley song and had a huge hit with it. Like many of Marley’s songs, this one has several overlapping layers of meaning. On its surface, “I Shot the Sheriff” is set in a mythical area of the

American West. An image many have had from hearing the lyrics is of a “Billy the Kid”-type of person killing the area’s sheriff when the latter begins to stalk him. It sounds rather innocent, harmless, and light. On another level, however, this is a song about Rastas being harassed by Jamaican police—sometimes because of illegal ganja use, sometimes because of Rastas supporting the wrong political party, sometimes for no particular reason at all. The unnamed subject of the song laments, “Sheriff John Brown always hated me/ for what, I don’t know.” During the period of Jamaica’s history leading up to the attempt on Marley’s life, he had attempted to remain apolitical when it came to the country’s two political parties; but he could not escape those who stalked him the way Sheriff John Brown stalked the shooter. The sheriff wants to “kill it before it grows,” but there is more than agricultural seed being referenced here (although some read this as a reference to a farmer growing ganja.) It is the seed of possibility, the seed of human potential that is threatened. Dawes believes the sheriff is the “quintessential instrument of oppression” and that the act of shooting him, even if it is self-defense is an act of justice against this colonial oppression. (Dawes 2002, 80) He continues, “In ‘I Shot the Sheriff’, then, Marley is creating a parabolic narrative that is uncannily locked into the violence and sense of oppression that characterizes the ghetto world.” The claim of self-defense and innocence from aggression toward the sheriff is both hopeless and, in a way, comic-tragic. As Marley explained it, “The elements of that song is people been judging you and you can’t stand it no more and you explode, you just explode.” (Sheridan 1999, 45)

“Get Up, Stand Up”

“Get Up, Stand Up” has been declared the unofficial anthem for Amnesty International. (Sheridan 1999, 44) It is a rousing, danceable, infectious tune that hooks one musically before one listens to the words. But once one begins to pay attention to the content housed within the confection of this great song, one realizes that the unavoidable moving of the feet that accompanies one’s hearing of the song is exactly the point of the lyrics as well. Marley is telling Jah’s people that they cannot sit still and put up with continued racism, poverty, elitism, sexism or any more of the “ism/schism” he talks about in “One Drop” and elsewhere. This song is a call to action that effectively combines rhythm, melody, and lyrics, all heading toward the same conclusion. Move! “Get up, stand up/ stand up for your rights./ Get up, stand up/ don’t give up the fight.” This is one of those songs that results in people in the crowds holding up their lighters in affirmation! It has become a true anthem for many devoted Marley fans.

“Small Axe”

The text and the message of “Small Axe” are fairly straightforward, but powerful, nonetheless: “If you are the big tree, we are the small axe, sharpened to cut you down, ready to cut you down.” This is a brief parable about the last becoming first and the first last. Jamaica is a small nation in the middle of the Caribbean. It is one of the poorest nations in the Americas. But the little one is capable of bringing down the mightiest when armed with the sharp axe of truth. Marley is trying to convince his audience, both in Jamaica and throughout the Third World, that they have more power than they realize. The song calls on them to seize the power of Jah and stand up for their rights against larger nations, against multinational corporations, even against the “big t’ree” Jamaican recording studios of the day (Dynamics, Federal, and Studio 1.)The

purpose of the song is to empower the audience to participate in their own liberation. It is a prime example of music as transformative education.

Calls for Unity

The final category to be examined is Marley's songs that transcend racial or national issues and call for the unity of all persons under Rastafarian principles. Even though early Rastafarianism was intentionally directed toward Africans and against Whites, Marley's form of the religion moved progressively toward a universal vision of peace, love, and unity. Two songs are powerful illustrations of his lyric genius in this category: "One Love" and "Zimbabwe." They both also point toward the steady increase in his status as a songwriter, a prophetic voice of freedom, and an internationally known leader of human rights and unity for all people.

