# Sankofa

## Undergraduate Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies

# Language, Life, and Literature in the Caribbean

edited by

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The Sankofa Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies is a peer-reviewed journal that supports the amplification of subaltern and marginalized voices at the University of Waterloo. The journal encourages submissions from all University of Waterloo communities (staff, faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students) from across all faculties and disciplines. Sankofa encourages us to 'look back' to 'move forward' by challenging traditional and eurocentric ideals of scholarship. The journal was conceived by Dr. Christopher Stuart Taylor to support his fourth-year course, "B[l]ack to the Future: Black Settlements in Canada for the 2020s and Beyond" in May 2021.

This 3rd issue of the journal is comprised of essays and poetry from students who took the course BLKST210 - Language, Life and Literature in the Caribbean in Winter of 2023 with Dr. Clive Forrester.

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# Editors' Note

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the latest edition of the Sankofa Undergraduate Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. As the co-editors of this journal, we are proud to present a collection of thought-provoking and insightful chapters from the talented students who have contributed to this publication.

We were impressed by the quality of the work submitted by these young scholars, who have displayed an exceptional level of interdisciplinary thinking and research skills. Their papers demonstrate a deep understanding of issues impacting the Caribbean and reflect a commitment to rigorous academic inquiry.



Dr. Clive Forrester

Dr. Katherine Bruce-Lockhart

As editors, it has been an honor to work with these students and to witness the dedication and passion they have invested in their research. We hope that this edition of the Journal will serve as a source of inspiration for all those who seek to engage in interdisciplinary scholarship. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to this publication, including the authors, graduate students Abigail Opoku who served as a reviewer, and Julie Veitch who originally marked these essays for the course BLKST210

as well as the staff at the Dana Porter Library for hosting the journal.

Without their hard work and dedication, this journal would not have been possible. We hope that you enjoy reading this edition of the Sankofa Undergraduate Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you.

Sincerely,

Clive and Kate

# The Reality of Jamaica's Beach Tourism Industry

## Environmental and Economic Impacts

*Nicolas Caputo*



**Introduction**

When one is thinking of traveling, the Caribbean is usually a prime choice because of its many countries to choose from, the weather, and the beautiful coastlines. Despite this, there are problems that have been occurring in the Caribbean because of its tourism industry, and these problems will persist if nothing is done. These problems display the many weaknesses that the Caribbean tourism industry possesses, in multiple facets.

They include issues with respect to harm done to the environment, economic opportunities, and growth, as well as further impending issues in these areas that will expand their scope for the worse, which will be explored later in the paper. This paper will specifically focus on these issues with respect to Jamaica. In summation, the tourism industry, while shown to be beneficial for economic growth in the past, is now leaving Jamaica susceptible to economic challenges and environmental problems in the future, due to the damage caused to the environment, the influence of natural disasters, and decreased interest in tourism in the country. These issues can be prevented by making efforts to maintain the local environment, protecting areas that could be damaged by environmental influences, and finding alternatives to beach tourism to stay competitive with other tourist destinations.

## Damage to the local environment

Tourism in Jamaica has proven itself to be damaging to the local environment. The nature and environment of Jamaica are continually damaged not only by tourists who visit and have a lack of respect for the land but also by the people native to the country who have been demolishing the land to set up their tourist resorts (Henry, p. 19). Specifically, rainforests are being cleared out to put up resorts, tourist attractions, roads, and other infrastructure related to tourism. (Lewis, p. 151). The collection of minerals and natural resources used by the tourism industry is often acquired locally, leading the land to be left ripped up and destroyed by miners (Coke, p. 289). Waste and littering are also issues that the tourism industry exacerbates due to the volume of products consumed. Cruise ships alone produce more than 70,000 tons of waste each year, which can contribute to the death of marine life (Sunlu, pg. 264). Tourists litter in hiking areas, leaving behind garbage, camping equipment, and more (Sunlu, pg. 265). Furthermore, many activities are done near fragile ecosystems, which could damage marine ecosystems and fisheries (Sunlu, p. 265). This can harm Jamaica in two ways. First, this could affect Jamaica itself, as the fisheries may bring in fewer fish that are safe for consumption (Mackay, p. 53). It is also possible that the fish may migrate away from Jamaica, and to another area in which there is less waste. Secondly, it can also harm coastal tourism as the ecosystems may become damaged to the point where they may not be fit for an attraction (Mackay, p. 53). This would affect activities - such as scuba diving - which are reliant on having a clear diving area and beautiful marine life and ecosystems to look at. This issue will reduce profits for tourism and fisheries, as well as increase the price of fish, as the local supply will be reduced if there are fewer fish to pick from.

Over time, Jamaica has and will continue to experience various damages to its beaches and local infrastructure because of climate change. Climate change has the power to accelerate beach and coastal erosion, a natural process that is detrimental to beach tourism, Jamaica's main form of tourism (Hyman, p. 1199). Additionally, climate change can contribute to flooding and rising sea levels, which would decrease the amount of beach that is available to build tourist attractions around and resorts near (Hyman, p. 1199). Aside from coastal damage, climate change can also enable saline intrusion to occur in aquifers, contaminating safe drinking water sources (Hyman, p. 1199). This is a genuine problem when one considers that hotels, resorts, and many residents may rely on these aquifers for safe drinking water. This could also be detrimental to plants that rely on these aquifers for freshwater, as the saltwater intrusion could kill them. Jamaica's local environment has seen repeated damage as a result of the activities of the tourism industry, and the effects of climate change.

**Vulnerability**

Due to the nature of how tourism and travel operate, Jamaica is severely impacted by extreme weather events and the consequences of climate change, which can affect the amount of revenue that is accumulated for any given period. The type of tourism that Jamaica engages in, beach tourism, is directly affected by coastal storms and heatwaves (Hyman, p. 28). Since coastal storms and heat waves present undesirable conditions for enjoying beach tourism, these are serious threats to Jamaican beach tourism (Hyman, p. 28). Because these disasters are also linked to climate change, the tourism industry directly influences and contributes to its own environmental problems, which in turn affects its economic success (Mackay, p. 52). Moreover, climate change is also responsible for the deterioration of environments and coastlines, which affects areas that are suitable for tourism (Mackay,p.. 8). In addition to this, as climates become warmer, sea levels rise causing many problems for both tourist attractions and the countries that they lie within. As for Jamaica, Mackay estimates that 100% of the land surrounding ports would be submerged, as well as 20% of airport land and 2% of roads, following a 1-meter rise in sea level. (Mackay, p. 53). Coastal erosion is a process that can be accelerated by an increase in sea level (Scott, p. 891). This would lead to less available space for beach tourism and coastal activities. Furthermore, as climate change has worsened over the years, many analysts have begun wondering when Jamaica will experience a significant rise in sea level, with Hyman suggesting that it will occur beyond 2050 as sea levels are estimated to rise between 0.17 and 0.24 meters for that time period. (Hyman, pg. 1198). As explained, the tourism industry in Jamaica is clearly at risk of being jeopardized due to climate change.

Most of Jamaica's population is at risk of being affected by natural disasters and climate change-related events. According to Hyman, 82% of Jamaica's population lives within 5 km of the coast, leaving them susceptible to weather events, such as heatwaves and coastal storms, as mentioned above (Hyman, p. 1198). Projected effects of climate change include a rise in temperature of 1.1 to 3.5 degrees Celsius and a decrease in rainfall near the end of the 21st century (Hyman, pg. 1198). This will cause the country's agricultural sector to have difficulties with profitability. Agriculture heavily relies on rainwater to help water the plants, and a decrease in rainfall combined with an increased temperature poses problems for this industry. Jamaica is also increasingly being hit by hurricanes as time passes. The 10-year trend rate of hurricanes hitting Jamaica has increased from a score of 1.7 in the year 1900 to 2.4 in the year 2009 (Hyman, p. 1199). As climate change worsens each year, this score can be expected to increase even further. This may lead more residents to eventually move inland as hurricanes make a significant dent in the country's profit margins. Therefore, residents of Jamaica are at risk of decreased quality of life due to the consequences of climate change affecting safety near coastal areas as well as decreased rainfall and increased temperatures during the coming century.

