

Performing Otherness in Guyanais Dancehall: An Analysis of the Rude Bwoy and Bad Gyal
Personas

By

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Abstract

This dissertation is at the intersections of Black popular culture, French Cultural studies, and Linguistic Anthropology. Primarily, this project focuses on the diffusion of Jamaican dancehall music and culture in Guyane (French Guiana), an Overseas Department and region of France. Dancehall music as a status granting institution (Stanley Niaah 2004) offers Guyanais artists radical politics along racial, gender, sexual, and linguistic lines. Rather than looking to France, Guyanais dancehall audiences and performers, I argue, find an influential source of identification in a trans-Caribbean culture. This phenomenon complicates our understanding of Francophone identity as Guyanais people choose to identify with a regional Black Caribbean identity even as they exist in the Francophone world. More specifically, I draw on semi-structured phone interviews from dancehall enthusiasts in Guyane, a linguistic analysis of code-switching between Jamaican Creole and Guyanese Creole, and a study of the embodiment of the "bad gyal" and "rude bwoy" personas to examine how Jamaican dancehall music is creatively appropriated in Guyane.

Dedication

Dedicated to 11-year-old me, who believed she would do great things.

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¹ "Big up" is an expression of respect and recognition. It is an acknowledgment of how much you mean to someone. The sentence can be translated as "You all should "Big Up" yourself.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Nou French Guiana...
My French Guiana, Your French Guiana...
All a di world seh Guiana...
Jahyanai pan di ting, so yuh know seh a di Guiana.

[Our French Guiana...
My French Guiana, Your French Guiana...
Everyone in the world is repping French Guiana...
Jahyanai singing on the beat, so you know he's repping Guiana.]

1.1 Nou French Guiana

The above lyrics are from the song "French Guiana" by Scridge featuring Jahyanai and Bamby, three Guyanais (French Guianese) artists. Jahyanai² deejays the lines above, indicating his love and appreciation for his homeland, Guyane. He uses a "we vs. them" discourse to explain the significance of "Nou French Guiana." He asserts that his crew is not only the Rude Empire music group, but it is also the entire Guyane. He affirms a "Nou/We" identity that champions Guyanité (French Guianeseness). Even though Guyane has a diverse population with individuals speaking a plethora of languages, Jahyanai affirms his fealty and admiration for his country, Guyane. As he establishes a "Nou/We" that encompasses Guyane, he constructs a "Yo/Them" that distances himself from France and Frenchness.

Broadly, "French Guiana" is a song that describes a conflict between two rival groups. It underscores the importance of geographical difference and in-group solidarity, particularly the distinction between Guyane and France. All three artists defend their turf, Guyane, and celebrate Guyanité in various ways. They detail different locations, themes, and ideologies associated with Guyane. For instance, they talk about the Amazon, the richness of Guyanais cuisine, the diversity

² Jahyanai King will be referred to as Jahyanai King, Jahyanai or the Rude King.

and beauty of Guyanais women, and the Rude Empire Music group.³ They employ a multilingual repertoire in song incorporating Guyanais Creole, Jamaican Creole, taki-taki,⁴ and French. All three Creoles have been stigmatized and considered non-standard languages to varying extents (Alby and Léglise, 2018; Léglise and Migge 2021; Patrick 1997). Each artist uses their multilingual repertoire to index ideologies and identities and challenge negative ideologies. They elevate all three Creole languages to a status of prestige in the French Caribbean dancehall space. By alternating between Creoles, they underscore the revalorization of Creole languages. For instance, taki-taki is often considered "simple speech," "easy to learn," and not as complex grammatically, when compared to French (Léglise and Migge, 2006, p.16). Additionally, it is associated with Maroon communities that do not share the same status in Guyanais society compared to Guyanais Creoles. The use of Jamaican Creole in song in the performances of Jahyanai and Bamby indexes ideologies related to the stylization of the "rude bwoy" and "bad gyal" figures. Both personas index ideologies associated with "toughness," "coolness," deviant

³ The music label company owned by Jahyanai. Both he and Bamby are a part of Rude Empire.

⁴ Taki-taki was first used by non-Maroons in Suriname in the 20th century in a pejorative way to refer to Sranan Tongo and other Maroon languages (Léglise and Migge 2017, 4). In Guyane, after the socio-political and historical changes in the 90s (see chapter 2), however, non-Maroons started to use taki-taki to refer to all English lexified Creoles spoken by Maroons in a pejorative way (4). In the current day languagescape of Guyane, taki-taki has been reappropriated by Maroon communities (5). Léglise and Migge's (2012) investigation on taki-taki highlights that it "is used by a wide range of social actors in French Guiana to reference linguistic practices associated with the English-based Creoles... they assign to it widely differing social meanings and referents and they construct varied linguistic and social distinctions and entities. The term Takitaki is used to highlight a range of newly emerging social categories, identities, social distinctions, and relationships prompted by on-going macro-social processes of change such as migration, urbanization and social reconstitution that have been affecting this region in the last two and a half decades" (11). They argue that taki-taki possibly creates three categories for its speakers: "ours" and "theirs," while also referring to "the people from the other country" (11). For metropolitan, Antillean and middle-class people, it signifies a separation in prestige and power, assigning taki-taki to "local low status" (11).

sexuality and gender expression, and their performance of lyrical (metaphorical) violence, rivalry, and self-exaltation.