"One Love"

For those of us who live in Florida and its neighboring states, "One Love" will always make us think of groceries, since it was the musical background for a series of TV commercials for Publix Supermarkets. But the song has achieved a status as one of the most important songs in his collection, despite its commercial usage. "One Love, one heart/ let's get together and feel all right./ hear the children crying (One love)/ Hear the children crying (One heart)/ Sayin', 'Give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right./ Sayin' let's get together and feel all right.'" The song is a clarion call to hopeless sinners, to those who are being asked to "fight this Holy Armageddon". Marley is "pleading to mankind... Give thanks to the Lord and I will feel all right./ Let's get together and feel all right." The song was named the "Song of the Millennium" by the BBC at the end of 2000 because of its message of hope and its plea for unity and peace. (McCann and Hawke 2004, 30)

"Zimbabwe"

Marley wrote this powerful song during his first trip to Africa and his beloved "Zion": Ethiopia as a result of the struggles for African freedom from the horrors of apartheid in Rhodesia and South Africa. When the song appeared on *Survival* in 1979, Marley was already dying of cancer. The power of the song led to an invitation for him and the band to participate in the celebration of Zimbabwe's independence celebration in 1980. In fact, the first stage announcement following the raising of the new flag of an independent Zimbabwe was, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Bob Marley." His set ran to increasing glee from an exuberant audience until, during his performance of "I Shot the Sheriff," the crowd began to riot and the police shot tear gas canisters into the audience. Marley and the Wailers left the stage for safety reasons, then took the stage again after order had been restored. He closed his set—and the show—with "Zimbabwe" with the crowd bouncing and skanking and singing along at the top of their lungs. (Sheridan 1999, 105) This was activism and advocacy in action, as Marley's calls for African freedom and independence began to be realized. "Unity is the world's key to racial harmony," said Marley. "Until the white man stops calling himself white, and the black man stops calling himself black, we will not see it. All the people of the earth are just one family." (Sheridan 1999, 78)

Conclusions

Bob Marley skillfully blended multiple cultures, syncretistic religious influences, and a commitment to freedom, justice, hope, and unity through the gift of his musical and lyrical genius. He never saw himself as anything other than a messenger of Jah, and used his music as a device to empower persons toward personal and corporate transformation. His work on behalf of the Third World's poor and powerless led to impressive awards: the United Nations awarded him the 1978 "Medal of Peace" and just a while before his death in 2011, Jamaica gave him its highest honor, the Order of Distinction.

Worth summarizes the significance of Bob Marley and his transformational music:

He saw himself as a person sent by Jah to strengthen his people's resolve about freeing themselves and to strengthen their faith in Jah. This role included helping his people achieve what he saw as his people's goals. While Marley may have seen these goals in many ways and in vague terms, sometimes as spiritual goals and sometimes as physical goals, he believed that his role was to encourage the Rastafari to continue toward those goals.... He sought, through his music to remind the Rastafarians of their status as Jah's people and to remind them that they should be acting in accordance with that status.... Thus, Marley saw Jah as the enabler for the Rastafarians's goals, and he saw himself as part of that enabling process. (Worth 1995, 107-8)

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APPENDIX

AFRICA UNITE

Africa, Unite
'Cause we're moving right out of Babyon
And we're going to our father's land

How good and how pleasant it would be
Before God and man, yeah
To see the unification of all Africans, yeah
As it's been said already let it be done, yeah
We are the children of the Rastaman
We are the children of the Higher Man

So Africa, Unite cause the children wanna
Come home
Africa, Unite 'cause we're moving right
out of Babylon
And we're grooving to our father's land

How good and pleasant it would be
Before God and Man
To see the unification of all Rastaman, yeah

As it's been said already let it be done
I tell you who we are under the sun
We are the children of the Rastaman
We are the children of the Higher Man

So, Africa, Unite, Africa, Unite
Unite for the benefit of your people
Unite for it's later than you think
Unite for the benefit of your children
Unite for it's later than you think

Africa awaits its creators,
Africa awaiting its creators
Africa, you're my forefather cornerstone
Unite for the Africans abroad,
unite for the Africans a yard
Africa, Unite

BABYLON SYSTEM

We refuse to be
What you wanted us to be
We are what we are
That's the way it's going to be,
If you don't now, you can't educate I
For no equal opportunity
Talking about my freedom
People freedom and liberty

Yeah, we've been trodding on
The winepress much too long
Rebel, Rebel
We've been trodding on the
Winepress much too long, Rebel