Tourism in Jamaica has not only damaged its own environment but is also a purveyor of damaging the world's environment as well. Due to the sheer volume of tourists flying to the Caribbean, Mackey estimates that greenhouse gas emissions are significantly impacted, with global tourism accounting for 5% of all carbon dioxide emissions (Mackay, p. 51). When contrasted with all countries' emissions, the global tourism industry has contributed enough to put them as the fifth highest carbon dioxide polluter globally (Mackay, p. 51). Therefore, the tourism industry in the Caribbean is responsible for causing harm to nature globally and will continue to do so, provided nothing is done to curb carbon dioxide pollution.

Assistance from parties outside of Jamaica may also be of use in combating climate change and the issues that are caused and exacerbated by it. Specifically, assistance from Global North countries, a group of countries with higher socio-economic backgrounds and similar political stances, is most warranted for multiple reasons. First, Global North and Global South countries meet together each year to discuss climate change and what is to be done going forward, and it has been agreed upon that a limit on the rise of temperature of 1.5°C is permissible (United Nations, p. 3).

Secondly, the countries of the Global North possess the power to directly provide funding for countries affected by damages, which is useful to Jamaica as they suffer massive economic losses during dangerous climate events such as coastal storms and heatwaves. Lastly, because many countries in the Global North were once former colonial powers in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region, they are ultimately responsible for mending the hardships that are currently faced by the current generation. It is not possible to say what would have happened had these groups not faced colonialism, but what is certain is that Jamaicans, along with other Caribbean countries, are in the economic position that they are in because of the Global North countries' part in colonizing them in the past, such as Spain and France, for example.

**Future economic challenges**

Economic issues are impending within the next decade, as the tourism industry is larger than just the Caribbean and there is not much room for long-term growth. Currently, the Caribbean ranks ten out of twelve on the WTTC's list of long-term growth prospects for the years 2016-2026 (Mackay, p. 45). The WTCC is the World Travel and Tourism Council, an organization that works with governments worldwide to share information on the tourism industry (Mackay, p. 45). The market share is expected to be 14% for the Americas (excluding South and Central America) by 2030, down from the previous 23% it held in 1980 (Mackay, pg. 50). This is due to the features, growth, and development of other regions of the world in  attracting tourists. As this accounts for all countries residing within the Caribbean, this 9% decrease in profits is felt by all countries, including Jamaica.

In addition to market share issues, the country's susceptibility to natural weather events also has a significant impact on the financial state of Jamaica. Based on research from Hyman, 90% of the country's GDP is produced within the coastal zone (Hyman,p.. 1198). This means that it is quite easy for Jamaica to lose business due to weather events such as coastal storms, which can prevent beach tourism from occurring as well as airports, seaports, and oil refineries from operating (Hyman, p. 1198). This is significant because all three industries are part of the major infrastructure of the country, and they are all located on the coast of Jamaica (Hyman, p. 1198). For example, Jamaica has had numerous hurricanes strike the island, and this trend has only increased as time has passed (Hyman, p. 1198). Hyman's findings suggest that hurricanes account for up to 10% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Hyman, pg. 1198). He also notes that most industrialized countries only receive losses in GDP of about 1% after being struck by hurricanes (Hyman, p. 1198).

This is especially important considering that awarding subsidies to various tourism businesses may not be possible based on Jamaica's lack of financial resources (Hyman, p. 1198). Taking all of this into account, Jamaica must find ways to reduce the amount of revenue that is lost by weather damage from coastal storms and hurricanes, as the 10% loss in GDP may only increase as these storms become stronger and more frequent due to climate change.

**Countermeasures against economic collapse**

The tourism industry in Jamaica can be affected by many factors; therefore, it is important to try to minimize the amount of harm that can be done. The first issue that should be tackled is with respect to local environments. Harsher regulations on which areas can be bulldozed for building up tourism attractions should be enforced to help protect the land. This will help prevent the removal of rare natural environments and geolocations. As mentioned previously, rainforests are being torn down and marine life is being damaged due to the construction of tourist attractions and the dumping of significant amounts of waste into the ocean, respectively (Lewis, p. 151). Furthermore, fines for tourists who litter and damage the land should also be established, as many individuals like to treat the land as they see fit. As mentioned before, many hikers and individuals in the country tend to litter and damage the land during their travels. These fines and regulations could help maintain the health of the land thus making it a more appealing tourist destination. In turn, this will create a culture of respect amongst tourists for the country that is providing and caring for them, as well as changing attitudes on how the land should be viewed and treated amongst Jamaican citizens.

Another countermeasure to be considered is creating more tourist attractions deeper inland in Jamaica. This is partially because sea levels are rising, and will eventually submerge large areas of land, taking away from the amount of space that can be used for resorts and attractions (Scott, pg. 891). It is also important to move attractions more inland as natural disasters and coastal storms influence when beach tourism is possible, and as it is Jamaica's main form of tourism, having a backup is important (Hyman, pg. 1199). Having this alternative approach to tourism may help Jamaica stay competitive with other tourist destinations as well as protect the industry from collapsing due to issues caused by climate change.

An example of this is developing mountain tourism to become as desirable as beach tourism. Mountain tourism is not concerned with rising sea levels, making it an option to consider when looking for alternatives (Hyman, pg. 1198). This can be done alongside the currently existing beach tourism, using its revenue to develop tourist attractions in the mountains and in inland Jamaica (Hyman, pg. 1199). Mountain tourism would be a wise long-term development project, provided that the tourist attractions and resorts are desirable. Thus, using alternative approaches to beach tourism may help Jamaica stay competitive among other popular tourist destinations, especially if beach tourism becomes too unstable to employ consistently.

Thirdly, since Jamaica is low on the list of countries with long-term growth potential for the tourism industry, the country should start adapting to current times and creating attractions that are not only unique to the country but also very desirable to tourists. New destinations are becoming more prominent in the global tourism industry as they introduce unique aspects of their countries to the world (Mackay, p. 45). This is so Jamaica can drive more tourism to their country and create more opportunities for economic growth and sustainability. Without these changes, it is possible that Jamaican tourism will be left at the bottom of the list as more places become more attractive to tourists looking to get away (Mackay, p. 45). As previously mentioned above, the countries of the Global North are responsible for helping to aid countries such as Jamaica during times of need and hardship. Furthermore, the global policies on limits to the rise  in temperature should be maintained, if not improved, as many countries like Jamaica depend on good weather and climate conditions for their economic stability (United Nations, p. 3).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Jamaican tourism industry contributes to its own economic and environmental issues both now and in the future, despite being the main source of income for the country. The setup of tourist attractions damages the local environment as well as the global environment through air traffic to the destination and the ocean and marine life through cruise tourism. Additionally, future tourism profits in the Caribbean are expected to drop a significant amount, leaving Jamaica with impending economic issues. Lastly, because of the frequency of coastal storms, heat waves, and other natural disasters, Jamaica's tourism industry is also vulnerable. Ongoing coastal storms and harsh heat waves can limit beach tourism, leading to potential economic deficits. While not all of these issues are preventable, steps can be taken to reduce the damage that can be inflicted. Protecting the local environment from both tourists and those native to the land is a key step, as tourism contributes heavily to local land damage, through disrespectful behavior, mining, and the construction of tourist attractions and resorts. Furthermore, creating alternative tourism opportunities will help keep businesses open during tough environmental events. Lastly, Jamaica must modernize its business and create unique attractions to draw attention specifically towards itself, and away from newer emerging tourism sectors elsewhere, where attractions unique to those locations draw heavy interest. Overall, improvements to the scope of the Caribbean economy and environment must be adapted to future times to prevent the region from facing severe economic and environmental challenges.