Jahyanai and Bamby, as members of the Rude Empire Music group, assert their allegiance and self-identify as locally-oriented and Guyanais. Jahyanai embodies the "rude bwoy" persona through his leadership and allegiance to Rude Empire. Additionally, throughout his lyrics, he argues that he is prepared for a lyrical confrontation in the sense of a dancehall sound clash,⁵ or a physical fight in order to defend his turf, Guyane. He also demonstrates his multilingual versatility by switching between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole. For instance, in:

Ready man a Ready from mi born.
[I've been ready since the day I was born.]

Mo pa ka bat deyè pas mo doubout.
[I never back down, I always stand strong.]

Additionally, he embodies his "rude bwoy" person by demonstrating "toughness" through his readiness to fight and protect his community lyrically and physically.

Bamby asserts herself as the "bad gyal," the counterpart to the "rude bwoy" and a member of Rude Empire. She also draws on discourse associated with "toughness" and rivalry, similar to Jahyanai's claim of "we/nous" discourse that asserts his Guyanité. She states:

Dem seh they wanna kill me.
[They say they want to kill me.]

A mi dem a fight all di time.
[It's me who they always choose to fight.]

⁵ Similar to a rap battle.

Additionally, Bamby embodies non-normative sexual and gender expression, particularly through her erotic displays of the body, sexually explicit and sometime violent lyrics. For instance, Bamby declares her loyalty to the Rude Empire Music Group and Guyane as Guyane's very own "bad gyal." Here, she draws on discourse surrounding her sex appeal and beauty. Using a repertoire that includes Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole as she recounts her story of rivalry and conflict, she says:

Mo ka fè palé rélé mo Black Madonna.
[I'm making them talk, they call me Black Madonna.]

Toute moun ka mande mo to lo bò ké sa road.
[They ask when I'm heading out.]

When mi touch di road: "Bamby so sweet."
[When I'm out: (They say) "Bamby's such a wonderful woman."]

In stylizing the "bad gyal," Bamby represents herself as a sex icon similar to Madonna from the United States. Her use of Madonna also pays homage to Lady Saw, a famous Jamaican dancehall artist who is often referred to as Black Madonna (Skelton, 2002). Both the American Madonna and Lady Saw as Black Madonna embody nonnormative performances of female sexuality and sexual freedom. Bamby refers to both persons simultaneously, highlighting the importance of sexual liberation in dancehall. Interestingly, Jahyanai personifies Guyane, calling it "Bad Gyal Guiana," giving it similar attributes to Bamby.

Scridge, unlike Bamby and Jahyanai, paints a more nuanced picture of Guyane by centering the voices and the lived experiences of Guyane's Maroon communities. His multilingual repertoire draws on French, Guyanais Creole, taki-taki, and Jamaican Creole to underscore Guyana's cultural and linguistic diversity. He begins the song in taki-taki:

Mi de naa liba.
[We are on the river.]

De wani beli mi.
[They want to bury me.]

Dem seh dem wan fi kill mi.
[They say they want to kill me.]

Mi sabi taki i wani'm libi
[They want to take my life.]

Scridge evokes the image of the Maroni River that is home to Guyane's and Suriname's Maroon communities. Employing taki-taki, he asserts that indigeneity, specifically as a descendant of Maroons, is a vital part of Guyanité. Like Jahyanaï and Bamby, he enters the "we vs. them" discourse, attempting to protect himself. Given the complicated relationship between Maroon communities and the Surinamese and French States, I infer that he refers to both State powers as the "they." Scridge sings his only verse in French, where he continues to focus on the parts of Guyane that he admires. He says :

De retour en Saint Laurent retour au pays.
[Back to Saint Laurent back to the country.]

Je mange du couac de wasai et du Bami.
[I'm eating cassava with açai and bami.]

Ma guyane qu'est-ce que je t'aime, tu t'embellis.
[My French Guiana, how I love you so, you make yourself more beautiful.]

Je quitte le perif pour l'amazonie.
[I'm leaving the ghetto for the Amazon.]

Chez toi t'as tant à donner.
[Home, you have given so much.]

Ya que les jolies bad gyal bronze.
[There are only beautiful dark-skinned girls here.]