Babylon System is the vampire
Sucking the children day by day
Me say the Babylon System is the Vampire
Sucking the blood of the sufferers
Building church and university

Deceiving the people continually
Me say them graduating thieves and murderers
Look our now
Sucking the blood of the sufferers

Tell the children the truth
Tell the children the truth
Tell the children the truth right now
Come on and tell the children the truth
(repeat)

'Cause we've been trodding on
The winepress much too long
Got to Rebel, Got to Rebel now

We've been taken for granted
Much too long, Rebel
(repeat)

From the very day we left the shores
Of our father's land
We've been trampled on, oh now

Now we know everything we got to rebel
Somebody got to pay for the work
We've done, Rebel

BUFFALO SOLDIER

Buffalo soldier, dreadlock Rasta:
There was a buffalo soldier in the heart of America,
Stolen from Africa, brought to America,
Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival.

I mean it, when I analyze the stench—
To me it make a lot of sense:
How the dreadlock rasta was the buffalo soldier,
And he was taken from Africa, brought to America,
Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival.

Said he was a buffalo soldier, dreadlock rasta—
Buffalo soldier in the heart of America.

If you know your history,
Then you would know where you coming from,
Then you wouldn't have to ask me,
Who the 'eck do I think I am.

I'm just a buffalo soldier in the heart of America,
Stolen from Africa, brought to America,
Said he was fighting on arrival, fighting for survival;
Said he was a buffalo soldier win the war for America.

Dreadie, woy yoy yoy, woy yoy yoy,
Woy yoy yoy. Yoy yoy-yoy yoy!
Woy yoy yoy, woy yoy- yoy yoy,
Woy yoy yoy yoy. Yoy yoy-yoy yoy!
Buffalo soldier troddin' through the land, wo-ho-ooh!
Said he wanna ran, the you wanna hand,
Troddin' through the land, yea-hea, yea-ea.

Said he was the buffalo soldier win the war for America;
Buffalo soldier, dreadlock rasta,
Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival;
Driven from the mainland to the heart of the Caribbean.

Singing, woy yoy yoy, woy yoy –yoy yoy,
Woy yoy yoy yoy, yoy yoy-yoy yoy!
Woy yoy yoy, woy yoy-yoy yoy,
Woy yoy yoy yoy, yoy yoy-yoy yoy!

Trodding' through san juan in the arms of America;

Troddin' through Jamaica, buffalo soldier—
Fighting on arrival, fighting for survival;
Buffalo soldier, dreadlock rasta.

Woy yoy yoy, qoy yoy-yoy yoy,
Woy yoy yoy yoy, yoyyoy-yoy yoy!
Woy yoy yoy, woy yoy-yoy yoy,
Woy yoy yoy yoy, yoy yoy-yoy yoy!/ fadeout

CHANT DOWN BABYLON

Come we go burn down Babylon
One more time, come we go chant down
Babylon one more time
For them soft, yes them soft
Them soft, yes them soft
So come we go chant down Babylon one more time

Me see their dreams and aspirations
Crumble in front of their face
And all their wicked intentions to destroy the
Human race

And how I know, and that's how I know
A Reggae Music, mek we chant down Babylon
With music, mek we chant down Babylon
This music, mek we chant down Babylon
This music, come we chant down Babylon

Come we go chant down Babylon one more time
(Repeat)
For them soft, yes them soft
Them soft, mi say them soft
So come we chant down Babylon one more time

Music you're, music you're the key
Talk to who, please talk to me
Bring the voice of the Rastaman
Communicating to everyone

How I, How I know, How I, How I know
And that's how I know
A Reggae Music, chant down, Chant down Babylon
Chant down Babylon
Reggae Music, Chant down Babylon
Reggae Music, Chant down Babylon
Reggae Music, Chant down Babylon
Reggae Music

DUPPY CONQUEROR

Yes me friend
We de a stree again
Yes me friend (,e good friend)
Dem say we're free again

The bars could not hold me
Force could not control me, now
They try to keep me down
But Jah put I around

Yes, I've been accused (many a times)
And wrongly abused, now
But through the powers of the most-high
They've got to turn me loose

Don't try to cold me up on this bridge, now
I've got to reach mount zion—
The highest region
So if you're a bull-bucker,
Let me tell you this—
I'm a duppy conqueror, conqueror!