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# Artists Redefining the Roles of Women in the Caribbean

### Introduction

Gender can be defined by the perceived culture, expectations, behaviours, and roles that are drawn upon someone due to their given sex at birth and the relative traits of masculinity and femininity (McDermott 89-90). In the Caribbean, there is an ongoing critique regarding gender roles in terms of how a woman should act to conform to society. Caribbean women are flooded with more expectations on how they conduct themselves in society, in comparison to Caribbean men, they have a lot more freedom in the way they act and behave, without the concern of being ostracized (Pinto 2006). As time has progressed, Caribbean women have begun to address gender inequalities through their desired art forms, one of which is poetry. This paper will be an analysis of poems by Jamaica Kincaid and Louise Bennet in the search for common ground in their works. It will also examine the modern perspectives and roles of Caribbean women by analyzing their responses in relation to regional history and research. In the exploration of the stance of gender conformity and

**Ashley Nicole Harper**

gender expression taken by these poets in their art and text, this paper shows how Caribbean women continuously challenge longstanding gender norms.

### Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl"

Jamaica Kincaid's poem "Girl," published in The New Yorker in June 1978, details a conversation between a mother and daughter, describing the growth and tasks the daughter would need to accomplish as she enters womanhood. Through the eyes of the Antiguan poet, Kincaid illustrated the image of an 'ideal' woman with a list of responsibilities

that fall into being a woman who is presented as being neat, proper in the manner of what music she listens to or how she presents herself, and doing chores to keep the house in order (Kincaid 1978). At the beginning and end of the poem, Kincaid writes the following terms and conditions of womanhood,

*"Wash the white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the color clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry; […] always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread?; you mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread?"* (Kincaid 1978)

In the mother's interpretation, for her to achieve womanhood, she needs to prepare and practice to become a successful housewife for her potential spouse. If she does not follow these steps, the mother fears that she will not graduate from her childlike state and will not be viewed as an upstanding woman. The duties the mother described at the beginning of the poem create two roles for the daughter; in the future, if she were to join the workforce, she would also be bearing more responsibilities in addition to her household duties, unlike her spouse. As declared by Patricia Anderson, this would be known as the "social reproduction and woman's dual roles," in the instance where a woman will have extra-household work to meet the needs of her family as the male being the sole breadwinner is deemed to be unrealistic (292-293). In connection, when rereading the poem itself there lies a heavy expectation on the girl to keep the household functioning, making her role bound to her domestic responsibilities. In the history of the Caribbean, there is a strong connection with patriarchal society and how women are represented in the household. Traditionally, Caribbean women of the house carry the liability of additional home labour which originates from the enslavement period and tailing into the post-emancipation period where they would supply aid in the house of the plantation with the main priorities of cooking and cleaning while the men would be working in the fields. As a result of these actions in history, the plantation house is now substituted by the conventional Caribbean household with the expected fulfillment of the same duties. Furthermore, Caribbean women and mothers now have to sustain themselves and participate in the economy while fulfilling these "traditional" responsibilities tied to their gendered roles applying unrealistic pressures and stress in their daily lives (293-294).

## Louise Bennet, Jamaica Oman

"Jamaica Oman," by Louise Bennet is a piece strictly written in Jamaican Creole that illustrates the tale of a Jamaican woman (written in this case, 'Oman")to discuss the advancement of women's roles and power, through references to Jamaican indigenous and civil rights histories and folktales. Through this poem, Bennet shows how the Jamaican woman has grown to be resilient and successful while presenting ideas that they can equally achieve what the Jamaican man can do (Cooper 46). In the third stanza of the poem Bennet writes,

*"From Maroon Nanny teck her body*
*Bounce bullet back pon man,*
*To when nowadays gal-pickney tun*
*Spellin-Bee champion."* (1983)

In the excerpt of the stanza, this can be interpreted as the education of Jamaican women and how it lies in high contrast to the story of the country's hero Maroon Nanny who was known to rebel against British soldiers during the enslavement period (Cooper 46). In a survey in 2005, Jamaican women have been proven to achieve higher at all levels of education than their male counterparts. Unfortunately, female-led households are more susceptible to falling into the poverty line due to the weight of responsibilities that are in alignment with their 'role' of childbearing or housework (Webster 107).

Although the written piece "Girl" was created in 1978, it reflects lasting cultural practices in the Caribbean society that prepares and holds girls to this standard of womanhood. Kincaid's writing displays the considered assets of what Caribbean femininity is and how these rules are ingrained in the Caribbean culture such that it is passed from one generation to another.

In more recent years, according to data derived from the World Bank, collected in the mid-2010s, literacy rates among Jamaican women are 10% higher than males (93% versus 83%) (2022). Although these statistics shows/provide evidence that there is a strong trend of Jamaican women holding a stronger educational record, Dorian Powell states that most Caribbean women are known to be conditioned into more traditional roles or becoming home-based rather than entering into the workforce for a job with an upstanding salary. Up until recently, more women in middle-income households have more of an interest to work outside of the home distancing themselves from the home (113). In the work of "Jamaica Oman," Bennet is challenging the traditional views of Caribbean women through the work on how they can possess the power to be viewed as equals to their male counterparts and deter/challenge patriarchal ideas.

**Conclusion**

  Kincaid and Bennet provide different perspectives on the challenges faced by Caribbean females in terms of gender roles. Ranging from the description of alleged rules of womanhood in Kincaid's poem to the empowerment of Jamaican women through metaphor in Bennet's poem, these poets continue to bring a voice to women who feel unseen due to their position in society. They discuss the duality of roles that Caribbean women are expected to uphold.. This is displayed in the written work Girl, a multigenerational story between a mother and daughter that tale reveals society's expectations of a girl before reaching womanhood. It not only highlights acceptable roles for women but also outlines those that are disagreeable to society. Although women are held to these standards, they are also expected to maintain them while contributing economically to their households. In Bennet's poem, "Jamaica Oman," she depicts the image of a resilient Caribbean woman and the power she upholds. Seen as the more domesticated sex, Caribbean females (specifically Jamaican) are found to rank higher in literacy rather than males. In other stanzas of the poem, there is a consistent uplift of the female spirit in spite of the societal perceptions of how a woman should act. To conclude, these poets write tales about women in

ways that disrupt the dominant gender norms and highlight the issues which women face due to patriarchal ideas in society. In their works, they have pushed the boundaries on the representation of Caribbean women and have brought recognition to unheard voices. Although there is work needed to be done in the area of equality of women in the Caribbean, these writers have shared their outlooks on what being a female in the Caribbean means.

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# THE BLACK BOY AND HIS INHERITANCE OF THE TOXIC BOYHOOD

He took the ashes
Of those to whom he is heir

As they made their way
Through the clean
Innocent groves
Of his fingerprints
They were instantly
Soaked in death
What could soon become
Imprisoned in his veins


When the pages
Of life were placed
In front of him
He looked down
At his fingertips
And smiled


Unbeknownst to him,
Is the final page
He, a child,
Drew lines of ruin

Unbeknownst to him
Is why,
He, a child,
Was given ashes
For crayons


Those who were also heirs to them:
Who among his brothers
And fathers will teach cessation,
Choice and freedom?


Who will be the first
To wash away
The ashes from him?


And yet,
All is unbeknownst to him,
The child smiling,
Drawing away

*Kayla Russell*

# THE FORBIDDEN STATE OF MIND:

## Black mental health illness in Jamaica

Micah Reynolds

Black mental health fails to be recognized by its citizens as a dire societal issue within the Caribbean. Many Jamaican people express a shared discomfort with and direct avoidance of voicing concerns about the stigma surrounding mental health and addressing its ubiquitous impact. In Jamaica, there is still a significant amount of stigma surrounding mental health and seeking mental health treatment. As author Gaston argues,

*"Barriers to psychological care utilization are two-tiered including personal-social reasons such as shame, distrust, limited finances, lack of knowledge about mental health as well as institutionalized-societal reasons including unavailability and limited access, minimal attention to mental health by society and culturally directed stigma associated with seeking services"* (Gaston, 2016).