Even though Scridge resides in France, he proclaims that he is leaving the periphery for the Amazon. Discussions on France and its overseas regions and territories assert France as the

center; its departments are often considered peripheral and geographically and ideologically separate from France. More specifically, Scridge says "le p rif," which refers to *Le boulevard P riph rique de Paris*. Encircling Paris, it "is a 35-kilometer-long highway that, to a few exceptions (mainly the two forests of Boulogne and Vincennes), mark the separation between the Paris municipality and suburban municipalities" (Lambert 2015). This has resulted in racial and class divides where areas on the outskirts of the p riph rique house "the most economically precarious municipalities in the North of Paris (Clichy, Saint Ouen, Saint Denis, Aubervilliers, Pantin, and Le Pr  Saint Gervais)" (Lambert 2015). In this iteration of the meaning of "le p rif," Paris becomes the center and the outskirts becomes the periphery where ethnic minorities in Paris experience economic and social disparities. Ang lil and Sires (2012) argue that in "create[ing] the banlieues, France found itself replaying a former colonial refrain, only this time within its own national borders" (60). As Scridge's draws on the symbolism of "le p rif" in his verse, he complicates race, space and place within the center and periphery divide. More specifically, in the Guyanais context, he reverses the binary positions, seeing France as peripheral to Guyane and the Amazon, and repositions Guyane as the center. This is evident in his choice to sing the above verse in French rather than in taki-taki, like in the earlier parts of the song. In French, he indexes his appreciation of Guyane and the cultural and ethnic diversity of his Maroon community that resides in the Amazon. Not only does he highlight the multilingual and multicultural context of living in the Amazon and Guyane, but he also critiques France and Frenchness as he says "Je quitte le perif pour l'amazonie." As he sings in French, he decenters France as the metropole and recenters Saint Laurent, the Amazon, and Guyane as places of social, linguistic, and cultural importance.

In "French Guiana," Jahyanäi, Bamby, and Scridge engage in Creole multilingualism to assert their Guyanité. Considering Guyane's diverse population, collectively, they draw on Guyanais Creole, taki-taki, and French (in Scridge's case). They also stylize Jamaican dancehall tropes and aesthetics concerning the "rude bwoy" and "bad gyal" personas and the importance of their Rude Empire music group by using Jamaican Creole. "French Guiana" demonstrates intercommunity and inter-language solidarity within Guyane. Drawing on a "we vs. them" discourse in the song, the artists assert a Guyanité that highlights cultural diversity and positions them in opposition to Frenchness. For example, although a section of the song was in French, Scridge spoke about leaving France to return home to the Amazon. Additionally, by drawing on Jamaican Creole and stylizing their personas, we see that Bamby and Jahyanäi situate their shared ideologies, history, culture, and positionality as a part of the larger Caribbean. Moreover, as Frenchness seeks to *Other* minority communities in mainland France, it also *Others* Guyanais people positioning Guyane on the "the periphery of the periphery" (Taglioni and Romain 2020, 26). In this song, however, Scridge, Bamby and Jahyanäi all challenge the notion of Guyane as peripheral and recenter Guyane and Guyanité as crucial to the understanding of Francophone identity.

1.2 Situating Black France

Located outside of metropolitan France, Guyane, an overseas region and collectivity of France, problematizes notions of Frenchness. Frenchness, grounded on republican ideals, suggests a sense of sameness on the basis of French national identity and history, rather than cultural, ethnic, or racial diversity. This postulation of sameness is problematized by Guyane's history, peripheral status, and composite culture (Sabine 2011; Réno and Phipps 2017). Guyane's

history is one rooted in French colonialism, Plantation slavery, and neo-colonialism similar to the history of the rest of the Caribbean (Bernas, 2020; Mam-Lam-Fouck, 1996; MacLeod and Wood 2018). Dissimilarly, its past and current history is representative of Indigenous peoples and Maroon communities' fight for autonomy in Guyane against French assimilation (Hidair and Ailincal, 2015). Furthermore, there has been an ongoing migratory flow of diverse groups of people that has shifted the population's composition (Mam-Lam-Fouck, 1992, 329- 349; Hurpeau, 2012). The current diversity of Guyane's population and the increased migratory flow of foreigners challenges the formation of a national identity based on Guyanité (or Frenchness) since foreigners account for over 30% of the entire population (Hurpeau, 2012, p. 8). Guyane has become a polyethnic society, raising questions about in-group and out-group affiliations that undermine universalism. As an intervention in French Cultural Studies, Black Studies, Caribbean Studies, and Creolistics, in this dissertation, I look at Guyanais dancehall and examine identity construction and negotiation in the Francophone Caribbean from a lens that is often not considered.