Yes me friend (me good friend)
We de a street again
Yes me friend (me good friend)
Dem say we're free again

So don't try to cold me up on this bridge, now
I've got to reach mount zion—
The highest region
So if you're a bull-bucker,
Let me tell you this—
I'm a duppy conqueror, conqueror!

Yes me friend
Dem say we're free again, oh, oh, yeah!
Yes me friend
Dem set me free again.

EXODUS

Exodus, movement of Jah people, oh yeah
Open your eyes and let me tel you this

Men and people will fight you down (Tell me why?)
When ya see Jah light
Let me tell you, if you're not wrong (The why?)
Ev'rything is alright
So we gonna walk, alright, through the roads of creation
We're the generation (Tell me why)
Trode through great tribulation

Exodus, movement of Jah people
Exodus, movement of Jah people

Open your eyes and look within
Are you satisfied with the life you're living?
We know where we're going; we know where we're from
We're leaving Babylon, we're going to our fatherland

Exodus, movement of Jah people
Exodus, Exodus, Exodus, Exodus
Exodus, Exodus, Exodus, Exodus
Move! Move! Move! Move! Move! Move!

Open your eyes and look within
Are you satisfied with the life you're living?
We know where we're going; we know where we're from
We're leaving Babylon, we're going to the fatherland

Exodus, movement of Jah people
Exodus, movement of Jah people
Movement of Jah people (4 times)
Move! Move! Move! Move! Move! Move!

Jah come to break down 'pression, rule equality
Wipe away transgression, set the captives free

Exodus, movement of Jah people
Exodus, movement of Jah people
Movement of Jah people (5 times)

Move! Move! Move! Move! Move! Move!
Movement of Jah people (5 times)

GET UP, STAND UP

Get up, stand up, stand up for your right (3 times)
Get up, stand up, don't give up the fight

Preacher man don't tell me heaven is under the earth
I know you don't know what life is really worth
Is not all that glitters in gold and
Half the story has never been told
So now you see the light, aay
Stand up for your right. Come on

Get up, stand up, stand up for your right
Get up stand up, don't give up the fight
(Repeat)

Most people think great God will come from the sky
Take away ev'rything, and make ev'rybody feel high
But if you know what life is worth
You would look for yours on earth
And now you see the light
You stand up for your right, yeah!

Get Up, Stand Up, stand up for your right
Get Up, Stand Up, don't give up the fight
Get Up, Stand Up. Life is your right
So we can't give up the fight
Stand up fro your right, Lord, Lord
Get Up, Stand Up. Keep on struggling on
Don't give up the fight

We're sick and tired of your ism and skism game
Die and go to heaven in Jesus' name, Lord
We know when we understand
Almighty God is a living man
You can fool some people sometimes
But you can't fool all the people a;; the time
So now we see the light
We gonna stand up for our right

So you better get up, stand up, stand up for your right
Get Up, Stand Up, don't give up the fight
Get Up, Stand Up, stand up for your right
Get Up, Stand Up, don't give up the fight

GIVE THANKS AND PRAISE

Give thanks and Praises to the Most High
Give Thanks and Praises So High
He will not deceive us my brethren
He will only lead us again
Oh take off that veil from off of your eyes
Look into the future of realize

Noah had three sons, Ham, Shem and Japhet
And in Ham is know to be the Prophet
Glory to JAH the Prophet is come
Through all these ages
Glory to JAH the Prophet has come
Through all these stages

When my soul was hurtin deep within
And I'm worrying to be free, desperately, Yeah
So guide and protect I and I Oh JAH, JAH
Through all these ages
Guide and protect I and I Oh JAH, JAH
Through all these stages

Rastafari is His Name, JAH Rastafari is His Name, JAH
If JAH Didn't love I, if I didn't love I,
If JAH Didn't love I, if I didn't love I
Would I be around today
Would I be around to say

Give Thanks and Praises, Give Thanks and Praises
Give Thanks and Praises, Give Thanks and Praises
Give Thanks and Praises, Give Thanks and Praises

I SHOT THE SHERIFF

I shot the sheriff, but I didn't shoot no deputy
Oh, so, oh
I shot the sheriff, but I didn't shoot no deputy
Ooh, ooh, ooh Yeah

All around my hometown
They're tryin' to track me down, yeah
They say they want to bring me in guilty
For the killing of a deputy, for the life of the deputy
But I say, oh, now, now...