This stigma is due to a lack of education about mental illness, the belief that mental health problems are a personal weakness or failure or spiritual or moral deficiency, and the cultural stigma that is seeking mental health treatment is a sign of fragility. This stigma can prevent people from seeking the help they need, leading to decreased access to mental health resources and services. These conditions have led to a culture of shame and secrecy around mental health, with many people feeling discomfort about vocalizing their mental health status/concerns. The

omnipresent imprint of historical enslavement, intergenerational trauma, and inadequate healthcare/mental health access has led to an abysmal rate of urgency directed toward addressing Black mental health outcomes within Jamaica.

**Religion, clergy, and forced indoctrination**

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, Jamaica has the most churches per square mile compared to any other country in the world, with over 1,600 churches (Guinness Book of World Records, n.d). Jamaica is heavily Christian-based, with its various religious sects coexisting within its vast landscape. To understand the deeply-rooted religious frames and fundamentalism within Jamaica today, such as colonization, forced indoctrination, remnants of enslavement, and the historical psychiatric pseudoscience of mental illness must be examined in detail. Each of these elements has influenced Caribbean people's thinking, as have the social structures in which they exist, and how this impacts their sentiments and attitudes, their emotional reactions, their coping mechanisms, the way they accomplish things, how they exist in the world/society, and how others interact/respond to them.

The psychological repercussions of colonialism and slavery, including poor self-esteem, authority tensions, and self-racism, are still fundamental components of the Jamaican psyche. "When the British later seized Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655, they forcibly brought over 600,000 Africans to Jamaica via the Middle Passage. This period marks the presentation of the European psychosis" (Hickling, 2005). The central delusion of this psychosis was that all Whites were superior to non-Whites and were also entitled to anything these non-Whites may possess. Therefore, Africans were considered to be sub-human, treated as property, enslaved, raped, beaten and killed (Longman-Mills, 2019).

European contact unleashed a plethoric range of patriarchal, racist, and capitalist ideals that immobilized and incarcerated the mind, soul, identity, culture, and very being of the enslaved African men and women. This, in turn, formed a rigid racial hierarchy, with Africans relegated to a subhuman status. A Harvard scholar on racial

relations, Nancy Leong, defines racial capitalism perfectly. In her analogy, she states, "Racial capitalism — the process of deriving social and economic value from the racial identity of another person — it is a long-standing, and deeply problematic practice as a systemic phenomenon" (Leong, 2013). Assigning value to people or property is nothing new in European practice and identity. Whiteness itself as a social construct, has held value throughout history up until present-day societies, and it has been responsible for bestowing immense power and entitlement to its holder.

The transmission of Whiteness as a source of value is fully exemplified by the infamous White European historical figure, François Bernier. Bernier holds one of the earliest and most salient examples of racial classification and his role in allotting the necessary power for the lasting successes of White supremacy. In his view, "To Bernier there are, among the innumerable differences in the physical appearance of humans, 'four or five Species or Races of men so notably differing from each other that this may serve as the just foundation of a new division of the world' (Stuurman, 2000). His racist ideals, which formed the present-day racial classification system, were predicated on ethnocentric and phenotypic characteristics of the four to five races he divided. Hence, he shaped how Whiteness as a value in itself came into existence. Simpson and Yinger remark ethnocentrism as the, "nearly universal tendency to believe in the rightness of one's own group and the natural aversion to difference" (1985). Features of ethnocentrism are mirrored in how Bernier's power and privilege as a White European man granted him the ability to distinguish the four 'races' as: "1. The 'first' race; 2. The African negroes; 3. The East and Northeast Asian race; 4.The Lapps" (Stuurman, 2000). Bernier erroneously relied on his personal experiences and observations in the formation of social constructions of race that he designed to hold the position of Whiteness at the precipice and other racial 'minorities' at the base of the hierarchy.

During the chattel slavery period, we get a clear image of how racial hierarchies formed and were relentlessly maintained historically. This history reveals how White people have deferred the innate human worth of Black bodies and life as a commodity to be bought, sold, and exploited as a means for capital and economic gain. The enslavement era subjected Black people to a permanent loss of self and,

"They were severed from the history and accomplishments of their African cultural heritage and their new-found cultural history had slavery as its foundation. This history of subservience, relegation and inferiority was reinforced by the Jamaican slave system over centuries of slavery and taught African-Caribbean people to internalize their inferiority" (Longman-Mills, 2019).

 Enslaved Black people were valued commodities and were physical manifestations of an enslaver's economic wealth and social status. Enslaved Black people were valued in how they added or assisted the experience and usability for White people, thus relegating the worth of enslaved Black people to an economic means to gain lasting power and control. During this dark era, enslaved Black people were transferred among enslavers as commodities and appointed value formulated by White's upon slave auctions. As stated by Longman-Mills, "This hierarchy, as designed, fueled resentment and conflict among the enslaved, making cohesion and rebellion less likely (...). The inferiority undertones of slavery were internalized, and the self-esteem of the African slave was consistently challenged. Therefore, to gain their sense of self and self-respect, resistance and freedom were seen as the only options". This process of dehumanization and objectification of the Black body — seeded the roots of the racial capitalist hierarchical structure (2019).

The second feature of deeply-rooted religious frames in Jamaica spawns from methods of forced indoctrination following colonial legacies. Religious participation and expression were barred during this era as, "Africans were not allowed to participate in their religious ceremonies and many were Christianized" (Longman-Mills, 2019). This process of Christianizing the captive men and women was reinforced by subliminal and explicit means reinforcing subservience and fervently discouraging rebellion. The Christian religion was weaponized to enforce conformity and surrender to European powers, "The first serious attempts to Christianize the Negro slave in the British West Indies were made after the middle of the eighteenth century by non-Anglican sects: Moravians, Methodists, and Baptists" (Smith, 1950). The holy Christian/Catholic text known as The Bible was altered to achieve such results — with its modified version called The Slave Bible/The Negro Bible. This censored edition of the Bible was created to proselytize a pro-slavery form of Christianity to enslaved peoples within the West Indies.

This was the inception of altering the minds and stood as one of the most potent instances of coordinated narrative distortion that humanity has ever seen. The Slave Bible was the ultimate propaganda tactic of deception and conformity based on the Christian faith.

The Christian religion, revered for its moral principles, virtues, and messages of solace, mental fortitude, and salvation, was used as a lethal weapon to dispirit and inculcate White supremacy/superiority. Slavery laid the foundation for the Christianized nation, meaning that people not only hold Christianity as sacred but also strongly "identify with some form of Christianity, but Christian mores and values are embedded in the very foundation of the Jamaican nation" (Lazarus, 2012). Within the Bible scriptures, the cry for human freedom can be heard in many different ways and different passages, but the Slave Bible was stripped of all these ideas. This was combined with a belief among White people that Black people were barred from the divine promise of salvation — resembling a true example of White supremacy and the Whitewashing of religion, history, and culture.

Clergy members were confidants for many Jamaican peoples seeking mental health help. Passard holds the view that clergy members are similar to "frontline mental health workers" (Passard, 2023), but in actuality they are unregulated, untrained, and unequipped to provide mental health treatment, advice, or care. Thus, despite their wide availability, mental health concerns/illnesses cannot be solved by religious leaders, pastors, or clergy. Bolger notes that, "Some clergy have prejudicial attitudes about the cause and treatment of mental illness that can deter individuals from seeking professional help and some clergy report feeling limited in their competency to assist" (Bolger, 2021). In this way, clergy members can further exacerbate adverse mental health symptoms and illness by blaming individuals, making uneducated guesses or diagnoses, and making people feel responsible for precarious mental health states. Avent observes that, "Several authors have suggested that clergy's care practices and mental health literacy are determined by their religious, spiritual, cultural and communal beliefs" (Avent, 2015). There is uncertainty regarding the level and quality of care, as obtaining care that reflects principles of clinical objectivity is not promised in these interactions. Therefore, the biases and subjectivity from clergy members can act as a barrier, threat, or proactive care method depending on the context and the clergy one seeks advice, guidance, and direction from to address mental health concerns/needs.