Situated amidst French Cultural Studies, this dissertation is a part of the endeavor to theorize and situate Black France or France Noire (Célestine 2011; 2010; Célestine and Martin-Breteau 2016; Cottias 2007; Keaton, Sharpley-Whiting, and Stovall 2012; Ndiaye 2008; Thomas 2006). Mudimbe-Boyi's (2012) chapter in *Black France/France Noire: The history and politics of Blackness*, "Black France: Myth or Reality? Problems of Identity and Identification" has become crucial in my understanding of France Noire and how Guyanais people position themselves in relation to France and Blackness. Mudimbe-Boyi defines the word "Black" in Black France as

a generic term that designates multiple and diverse subjects originating from various continents and parts of the globe with completely different trajectories and historical

paths: Africa, the Americas, Asia, and now Europe. Linguistically, it does not seem certain that in English "Black France," ... necessarily covers all that is signified in the words "France noire." While "Black France" may be transparent in the same way that "Black America" is, "France noire" by contrast proves to be polysemic. (20)

The term "France Noire," in contrast to the English, Black France, underscores a plethora of other possibilities. She gives a detailed description:

... "France noire" by contrast proves to be polysemic. The first meaning is devoid of any racial reference: it trivially refers to an underground France, parallel, clandestine, and invisible. In the second sense "France Noire" is amenable to politics and history and embodies the French imperialist vision. It designates, in effect, Blacks outside France, but from a territory in France's possession and under French political dominance, as is the case with the African colonies and the French Overseas Departments and territories... The third meaning of "France noire," a contemporary one, concerns the Blacks within Metropolitan France. It implicitly raises the questions of belonging and non-belonging while simultaneously acting as an intervention, affirming the Self as a being and as a subject... In their semantic similarity, "Black France" and "France noire" go well beyond a simple physical Black presence in France. In the signified, they carry a subtext: a claim for the right to speak, the contestation of dominance, marginalization, and invisibility within French society where these exclusionary practices contradict republican ideals. (20-21)

Additionally, she highlights the liminal position in which Black people are placed in the Black Francophone diaspora. She states that "[a] France noire situates the Black in a double liminal position: French but Black, or Black but part of France" (21). Mudimbe-Boyi's theorization of France Noire sums up Guyane's relationship with their colonial and neo-colonial power, France. Guyane is both politically and economically a part of France and its history, however, it has been placed in this liminal position. With respect to Guyane's positionality, it is often overshadowed or marginalized in conversations on France or, more specifically, the overseas departments and regions. The first chapter in this dissertation situates Guyane's liminal status in relation to France and Frenchness. In this double liminal position, France Noire fosters "a relationship of similitude and difference, inclusion and mutual exclusion, and... belonging and non-belonging" (Mudimbe-Boyi 2012, 24). This postulation holds true for Guyane and Guyanais identity.

1.3 Black and Caribbean Popular Culture and Identity Negotiation

Scholars who have worked on the theorization of the Francophone Black and Caribbean diaspora include Aimé Césaire (1947; 2001; 2017), Frantz Fanon (2008), Édouard Glissant (1990; 1992), Jean Bernabé et al (1993), who have influenced the larger field of Black Studies. Additionally, scholars like Stuart Hall (1989; 1992), and Paul Gilroy (1993), among others, have been crucial in reconceptualizing the Black diaspora with reference to collective identity and the importance of difference amongst Black diasporic peoples.

Stuart Hall (1989) states that there are two possible ways of conceiving "cultural identity." The first has to do with the postulation of "shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self, hiding inside the many other, more superficial, or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (232). This has been helpful in conceiving a Pan-African identity. For instance, in the literature and political movement of Négritude. Furthermore, Hall argues that this collective view of identity has offered us an opportunity to view the Black identity through processes of dispersal and fragmentation. The second view of cultural identity acknowledges:

the many points of similarity... critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather - since history has intervened - 'what we have become'. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side - the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean's uniqueness. Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. (233-234)

Hall argues that it is from the second understanding of cultural identity that we are able to truly understand the Black colonial experience, the process of *Othering* that occurred, and its impact on the Black diaspora. In thinking in terms of Caribbean identities and diaspora, Hall urges us to see identity using both approaches. Caribbean identity simultaneously grounds itself in the

historical happenings of the past of slavery, Indigenous genocide, indentureship, and fragmentation that allows us to speak of the similarities between the Caribbean experience and the Black experience. However, there have always been key differences within the communities that were dispersed and within the current-day conception of Caribbean identity. Talking about the differences and similarities between Martinique and Jamaica, he says that they are "*both* the same and different" (235). I understand the relationship between Jamaica and Guyane to be quite similar. Even though individuals in both countries may not have had the experience of the same political or colonial power, they both share similar historical experiences and the key experience of being *Othered*. This situates Guyane and also guyanité (polysemic) as a part of the larger Caribbean diaspora and the Black diaspora based on the first view of identity that Hall puts forth.