Oh, I shot the sheriff, but I swear it was in self-defense
Ooh, ooh, ooh
I said, I shot the sheriff, Oh Lord
And they say it is a capital offense
Ooh, ooh, ooh
Hear this

Sheriff John Brown always hated me
For what I don't know
Ev'ry time I plant a seed
He said, "Kill it before it grows"
He said, "Kill them before they grows"

And so, oh, now, now
Read it in the news

I shot the sheriff, but I swear it was in self-defense
Ooh, ooh, ooh
Where was the deputy?
I said I shot the sheriff but I swear it was in self-defense

Freedom came my way one day
And I started out of town, yeah!
All of a sudden I saw Sheriff Jon Brown
Aiming to shoot me down
So I shot, I shot, I shot him down
And I say, if I am guilt I will pay

I shot the sheriff, but I say, but I didn't shoot no deputy
Ooh, no, oh
I shot the sheriff, but I didn't shoot no deputy
Ooo, ooo, ooh

Reflexes had the better of me
And what is to be must be
Ev'ry day the bucket a-go-a well
One day the bottom a-go drop out
One day the bottom a-go drop out
I say I, I..

I, I shot the sheriff, but I didn't shoot the deputy, no
(Repeat)

JAH LIVE

Jah Live! Children yeah!
Jah-Jah live! Children yeah
Jah live! Children yeah!
Jah-Jah live! Children yeah

The truth is an offense but not a sin!
Is he who laugh last, children! Is he who win
Is a foolish dog bark at a flying bird!
One sheep must learn, children! To respect the shepherd!

Jah live! Children yeah!
Jah-Jah live! Children yeah
Jah live! Children yeah
Jah-Jah live! Children yeah, Jah!

Fools syain' in their heart
Rasta your God is dead
But I and I know Jah! Jah!
Dreaded it shall be dreaded and dread

Jah live! Children yeah!
Jah-Jah live! Children yeah
Jah live! Children yeah
Jah-Jah live, children yeah

Let Jah a-rise
Now that the enemies are scattered
Let Jah a-rise
The enemies, the enemies are scattered

Jah live! Children yeah!
Jah-Jah live! Children yeah
Jah live! Children yeah
Jah-Jah live!

JAMMIN'

Ooh, yeah; well, alright
We're jammin'
I wanna jam it with you
We're jammin', jammin'
And I hope you like jammin' too
Ain't no rules, ain't no vow
We can do it anyhow
I and I will see you through
'Cause every day we pay the price
We are the living sacrifice
Jammin' till the jam is through

We're jammin'
To think that jammin' was a thing of the past
We're jammin'
And I hope that this jam is gonna last
No bullet can stop us now
We neither beg nor we won't bow
Neither can be bought nor sold
We all defend the right
Jah Jah children must unite
For life is worth much more than gold

We're jammin', jammin', jammin', jammin'
And we're jamming' in the name of the Lord
We're jammin', jammin', jammin', jammin'
We're jammin' right straight from yard
Singing Holy Mount Zion, Holy Mount Zion
Jah sitteth in Mount Zion and rules all creation
Yeah, we're jammin', Bop-chu-wa-wa-wa

We're jammin'
I want to jam it with you
We're jammi', jammin', jammin', jammin'
And Jamdown hope you're jammin', too
Jah knows how much I 'ave tried
The truth cannot hide
To keep you satisfied
True love that now exists
Is the love I cannot resist
So jam by my side
We're jammin', jammin', jammin', jammin'
I wanna jam it with you

We're jammin', We're jammin', we're jammin', we're jammin'
We're jammin', we're jammin', we're jammin', we're jammin'
Hope you like jammin' too
(Repeat)