**Historical psychiatric pseudoscience**

 To the captured Africans' demise, the modified texts such as the Slave Bible were just the beginning of brainwashing and were a sadistic means to maintain the control and opulence brought forth by the egregious practice of enslavement. In particular, pro-slavery physician Samuel Adolphus Cartwright carefully fabricated and contrived a set of "diseases of the Negro race" in his works titled Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race. Here he presented the following condition of Drapetomania which is falsely defined by Cartwright as, " a mental illness causing Negroes to run away" (Cartwright, 1851). Cartwright went even further to claim that, "unknown to our medical authorities, although its diagnostic symptom, the absconding from service, is well known to our planters and overseers…In noticing a disease not heretofore classed among the long list of maladies that man is subject to, it was necessary to have a new term to express it. The cause in the most of cases, that induces the negro to run away from service, is as much a disease of the mind as any other species of mental alienation, and much more curable, as a general rule" (Cartwright, 1851).

There were other supposedly 'scientific' findings about the Africans that suggested their supposed inferiority. One example was the pseudoscientific finding of Genu Flexit that Africans' "physical structure of his knees, being more flexed or bent, than any other kind of a man" (Cartwright, 1851) and "If the White man attempts to oppose the Deity's will, by trying to make the negro anything else than "the submissive knee-bender," (which the Almighty declared he should be,) by trying to raise him to a level with himself, or by putting himself on an equality with the negro" (Cartwright, 1851). Additionally, there was Dysaesthesia aethiopica, which Cartwright believed to be the cause of laziness among enslaved people. He defined this as: "a disease peculiar to negroes, affecting both mind and body in a manner as well expressed by dysaesthesia, the name I have given it, as could be by a single term. There is both mind and sensibility, but both seem to be difficult to reach by impressions from without. There is a partial insensibility of the skin, and so great a hebetude of the intellectual faculties, as to be like a person half asleep, that is with difficulty aroused and kept awake. It differs from every other species of mental disease, as it is accompanied with physical signs or lesions of the body discoverable to the medical observer" (Cartwright, 1851).

Cartwright used false religious and scientific arguments to support his racist ideals and implemented treatment methods "in favor of whipping them out of it as a preventative measure against absconding or other bad conduct. It was called whipping the devil out of them" (Cartwright, 1851). Much of Jamaica's pastors and religious leaders both currently and historically relegate individuals who have a mental illness as equivalent with the presence of demons and possession as the cause/onset of mental health illnesses. Thus, White men like Cartwright could craft a narrative and implement anti-Black sentiments by endorsing enslavement through religious and psychiatric means. It only makes sense that a lasting stigma, trauma, intergenerational trauma transmission, hyper-independence, and a general fear and mistrust of mental health services and psychiatric interventions are the result for Black communities. Arguably, Eurocentric treatment methods of mental illness have proven to be racially biased, ineffective, and stigmatizing. Consequently, it is no wonder why we witness disparities and discord in the current mental health treatment options in Jamaica. Hickling stresses the need for effective mental health partnerships that can be applied to the Jamaican context. He states,

> *The provision of mental health care in Jamaica provides many lessons about the need for new partnerships within what Kleinman (1978) describes as the tripartite model. This model suggests that there are three interconnecting sectors that provide health care, the popular, the folk and the professional sectors.*

Hicklings' argument is to deinstitutionalize mental health and to engage other social supports and structures that can support mental illness in a more holistic posture rather than a divided compartmentalized view. Extending on this view proposed by Hickling, the enforced and normalized colonial systems of mental health institutionalization do not belong nor work in the context of Jamaica. Therefore, Hicklings suggestion to effectively utilize the tripartite model stands as one of the most suitable strategies to radically reimagine and restructure the current mental health system within Jamaica.

**Intergenerational and Historical Trauma**

During the time of enslavement, Black people were also viewed as property, which perpetuates the idea that Africans lack empathy and compassion and, thus, cannot suffer from any mental diseases due to not being "humans". Author Halliday emphasizes that "Mental illness among Black people was unrecognized by the European colonizers in the initial period of African slavery" (Halliday, 1828). It was ignorant to believe enslaved Black people were immune to the impacts of mental illness, especially given the heinous and iniquitous conditions brought upon by enslavement. The enduring imprint of slavery's effects have been palpable for Black populations at a base level. Longman-Mills extends the view that, "The psychological torture they experienced was immeasurable and extreme. At this point, the typical individual, upon entering slavery, may already have a post-traumatic stress disorder, a major depressive disorder, a generalized anxiety disorder and/or survivor's guilt (Longman-Mills, 2019)".

The erasure of identity and cultural practices was essential to control tactics and the maintenance of dominion. As stated by Gump, slavery is predicated on devaluing and dehumanizing the treatment of its captives;

*"there is little in slavery that was not traumatic: the loss of culture, home, kin, attendant sense of self, the destruction of families through the sale of fathers, mothers, and offspring, physical abuse, or even witnessing the castration of a fellow slave. Yet subjugation was its most heinous aspect, as it sought nothing less than annihilation of that which is uniquely human—the self"* (Gump, 2010).

It is hypothesized and proven within current empirical and scientific studies that the effects of slavery are expressed both genetically and psychologically. For example, according to a study by Shevlin, Dorahy, and Adamson, "the direct psychological effects of slavery may have included PTSD, major depressive disorder, personality disorders and even psychosis" (2007). These mental health conditions that were once assumed by Europeans to not affect or exist in enslaved Black people were now becoming the focus and vanguard of epigenetic and psychological research. Meaney and Szyf propose that "exposure to trauma may have had a longstanding effect on the individual and might also be transmitted from generation to generation (Meaney and Szyf, 2005). Intergenerational trauma transmission points to puzzling after-effects in gene expression and social behaviors. Published authors Leary, Fletchman Smith, Woodson, Gump, and Graff, explicate upon the hypothesis that longterm transgenerational trauma transmission can be traced to the living descendants of enslaved populations.

They maintain the view that, "Post-slavery research indicates that trauma from slavery has persisted until today (Leary 2005; Fletchman Smith 2011; Woodson 1969; Gump 2010; Graff 2014; 2017) with descendants of ex-slaves exhibiting what is known as Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS)" (Carnell, 2013). This condition entails unresolved and unaddressed multigenerational trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders that emerged from the simultaneous ancestral experience of enslavement and present-day obstacles of structural, institutional, and oppressive dimensions of racism. If the current science on epigenetic research is correct, Africans "are living the genetic consequences of our ancestors' enslavement in our health outcomes" (Carnell, 2013). As Carnell writes, "Research [. . .] shows that children of holocaust survivors suffered stress health affects, so would it be a stretch to believe that the children and grandchildren of slaves suffered similar health affects?" (Carnell, 2013).

**Language and Stigma**

In more detail, the Black community specifically has a long yet understandable history of stigmatizing mental health issues stemming from the cultural and historical experiences of Africans upon European contact and with the introduction of the British asylum system and confinement systems. As explained by Hickling, "The British introduced the Lunatic Asylum system in the colonial slave societies of the Anglophone Caribbean in the late 18th century" (Hickling, 2020). This was not voluntary admission but forcible means of institutionalization that the British believed was remediating mental illness within Jamaican populations. As Scull explains, "The concept of involuntary commitment, custodialization, and compulsory detention for patients with acute mental illness is a product of modern European civilization and to this day underpins much of the contemporary European mental health agenda. The custodial phase of world psychiatry began with the ''asylumization'' of the globe by the European colonial political epoch" (Scull, 1979).
The prevalence of mental health illness in Jamaica is considerably high. According to current available statistical data, in Jamaican populations an estimated 4 of 10 Jamaicans are expected to experience a mental health illness over the course of their lifetime (Jamaica Information Service, 2019).