In the second articulation of cultural identity, difference becomes important. In studies on the Caribbean and the Black diasporas, there has been a need to research areas of the diaspora that have been left out (Stephens 2009). Stephens underscores the importance of including "the anglophone Caribbean [which has been] a shadowy presence and bridge between the British metropolis and the US global superpower" and "the hispanophone and francophone worlds as they join what had been a primarily anglophone conversation between black populations in Europe, America, and the Caribbean" (1). The study of the Black diaspora and its knowledge and cultural production, as a transnational approach to the study of people of African descent, is an important aspect of this dissertation. Guyanais dancehall as a locus of study centers Blackness in the Guyanais context. It offers us the opportunity to be in transnational dialogue with scholars who have worked on Black diasporic communities in the French Antilles, the larger Caribbean, and the global Black community. In dialogue with primarily anglophone scholars from the Caribbean and francophone scholars on the francophone Caribbean and Black France in general,

this dissertation is a needed intervention in the study of the Caribbean and the Black diaspora to center identity formation and negotiation in La Guyane Française.

With popular culture as a locus, this dissertation allows us to interrogate the flows of popular culture in the Black diaspora. Nurse (1999) in her article, "Globalization and the Trinidad Carnival," maintains that:

In the context of these structural rigidities the region has developed a capacity to engage globalization and modernity creatively and politically by drawing upon its popular cultures as a source of cultural identity while participating in the dominant Europeanized culture. Caribbean popular culture forms have been an important mechanism for political resistance and social protest against European cultural hegemony by marginalized groups, especially the African diasporic populations throughout the region. (681)

Drawing on the work of Hall (1992), she underscores that popular culture is inherently a contradictory space. Hall (1992) specifically states that:

... popular culture has historically become the dominant form of global culture, so it is at the same time the scene, par excellence, of commodification, of the industries where culture enters directly into the circuits of a dominant technology — the circuits of power and capital. It is the space of homogenization where stereotyping and the formulaic mercilessly process the material and experiences it draws into its web, where control over narratives and representations passes into the hands of the established cultural bureaucracies, sometimes without a murmur. It is rooted in popular experience and available for expropriation at one and the same time. (108)

Grounded in his understanding that cultural identity is a "matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'" (Hall 1989, 234), Hall asks us to see popular culture outside the realm of authenticity and to see it as "dialogic strategies and hybrid forms essential to the diaspora aesthetic" (Hall 1992, 110). Hence, for Nurse (1999),

...in Caribbean culture... there are no pure forms and... everything is hybridized or the result of the confluence of several cultural traditions. The dynamics of this experience on the African diaspora has been described as one of 'double consciousness' by Paul Gilroy (1993). The negotiation of cultural identity by Caribbean people takes on an additional twist with the emergence of a diaspora in North America and Europe after the Second World War, what Stuart Hall (1991) refers to as the 'twice diasporized' peoples. (662)

This approach to Caribbean identity is useful in a variety of ways. Particularly, it allows us to understand that the negotiation of Caribbean identity and cross-cultural interactions has been a part of a lineage of Caribbean-specific modes of identification and resistance. Additionally, it allows us to situate popular culture as a part of the processes of globalization.

Scholars on issues of globalization often debate the processes of homogenization and heterogenization (Appadurai 1996; 2000). Cultural homogenization posits that periphery cultures are becoming more westernized with a fear of Americanization (McDonaldization) (Harvey 2005; Phillipson and Skutnabb - Kangas 1996; Ritzer 1996). The other approach, cultural heterogenization, maintains that is not about the binary opposition of the local or periphery culture, but about the ways in which their cultures are negotiated producing hybridized outcomes (Robertson 1992; Pennycook 2010). In thinking about poles and flows of influences with respect to Black popular culture, both the United States and Jamaica stand out. They both exist as sites for the conceptualization of Blackness globally in terms of the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993) or as a transnational representation of Modern Blackness (Thomas 2004). By negotiating identity construction through Black popular culture, Guyanais dancehall artists situate space, race, and place as important. They navigate globalization and Black popular culture by drawing on processes of creolization: musical, linguistic, and cultural.

1.4 Creolization

In this dissertation, I locate a trans-Caribbean discourse between the anglophone Caribbean, Jamaica, and the Francophone Caribbean, Guyane. More specifically, I situate the performance of the "rude bwoy" and "bad gyal" personas by Guyanais dancehall artists Bamby and Jahyanai as a part of the lineage of cross-fertilization (Gilroy 1993) of Caribbean cultural

and knowledge production. As Hall (1989) states, there are key differences and similarities between the two countries, however creolization as a musical, cultural, and linguistic term is important in the historical, linguistic, and cultural development of both Jamaica and Guyane and to my conceptualization of this trans-Caribbean discourse.

The origins of the word 'Creole' stem from the Iberian colonization of the Americas, where the term 'criollo' was used to describe people who were born in the Americas during the initial period of colonialization, both white colonists and enslaved Africans (Cruse, 2015; Palmié 2006). In the early use of the term, it did not connote racial difference or mixed race-ness for white colonists. It was not until the end of plantation slavery in the Caribbean that the term Creole was operationalized as a racialized category, in part due to wanting to differentiate the current inhabitants from the new indentured laborers (Chinese, East Indians), and later, as a nationalistic discourse that saw difference as a site of unity (Palmié 2006). In the nineteenth century, linguists tied the process of creolization to a racialized hierarchy, claiming that enslaved Africans could not fully acquire the colonial variety due to 'limitations' (Moreira de Sousa et al., 2019, p. 26).