NATURAL MYSTIC

There's a natural mystic
Blowing through the air
If you listen carefully now you will hear
This could be the first trumpet
Might as well be the last
Many more will have to suffer
Many more will have to die
Don't ask me why
Things are not the way they used to be
I won't tell no lie
One and all got to face reality now

Though I try to find the answer
To all the questions they ask
Though I know it's impossible
To go living through the past
Don't tell no lie
There's a natural mystic
Blowing through the air
Can't keep them down
If you listen carefully now you will hear
Such a natural mystic
Blowing through the air

This could be the first trumpet
Might as well be the last
Many more will have to suffer
Many more will have to die Don't ask me why
There's a natural mystic
Blowing through the air
I won't tell no lie
If you listen carefully now, you will hear

ONE DROP

Feel it in the one drop
And we'll still find time to rap
We're making the one stop
The generation gap
So feel this drum beat
As it beats within
Playing a rhythm resisting the system
Ooh-we I know Jah'd never let us down
Pull your rights from wrong
I know Jah'd never let us down
Oh no! Oh no! Oh no!

They made the world so hard
Everyday we got to keep on fighting
Everyday people are dying
From hunger and starvation, lamentation
But read it in Revelation
You'll find your redemption
And then you give us the teaching of His Majesty
For we no want no devil philosophy

Feel it on the one drop
And we still find time to rap
We're making the one stop
And we fill in the gap
So feel this drum beat
As it beats within, playing a rhythm
Fighting against ism and skism

ONE LOVE

One love, one heart
Let's get together and feel all right
Hear the children crying (One love)
Hear the children crying (One heart)
Sayin', "Give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right."
Sayin', "Let's get together and feel all right."
Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa

Let them pass all their dirty remarks (One love)
There is one question I'd really love to ask (One heart)
Is there a place for the hopeless sinner
Who has hurt all mankind just to save his own?
Believe me

One love, one heart
Let's get together and feel all right
As it was in the beginning (One love)
So shall it be in the end (One heart)
Alright, "Give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right."
"Let's get together and feel all right."
One more thing

Let's get together to fight this Holy Armageddon (One love)
So when the Man comes there will be no, no doom (One song)
Have pity on those whose chances grow thinner
There ain't no hiding place from the Father of Creation

Sayin', "One love, one heart
Let's get together and feel all right."
I'm pleading to mankind (One love)
Oh, Lord (One heart) Whoa.

"Give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right."
Let's get together and feel all right.
(Repeat)

REDEMPTION SONG

Old pirates yes they rob I
Sold I to the merchant ships
Minutes after they took I from the
Bottom less pit
But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the almighty
We forward in this generation triumphantly
All I ever had is songs of freedom
Won't you help to sing these songs of freedom
Cause all I ever had redemption sings, redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear of atomin energy
Cause none of them can stop the time
How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look
Some say it's just part of it
We've got to fulfill the book

Won't you help to sing, these songs of freedom
Cause all I ever had, redemption songs, redemption songs, redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
Cause none of the can stop the time
How long shall you kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look
Yes some say it's just part of it
We've got to fulfill the book

Won't you help to sing, these songs of freedom
Cause all I ever had, redemption songs
These songs of freedom, song of freedom

SLAVE DRIVER

Slave driver the table is turned
Catch a fire so you can get burned
Slave driver the table is turned
Catch a fire you're gonna get burned

Ev'ry time I hear the crack of the whip
My blood runs cold
I remember on the slave ship
How they brutalised our very souls
Today they say that we are free
Only to be chained in poverty
Good god, I think it's all illiteracy
It's only a machine that make money

Slave driver the table is turned

Slave driver the table is turned baby now
Catch a fire so you can get burned baby now
Slave driver the table is turned
Catch a fire so you can get burned

Ev'ry time I hear the crack of the whip
My blood runs cold
I remember on the slave ship
How they brutalised our very souls