"Only about half the number of persons with mental illness will seek professional treatment" (Pan American Health Organisation, 2019). This current system of colonial mental health mismanagement and its oppressive nature is in direct opposition to indigenous cultural practices and reliance on the self-capability of the Jamaican nation. Based on the findings of Dr. Hickling, "Europeans have been fighting over possession and control of the Caribbean. Prior to the arrival of Europeans in 1492, the Indigenous Taino had an informal communal system of care for persons with mental illness" (Hickling, 2020). As Reed argues, "the creation of asylums across the British Empire was an extension of slavery" (Reed, 2014). This was all part of a mission to "civilize" and maintain sovereignty in all aspects of the human experience for the African/Jamaican people.

The mental anguish endured during enslavement and the introduction of Eurocentric ideals and belief systems removed voluntary mental health options. It began to implement involuntary treatment as a primary method for psychiatric intervention. This began the process of mass institutionalization and barring people from their families, communities, and friends. It became clear that ''measures to remove, sequestrate, and care for the insane were central to Britain's 'civilizing mission' " (Smith, 2010). The stigma of institutionalization and being relegated to that of a "lunatic" became a fear for many Jamaicans. Author Collis points out "that there was a high level of stigma towards mental illness in Jamaica and that the Lunatic Asylum was viewed with intense fear and avoidance" (Collis, 1972). It is crucial to analyze and understand the power and salience of language and the human experience. Language represents a core attribute in how stigmas get transmitted throughout generations and society. In this way, if individuals experience reality and create it through language, then one may internalize the stigmatizing, dehumanizing, and degrading language used to describe those with mental illnesses as true. This can occur on a conscious or subconscious basis and influence the feelings, decisions, and relationships of those impacted by personal struggles with mental illness.

Therefore, in terms of language use within the realm of mental health discussions and discourse, careful attention must be placed to avoid stigma and not impune the dignity of these people. Poor health-seeking behavior is mainly due to limited access to mental health systems as well as stigmatizing attitudes (Arthur et al., 2010; Bennett & Stenett, 2015). This stigma is perpetuated in the modern-day context by a lack of understanding about mental illness, mistrust of the healthcare system, and a belief that mental health struggles are a sign of weakness or lack of faith.

There is also a cultural emphasis on resilience, hyper-independence, strength, and perseverance, which can discourage Black individuals from seeking help for mental health concerns. Mental health illness and concerns within Jamaica are also treated as dichotomous despite there being a spectrum. The language used to describe this condition includes being either "mad," "na righted," "head nuh good," or "cool/alright." A popular song, "Jook Gal," by Elephant Man uses such lyricism and language of "Mad, sick, head nuh good" (Twista, 2004) to describe adverse mental states.

The lack of diversity in the mental health profession and the prevalence of negative stereotypes about Black individuals in the media can further discourage Black individuals from seeking help and enforce resistant attitudes toward help-seeking behaviors. Research suggests that stigmatization may render individuals with mental illness as "non-entities" in the eyes of many community members, potentially robbing them of any power to control the circumstances in which they live (Link & Phelan, 2001). In addressing this stigma, it is crucial to promote culturally responsive mental health care, increase the representation of Black mental health professionals, and encourage open dialogue about mental health in the Black community. This stigma can arise from various sources, including misunderstandings about mental illness, fear of seeking help, and lack of access to culturally competent mental health services. Authors Corrigan, Watson, Warpinski, and Gracia take a unique stance by explaining how in "the perspective of the mentally ill individual stigmatization may not only act as a barrier to seeking care and adhering to treatment recommendations; it may also lead to lowered self-esteem and reduced social opportunities" (Corrigan, Watson, Warpinski, & Gracia, 2004). Addressing this stigma requires education and outreach efforts to dispel misconceptions, as well as increased access to culturally sensitive mental health resources that are responsive to the needs of Black individuals and communities. Shin points to four stages of help-seeking behaviors:

*"Stage One is characterized by solitary coping, such as self-reliance and faith. Stage Two refers to the individual's reliance on family and friends. In Stage Three, the individual turns to formal services such as primary care providers, traditional healers, social service providers and ministers. Finally, in Stage Four, the individual may turn to specialized mental health services such as psychologists and psychiatrists in a variety of in- or out-patient facilities"* (Shin, 2002).

The description given by Shin models how many Black Jamicans navigate the realm of help-seeking and how they seek out those who can possibly help alleviate symptoms, fear, and isolation that often accompanies mental illness and psychosis. Shin's model demonstrates how this process of help-seeking begins with the individual trying to cope and extending outward into other social domains for help and treatment options. This process closely resembles the theoretical model of the ecological systems theory proposed by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner. He used this contextual framework (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem) to describe human development cycles and how this is fundamentally linked to social experiences and interactions. As a result, his conceptualization in the ecological systems theory is much like the proposed four stage model from author Shin regarding help-seeking behaviors for the Black Jamaican population in review.
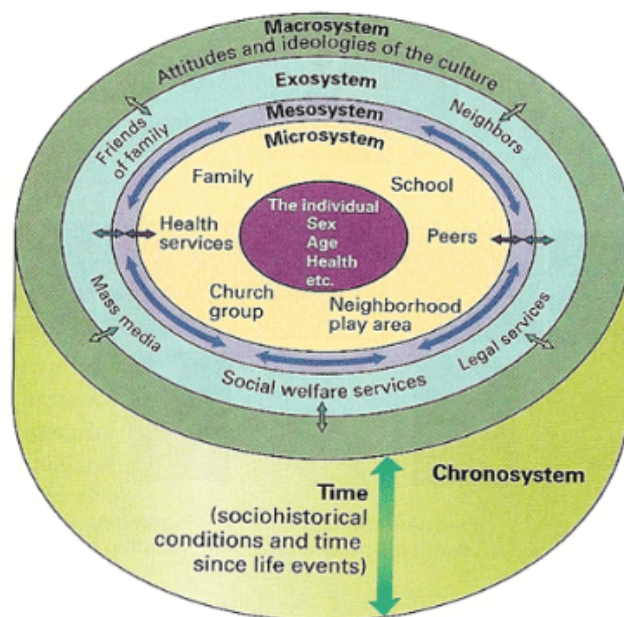


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory Model

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, mental health considerations within the Caribbean are essential for embodying what is known as 'Ujima' or 'collective responsibility .'Positive and supportive mental health outcomes rely on a collaborative effort amongst the various social networks within one's life to walk the path towards recovery and amelioration. The collective responsibility of humanity in this respect relies heavily on the virtues of willingness, love, harmony, and genuine empathy. As Schmid writes, "We have learned that you cannot talk about healing trauma without talking about race and trauma, and about historical trauma, institutional racism, slavery, implicit bias, and other difficult historical truths" (2018). The shared struggles and traumas brought upon by enslavement did not always draw people closer to each other but instead drew them apart and led to stigmatizing attitudes about mental health status and states.

Within the scientific and empirical research presented in this review, it is clear that chattel slavery, racism, and intergenerational trauma have a pronounced influence in avoiding and disparaging mental health treatment and intervention. The current research detailed in this report has also supported the notion that historical traumas represent a primary barrier to accessing care. This review has made it apparent that the pervasive features of historical enslavement, language, intergenerational trauma, legacies of colonialism, and inadequate healthcare and access to mental health treatment have resulted in the meager Black mental health outcomes within Jamaica. The sacrifices and perseverance of the Black enslaved populations within Jamaica has enshrined the quality of human resilience in its descendants. Recognizing mental health concerns and intergenerational and historical trauma as interconnected elements is crucial to appropriately take future action and to hone a distinct foresight on this worsening public health issue within Jamaica and among members of the Jamaican diaspora.