Using the word creolization as a cultural concept rather than a linguistic term, Baron and Cara's (2011) general definition is fitting for the various ways in which I conceive of creolization. They define creolization as:

When cultures come into contact, expressive forms and performances emerge from their encounter, embodying the sources that shape them, yet constituting new and different entities. Fluid in their adaptation to changing circumstances and open to multiple meanings, Creole forms are expressions of culture in transition and transformation. Traditionally associated with the New World cultures of Caribbean and Latin American Creole societies, creolization is now increasingly viewed as a universal process that could occur anywhere cultures encounter one another.... The concept of creolization was first formulated through the study of languages in colonial situations—especially in the Americas—where people who met speaking mutually unintelligible tongues developed a linguistic medium to communicate among themselves. They restructured the existing

languages of the colonizers and colonized, creating new Creole languages with distinctive phonology, morphology, and syntax (see Baker and Mühlhäusler 2007, 102). The emergence of languages, deeply expressive of their corresponding new cultures, pointed not only to new cultural forms but to new power relations and aesthetic dimensions. (3)

Creolization defined as a process is crucial to my understanding of the term. It highlights the fact that creolization was a necessary phenomenon in the Caribbean due to colonization and slavery. Additionally, it underscores the importance of creolization as a process rather than a final product. In order to relate to the *Other* and to new technological advances, cultures and people have had to adjust how they relate to and see the world. As individuals are exposed to new languages and cultures, they can choose to share their own, pick and choose aspects of a new culture that resonate with them, as well as refuse aspects that do not relate to them, emphasizing individuals' active role in world-making. Consequently, processes of cross-fertilization of the Caribbean (Gilroy, 1993) and Creole-specific cultural, linguistic, and musical influences feed the creation of the genres.

Caribbean societies are sites of different modes of creolization. For instance, with respect to Jamaican musical creations, bricolage,⁶ and creolization work together in processes such as dub mixing, versioning, and remixing to create new genres as well as new riddims.⁷ Jamaica has a long history of creating musical genres that have transcended its national borders. Jamaica's sound system culture,⁸ in particular, has played a huge role in disseminating local and foreign music, as well as forming Jamaica's urban youth culture. In the sound system space,

⁶ Derrida, 1993.

⁷ Jamaican Creole word for rhythm.

⁸ A sound system can be described as a combination of record players, large speakers, amplifiers with deejays (DJs) and master of ceremonies (MCs) who broadcast music in outside venues in Jamaica.

Jamaicans created new musical forms such as ska, rocksteady, dub, and dancehall, which all were influenced by Jamaica's first creolized and indigenous musical form: mento.⁹

Jamaica's sound system culture is a good example of the processes of creolization that have occurred musically, socio-historically, and politically in Jamaica. Sound systems came about during the 1940s and were originally a popular disseminator of American rhythm and blues (Stolzoff 2000, 41-42). Over time, it became a vehicle of creativity, as well as a means of political stance-taking for Black lower class Jamaicans. For instance, the creolization of rhythm and blues and jazz along with Jamaican local musical forms, such as mento, buru/burru,¹⁰ and revival,¹¹ created ska in the 1950s (Stolzoff 2000, 60). Ska coincided with the historical period of Jamaica's independence and was inscribed into the national imaginary. Consequently, it became important to the construction of Jamaican national identity. Reggae music and its roots and culture movement are also a part of Jamaica's musical lineage. Reggae emerged in the late 1960s

⁹ Chang and Cheng state that "Mento was the dominant music of Jamaica from its first appearance in the late 19th century up to the 1930s and was especially popular in rural areas. Even now mento is regarded ambivalently as 'country' music, somewhat crude and unsophisticated but hearkening back to days of lost, rustic innocence. Like most folk music, mento was a blend of music and dance, with songs mixing narrative and topical commentary. Mento has a clear, strong fourth beat in a bar of four beats and closely follows local speech patterns.... Mento songs are accompanied by various combinations of piccolo, bamboo fife, guitar, rumba box, fiddle banjo, shakers and scrapers"(1998).

¹⁰ Moskowitz (2006) maintains that "[t]he burru tradition of drumming dates back to the days of colonial Jamaica. During the colonial period, burru was allowed to survive because it was used in the field to encourage the slaves to work harder and to lift their spirits. After Count Ossie used the burru drumming style to reconnect his music with the African continent, it was taken up by several roots reggae artists, most notably Bob Marley" (46).