Oh God have mercy on our souls

SO JAH She

So jah seh,
Not one of my seeds,
Shall sit in the sidewalk
And beg bread.
(no they can't and you know they won't)
So jah seh,
Not one of my seeds,
Shall sit in the sidewalk
And beg your bread.
(no they can't and you know they won't)
And verily, verily,
I'm singing unto thee
Inite one self and love imanity
Cause puss and dog get together
What's wrong with loving one another
Cause puss and dog get together
What's wrong with you my brother
So jah seh
Ye are the sheep of my pasture
So verily, thou shall be very well
So jah seh
And down here in the ghetto
And down here we suffer
I and I a hang on in there
And I and I, I naw leggo
For so jah seh
I'm going to prepare a place
That where I am though shall abide
So jah seh
Fear not for mighty dread
Cause I'll be there at your side
And down there, down there in the ghetto
And down there, we suffer
But I and I hang on in there
And I and I, I naw leggo
So jah seh

SMALL AXE

Why boasteht thyself, oh svil men,
Playing smart and not being clever?
I say you're working iniquity to achieve vanity, yeah,
I say you're working inisquity to achieve vanity, yeah,
But the goodness of JAH JAH endureth forever.

If you are the big tree,
We are the small axe.
Sharpened to cut you down, Ready to cut you down.

These are the words of my master.
Keep on telling me
No weak heart shall prosper
Oh, no they can't.

And whosoever diggeth a pit, Lord,
Shall fall in it, shall fall in it.
Whosoever diggeth a pit shall bury in it,
Shall bury in it.

If you are the big tree,
We are the small axe
Sharpened to cut you down,
Ready to cut you down.

And whosoever diggeth a pit shall fall in it, fall in it.
Whosoever diggeth a pit shall bury in it, shall bury in it.

If you have a big tree,
We have a small axe
Ready to cut you down,
Sharpened to cut you down.

If you are the bug tree,
We are the small axe
Ready to cut you down,
Sharpened to cut you down.

WAR

Until the philosophy which holds one race
Superior and another inferior
Is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned
Everywhere is war, me say war

That until there is no longer first class
And second class citizens of any nation
Until the colour of a man's skin
Is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes
Me say war

That until the basic human rights are equally
Guaranteed to all, without regard to race
Dis a war

That until that day
The dream of lasting peace, world citizenship
Rule of international morality
Will remain in but a fleeting illusion
To be pursued, but never attained
Now everywhere is war, war

And until the ignoble and unhappy regimes
That hold out brothers in Angola, in Mozambique,
South Africa sub-human bondage
Have been toppled, utterly destroyed
Well, everywhere is war, me say war

War in the east, war in the west
War up north, war down south
War, war, rumours of war

And until that day, the African continent
Will not know peace, We Africans will fight
We find it necessary and we know we shall win
As we are confident in the victory

Of good over evil, good over evil, good over evil
Good over evil, good over evil, good over evil.

ZIMBABWE

Every man gotta right
To decide his own destiny
And in this judgment
There is no partiality
So arm in arms, with arms
We will fight this little struggle
'Cause that's the only way
We can overcome our little trouble

Brother you're right, you're right
You're right, you're right, you're so right
We gonna fight, we'll have to fight
We gonna fight, fight for our rights

Natty dread it ina Zimbabwe
Set up ina Zimbabwe
Mash it up ina Zimbabwe
Africans a liberate Zimbabwe

No more internal power struggle
We come together, to overcome
The little trouble
Soon we will find out
Who is the real revolutionary
'Cause I don't want my people
To be contrary

Brothers you're right, you're right
You're right, you're right, you're so right

We'll have to fight, we're gonna fight
We'll have to fight, fight for our rights

Mash it up ina Zimbabwe
Natty trash ina Zimbabwe
I and I a liberate Zimbabwe

Brother you're right, you're right
You're right, you're right, you're so right

We gonna fight , we'll have to fight
We gonna fight, fighting for our rights

To divide and rule
Could only tear us apart
In everyman chest
There beats a heart
So soon we'll find out
Who is the real revolutionaries
And I don't want my people
To be tricked by mercenaries

Brother you're right, you're right
You're, you're right, you're so right
We gonna fight , we'll have to fight
We gonna fight, fighting for our rights

Natty trash it ina Zimbabwe
Mash it up ina Zimbabwe
Set it up ina Zimbabwe
Africans a liberate Zimbabwe
Africans a liberate Zimbabwe
Natty dub it ina Zimbabwe
Set it up ina Zimbabwe
Africans a liberate Zimbabwe
Every man got a right
To decide his own destiny