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# LAND SOVEREIGNTY AND BAUXITE MINING IN THE COCKPIT COUNTRY

## Madeline Ashworth

The legacies of colonialism and enslavement have had a profound impact on several contemporary fronts, including land stewardship and sovereignty. This is exemplified in Maroon communities in Jamaica; descendants of self-emancipated enslaved persons. Their unique relationship to slavery and coloniality poses questions about the relevance and usage of colonial treaties after colonizers have departed. The relationship between Maroon peoples and non-Maroon Jamaicans are shaped by colonial histories, and are impacted by several other factors, most notably the natural resource industry. Bauxite, an ore which is used to make aluminum, has been mined in Jamaica since the 1950s. However, as extraction sites become depleted, mining companies and the Jamaican Government (GoJ) have pushed to locate mining projects close to or within rural communities, many of which are occupied by Maroon peoples.

This paper argues the importance of land sovereignty and environmental advocacy in relation to Maroon peoples in Jamaica. By analyzing the fight between Maroon communities and those involved in the mining industry, within historical and contemporary contexts, we may be better equipped to advocate for environmental and social justice.

**Who are the Maroons?**

To fully understand the conflict facing Maroon communities today, we must first understand the conditions under which Maroon societies originated. Several Maroon communities were formed during the Spanish withdrawal from Jamaica in the 17th century. While Spanish and British forces fought for control over the island, a number of enslaved peoples escaped plantations and formed communities within Jamaica's interior (Bilby). In 1739, two treaties were signed between the Maroons and British occupiers, guaranteeing the Maroons sovereignty on the condition that Maroons would catch and return escaped enslaved peoples to the plantations (Bilby). These treaties were signed by two Maroon communities, known as the Leeward and Windward Maroons, who respectively occupy the Western and Eastern regions of Jamaica (Bilby). These treaties continue to be a source of resentment for non-Maroon Jamaicans to this day, with sentiments of deep betrayal permeating social and legal conceptions of Maroon peoples. These treaty relationships were further complicated when Jamaica gained political independence from the British in 1962 (Connell). The new post-independence constitution did not acknowledge the political or legal status of Maroon peoples, or the treaties which were signed with the British; this intentional exclusion effectively, in Bilby's opinion, functions to nullify any remaining social and political autonomy attached to these treaties (Bilby). However, Maroon communities assert that, because these treaties were signed with the British Government, not the Jamaican Government, that no nullification may take place without the consent of both signatories (Bilby).
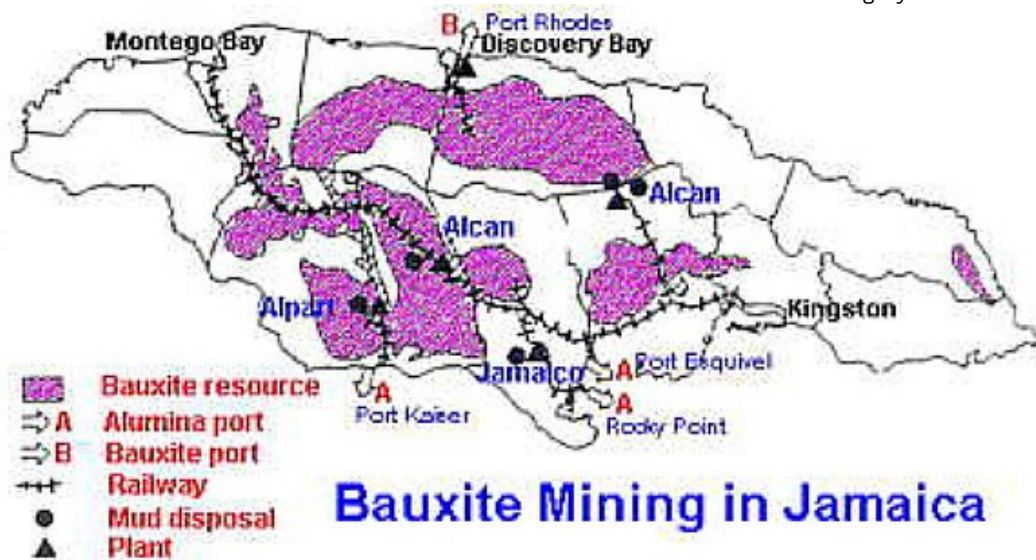
This has effectively created a stalemate between Maroon communities and the Government of Jamaica, with no clear definitions on the scope of territorial boundaries or the range of Maroon sovereignty (Connell). This has had impacts on several layers of relationships between Maroon and non-Maroon peoples in Jamaica, especially when it comes to land ownership claims.

**Impacts of the Bauxite Industry**

The resource extraction industry plays a significant role in influencing the relationship between Maroon peoples and the Government of Jamaica (GoJ). This tension is particularly evident in Accompong, a village in Cockpit Country. Accompong is a part of the Cockpit Country Stakeholders Group (CCGS), which was formed for the purpose of protecting the land and peoples of Cockpit Country (Connell). CCGS asserts, based on their understandings of treaties signed by the Leeward Maroons, that Cockpit Country covers 116, 218 hectares (Jamaica Environment Trust). In 2017, the Jamaican Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Andrew Holness, created the Cockpit Country Protected Area (CCPA); a victory for those who had been advocating for Cockpit Country's protection (Jamaica Environment Trust). This designated area would be protected from further mining to preserve the land, water, and cultural heritage of the area. However, the Parliamentary-dictated CCPA boundary is approximately 32 percent smaller than the CCSG's boundary, and excludes important areas which are now being released for mining projects (Jamaica Environment Trust). The difference in these boundaries is important to note, because the GoJ has a vested interest in maintaining the Bauxite industry for further economic profit, much of which is never seen by the communities from which the Bauxite is mined. While Bauxite mining previously comprised up to 10 percent of Jamaica's Gross Domestic Product, this percentage is diminishing as mining sites run out ("Neoliberalism, Environmental Justice, and the Convention on Biological Diversity" 150).  Moreover, the land itself is deeply intertwined in Maroon history. The land is not merely a source of physical sustenance, but of cultural survival (Connell). This connection is referred to by Connell as 'Maroon Ecology'; exemplifying "how actors in the African diaspora rearticulate and adapt legacies of resistance to contemporary power relations" (Connell). The resource extraction industry is an instance of this resistance, with the Government's drive for commercial gain warring with Maroon conceptions of stewardship and livelihood.

The process of Bauxite mining is harmful in and of itself, regardless of where it is mined. However, in Cockpit Country, it is particularly destructive. The land is extremely biodiverse and fertile; many communities are completely self-sufficient, relying on the crops they grow for their
personal and economic livelihood (Between Preservation and Exploitation 1). When mining occurs here, it destroys unique ecosystems that exist nowhere else in the world. Bauxite ore is produced through the "open cast method" which involves removing the entire layer of topsoil and vegetation which covers the ore deposit.

This leads to deforestation, soil degradation, and the emission of "potentially toxic fumes and dust" (Between Preservation and Exploitation 10). Clean water concerns also permeate this issue; forty percent of Jamaica's drinking water comes from Cockpit Country (Vice News 15:25). If mining were to encroach further upon this land, much of the country's drinking water would be at risk (Vice News 15:25). Another consequence of Bauxite mining is the creation of red mud tailing ponds which are left over after the Bauxite mining has finished. The water left in these lakes contains "caustic materials and metals" in high concentrations, which pose significant threats to plant and animal life (Between Preservation and Exploitation 10). Furthermore, once these lakes dry up, the dust from the red mud becomes airborne, and coats the entire surrounding landscape. This not only impacts the land, but also the people and wildlife who depend on the land for survival. Many residents in Cockpit Country rely on rainwater for daily use, which is also contaminated by the red dust (Vice News 9:20). The impacts of this red dust have not been sufficiently studied, leaving many questions unanswered about the safety of contaminated water. This risk is thrown into sharper relief when we consider the sensitivity of these natural areas. Levels of biological variation are so high in this area that "even individual hills in the region may contain completely unique ecosystems" (Connell). This means that any mining which takes place within these delicate environments will cause irreversible damage to these unique ecosystems. To add insult to injury, those farmers who lose their livelihood to Bauxite mining can rarely find employment in the Bauxite industry (Between Preservation and Exploitation 11). Thus, peoples are stripped of their land, their autonomy, and their livelihoods through the process of Bauxite mining.