¹¹ Wedenoja (2012) states that "Revival is an indigenous religious tradition in the island of Jamaica. It is also one of many "Creole" or African diaspora religions found throughout the Americas, including Vodou in Haiti, Santeria in Cuba, Shango in Trinidad, Conjure and Hoodoo in the United States, and Candomble in Brazil.... Revival is principally an African-derived religion, although it is Christian as well. All are products of European colonialism, the African slave trade, the sugar plantation, and Christian missionization, as well as conditions of oppression, deprivation, marginalization, and cultural dissonance; that is, they are responses to often extreme conditions of social injustice" (224).

and represents another creative development in Jamaica's musical genealogy, evolving from other Jamaican genres, such as rocksteady and dub. Politically, the Rastafari Afrocentric movement and Jamaica's inner-city conditions after independence had a large impact on the themes of songs in reggae, as well as urged individuals to take political stances against racial and class injustices. Reggae became a symbol of anti-colonial and neocolonial discourses in Jamaica. Furthermore, it became a transnational representation of Black diasporic identity and an expressive tool against all sorts of oppression.

Both ska and reggae can be situated in the Jamaican musicscape as a part of Jamaica's sound system lineage, its history of creolization, and modes of resistance. Dancehall music and culture, the direct progeny of reggae, has followed a similar trajectory. It is a part of the processes of musical, linguistic, and ethnic creolization that has been sustained in the Caribbean. From the oral traditions of storytelling to traditional forms of music, such as mento, to its progeny, ska, rocksteady, reggae, and dub music, dancehall music represents a part of Jamaica's lineage of creolization.

Berrian (2000), Cyrille (2002), Guilbault et al. (1993) are a few of the scholars who have worked on French Caribbean music and identity. Pertaining to dancehall, Marie-Magdeleine (2013, 2016) has worked on Jamaican, Martinican, and Guadeloupean dancehall music, while Zobda-Zebina (2006; 2008; 2011) has worked on dancehall in Martinique and its relationship to French hip hop. Prior work has been done on the presence and role of reggae music in Suriname and Guyane, primarily amongst Maroon Communities (Bilby 1991; 2000; 2001). Bilby illustrates how reggae has become a marker of indigenous identity, Black resistance, and a means of negotiating Maroon identity in relation to the dominant Creole culture in Guyane and Frenchness. Situated amidst the body of work on French Caribbean popular culture, this

dissertation looks primarily at the global diffusion and influence of dancehall music and culture in Guyane.

Dancehall in Guyane is representative of the continuation of this process of creolization and trans-Caribbean dialogue that has fostered new configurations and collaborations between the anglophone and the francophone Caribbean. This is evident in the opening section of this dissertation, where Bamby, Jahyanai, and Scridge employ dancehall to talk about in- and out-group affiliation. Bamby and Jahyanai, in particular, draw on dancehall linguistic and cultural codes to assert their relationship to their Caribbean identity and Guyanité. As they make this move, they consciously position themselves in opposition to Frenchness. Instead, they identify with Caribbeanness, more specifically Caribbean Blackness, by stylizing a Jamaican Black lower-class music genre, dancehall. In the chapter on dancehall, I illustrate the transgressiveness of identity formation and negotiation in dancehall music. As a Black lower-class genre, I argue that dancehall is a status-granting institution (Stanley Niaah 2010) that offers Bamby and Jahyanai different forms of identification that privilege non-normative modes of being with respect to language use and hegemonic ideologies on masculinity, femininity, and sexuality.

1.5 Creole Languages and Creolistics

The process of stylization (Agha 2007; Coupland 2001; Rampton 1995) highlights the importance of language use and choice in performances such as dancehall. Language choice underscores key ideologies associated with the persona that an artist performs. These ideologies are at times even reflected in everyday life. In the case of Bamby's and Jahyanai's performances, their use of Creole languages in song is crucial in understanding how they navigate their identity and dominant flows of culture. In this dissertation, I draw on Black popular culture and Creole

languages to offer the field of linguistics, more specifically the study of Creole languages, Creolistics, an approach that centers popular culture as a useful site for linguistic analysis.

The history of the field of Creolistics is closely connected to the Caribbean's history of slavery and racial oppression, biased missionary and travel descriptions, and the influence of the Darwinian approach to the study of race and language (Roberge, 2006; Moreira de Sousa et al., 2019). This has all contributed to the co-naturalization of Creole languages and race, which have produced harmful ideologies about Creoles and their speakers. A key debate in Creolistics is the formation of Creole languages, which is also known as creolization. Some scholars maintain that Creole languages are a part of a process of pidginization that expands into creolization (Hymes 1971; Bickerton 1984; McWhorter 2001), while others believe that the Creole languages are a part of the natural evolution of languages (Ansaldo, Mathews and Lim 2007; Degraff 2003, 2005; Mufwene 2006; 2008). Some discourses in the field maintain that Creoles are different from 'non-Creoles' or that Creoles are 'failed attempts' by their speakers to acquire colonial varieties. These ideologies in Creolistics about Creole languages are also reflected in speaker perceptions, where speakers refer to their language as "patois," "broken," or "improper English/French." The colonial variety or the official language of Creole-speaking communities such as French or English is associated with educational opportunities and social mobility, while Creoles have been relegated to the status of folk culture, maintaining negative connotations stemming from the legacies of colonialism.