Source: http://www.jamaicancaves.org/cockpit-country-bauxite-mining.htm

Maroon communities in Jamaica continue to fight against the GoJ and partner corporations which seek to mine Bauxite on their lands. This fight is decades-old, and will likely continue until the lives of Maroon peoples are valued over the potential profit that comes from the mining industry. That day may be a long way away, but through a historical and contemporary understanding of this conflict, we may be better equipped to advocate for those who are most affected by Bauxite mining in Jamaica.

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# Mirror, mirror on the wall, does Dancehall influence crime at all?



**Esa Scapicchio-Roopchand**

One of Jamaica's most hotly debated public ideas is that dancehall music and culture contribute to violence and criminal behavior. As dancehall music has continued to rise and gain traction globally, these public debates have taken a large toll on the themes discussed and the language used in the music itself. Traditional Jamaican heritage and upbringing are important elements that can aid in grasping a full understanding of the reasoning behind the themes presented in some lyrics. Experts should be critically analyzing the association made between dancehall and crime between dancehall and crime, noting the heritage and backstory of the songwriter(s). As most residents of Jamaica propose that dancehall has a direct cause-and-effect relationship with the island's intense levels of criminal activity and homophobic-driven violence, it is important to note that these proposals are often made without full acknowledgment of the social and economic conditions present during the songwriter's lifetime.

Although Jamaica's crime rate has risen throughout the past few decades, there have been high rates of homicides, drug trafficking, and shootings, etc long before dancehall music existed. The driving forces behind most of these crimes include poverty, unemployment, income inequality, and a lack of economic opportunities (Boyne, 234.) Music was never viewed as a factor of justification in support of criminal activity. Deliberate factual evidence is important when distinguishing the main causes of crime within a specific area because it dives deeper into the situational environment of the country. Specifically, according to Harriet, over 85% of violence in Jamaica is due to poverty and inequality, political corruption, gang activity, drugs and organized crime, historical and cultural factors as well as weak law enforcement (Harriet, 32.) "Jamaican popular music, films, and fiction share a strong emphasis on the island's culture, but not on it's violence" (Jaffe, 390.) Academics such as Jaffe continuously aim to show the existing causes of criminal actions before the emergence of dancehall music, to highlight the substantialness of preexisting factors.

Emerging from Ska, Reggae and Roots music, Jamaica unleashed the powerful and potent genre of dancehall in the late 1970's. As digital instrumentation became more prevalent, dancehall (or "ragga") produced faster rhythms and extensively incorporated Jamaican Patois into song lyrics. Onwards, the genre began to gain popularity throughout  Jamaica and eventually globalized; showcasing Jamaican artists at an international level. Considering the continuing evolution of the genre, lyrics in relation to violence have become more pinpointed and debated. Nevertheless, arguments have been made by well-known academics throughout Jamaica that focus more on the relationship between the two factors and less on the causation of one onto the other.

Father Sean Major-Campbell (priest and contributor to The Gleaner Newspaper in Kingston, Jamaica) has said that identifying dancehall's lyrics as the cause of Jamaica's crime is misleading, and considers this approach to be a "course in obfuscation that leaves us with an anecdotal diagnosis of the problem" (Campbell, 1.) Although there has been a continuous effort to prove the argument of direct influence, the relationship between the two seem to overlap. Campbell's take on the issue highlights the idea that commentators blatantly base their thoughts on personal accounts and beliefs, instead of adhering to facts and/or research (Campbell, 6.) The social and cultural context in which dancehall music is created is an essential factor to understand, as music is an artistic expression. The lyrics of dancehall music often reflect the experiences and realities of the artists and their communities and are not necessarily meant to be taken literally.

Carolyn Cooper makes a similar argument, illustrating that ninety percent of , dancehall artists are not from the economically privileged areas of Jamaica. She argues that most of these artists are not singing and DJing about crime and violence as a means of promotion, but rather reflecting on what they grew up around and knew.(Cooper, 6.) Cooper also makes mention of the drug trade as a major contributor to crime in Jamaica. She notes that many of these presently-known dancehall artists grew up in a time of heavy drug trafficking and illegal selling, especially in less-fortunate areas. Being raised in the underprivileged areas of Jamaica means that many artists are exposed to higher levels of crime and violence. "People are fighting for resources, it's no surprise that the crime rate is high, what do they have to lose"? writes Sonjah Stanley-Niah ( 7). Commentary from Jamaican-born scholars tends to propel the idea that crime is a popularly sung-about topic in view of the fact that it is prevalent and predominant in most artists' lives.

Human behavior is influenced by a wide range of factors. It is pivotal that narrow-minded thinkers and educators recognize that Jamaican society's increase of criminal activity is not based on one particular genre of music. Music alone does not cause crime, but it can influence attitudes and behaviors that may contribute to it. Especially in impoverished inner-city areas, music serves as social commentary for oppressed Jamaicans (Phipps, conclusion.) Therefore, it is unlikely that a single factor such as dancehall music can be solely responsible for crime rates in Jamaica (Boyne, 45.)

Along with violence, dancehall music has also been frowned upon for possessing direct homophobic representation in lyrics. Criticisms of these lyrics have, at times, led to the banning of dancehall on airwaves. . Additionally, foreign media depictions are widespread,and certain artists are unable to earn foreign currency from overseas income. Most commentators that advocate for the banishment of homophobic music merely focus on why these topics are being sung about. Instead, they tend to conclude that dancehall artists should be shamed for modeling direct homophobia. In the cases of some researchers, it is evident that they fail to investigate the reasoning behind certain lyrics.

Repeatedly, the upbringing of dancehall artists is often overlooked by critics. Jamaica has been characterized as "one of the most homophobic and transphobic societies globally" (Smith, Abstract.) The island's culture is not static nor universal and its music is a form of cultural expression that reflects the experiences and aspirations of the country's society. (Cooper, 4.) Sonjah Stanley-Niah explained that those who are critiquing Jamaican lyrics have obviously not been raised in the same neighborhoods as some of these artists…and do not understand the cultural complexity of Jamaican heritage (Niah, 3.) Many residents are unfamiliar with the experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, which can ultimately lead to prejudice and discriminatory behavior. Colonial legacies, lack of education, violence and discrimination, religious beliefs, and lack of legal protections are several components that influence the continuous generational homophobic perspective. In terms of the colonial legacy, the British imposed strict moral codes, including those related to sexuality. These codes have had a lasting impact on Jamaican society. The country also inherited a legal system that criminalized homosexuality, as well as an educational system that continues to lack schooling and awareness about LGBTQ+ issues. A large portion of Jamaica's population is Christian, resulting in many citizens holding conservative views on sexuality and gender. The influence of religious leaders and institutions has contributed to the marginalization of LGBTQ+ individuals and the promotion of anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes and behavior. In an interview highlighting homophobic attitudes in Jamaican music, Father Sean Major-Campbell added that artists and DJs "cannot be blamed for singing about what they know, it's this country's government that continues to let systems be run with these views" (Campbell, 1:41.) To accurately address and accredit the issue of homophobic lyrics and homophobic-instigated violence, awareness of ingrained cultural attitudes and beliefs about sexuality is vital.

In all, it is clear that the relationship between dancehall music and crime is complex and multifaceted. While it is true that some dancehall lyrics may be interpreted as promoting, violence, criminal behavior, and homophobia, it is additionally important to consider the broader context in which the music is created and consumed, as well as the many other factors that more clearly contribute to crime..While some seem to believe that dancehall music intensifies and strengthens the criminal footprint in Jamaica, the evidence suggests that it is not a key driver of crime.Observing key factors such as societal upbringing, economic and political factors and educational barriers (to name a few) is vital when making such profuse claims. It is crucial to approach the topic with a nuanced understanding and engage in evidence-based discussions that consider the complex social, economic, and cultural factors that shape the genre, and the experiences lived by the artists. This viewpoint can assist to foster a better understanding of the role that dancehall music, as well as other cultural forms, plays in shaping our society.

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