My approach to the study of Creole languages takes the theoretical stance of DeGraff's (2005) work on Creole exceptionalism, and Mufwene's (2008) work on language evolution. In addition, I employ a raciolinguistic approach to the study of Creoles using Alim, Rickford, and Ball's (2016) *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas about Race* and Rosa and

Flores' (2017) raciolinguistic perspective. I maintain that Creolistics and any study on Creole languages must consider the intersections of race, power, and identity in the Caribbean. Understanding Creole as a racialized construct allows us to examine ideologies, the use of Creoles in language contact, and identity negotiation.

Taking popular culture in Guyane as a locus of study enables us to examine the intersections of race, power, identity, and language in the formation of Creole societies. In this rapidly globalizing world, scholarship on language change, language variation, and sociolinguistics in Creole communities needs to be part of the larger conversations in linguistics and anthropology. Likewise, the broader field of linguistics would benefit from incorporating studies on Creole languages regarding racialization, language, and identity similarly to Alim et al (2016), Alim and Smitherman (2019), and Rampton (2007). Consequently, I analyze dancehall music and culture in Guyane to show how artists engage in Creole multilingualism by singing in primarily Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole (as well as taki-taki in the opening song). Additionally, they challenge notions of French national identity, gender, and sex norms as artists create imaginary communities that bypass Frenchness and engage in a trans-Caribbean and Creole multilingual discourse.

1.6 On the Gendered Politics of Respectability and Reputation

The social stratification of both Jamaican and Guyanais societies exists under patriarchy where discourses on gender relations intersect with race and class due to the history of colonial racialized and gendered hierarchy (Hope, 2006; Lefaucheur and Kabile, 2017). The normative gender and sexual politics in Guyane differ from that of metropolitan France (Guillemaut, 2013b). Masculinity is signaled by having multiple simultaneous sexual partners as well as

homophobia (Guillemaut, 2013b). Women are policed by respectability politics and female sexuality is “linked to transactional sexuality... reproduction (prohibited for female adolescents) and the denial of a sexual pleasure” (Lefaucheur and Kabile 2017, 407). Lefaucheur and Kabile maintain that analysis at the intersection of race-class-gender is “a new prism” in the field of French Cultural studies. Chapters four and five in this dissertation examine the stylization of the "rude bwoy" and "bad gyal" personas. They offer insight into how dancehall artists are negotiating heteronormative masculinity and femininity, while also challenging the rigid status quo in Guyane through explicit conversation on sex, erotic public display, lewd language, racial and ethnic pride, and other taboo topics.

Respectability politics and ideologies surrounding reputation influence the presentation of gender and sexuality in the Caribbean. Peter Wilson (1973), in his book *Crab Antics*, talks about respectability and reputation as class-based and gendered value systems in the Caribbean. Puri (2003), drawing on the work of Burton (1997), states that,

"Respectability" is oriented toward bourgeois valuations of the centripetal, toward standard English, home, family, hierarchy, decorum, stability, honesty, economy, delayed returns, and transcendence. In contrast, “reputation” is oriented toward the centrifugal, toward carnival, toward Creole, the street, autonomy, mobility, trickery, display, and transience. (23)

Respectability is often associated with women and reputation with men. Puri argues that the gendered binary is problematic as it positions women as "buying into dominant ideology [that] devalues the feminine" and men as resisting the dominant ideologies (31). He argues that reputation and respectability should be seen as mutually constitutive poles where "the performance of reputation depends on other performances of respectability" (32). Edmondson (2003), on the representation of the Black female body, additionally underscores the dangers of this binary. She states:

On the one hand, black women are represented as icons of respectability, virtuous women who must be properly educated and acculturated in order to take their place as symbols of national progress... the black nationalist ideal. On the other hand, black women are represented as the antiwoman, pathological and lascivious viragos who undermine the nationalist project... the historical stereotype, the nationalist nightmare against which the ideal labors. (2)

Similar to the rest of the Caribbean, the representation of femininity and sexuality in the French Caribbean has been policed by the notion of respectability (Giraud 1999; Zobda-Zebina 2011 cited in Lefaucheur and Kabile 2017), while ideologies on masculinity and male sexuality are governed by reputation, which is evident in the sexual liberties that are often afforded to men (Bombereau and Aleen 2008; Lefaucheur and Mulot 2012; Pourette 2006). Both Bamby and Jahyanai draw on the politics of resistance in dancehall music to undermine respectability and reputation. This form of resistance, which Cooper (2004) calls *slackness*, challenges conservative Jamaican discourse on culture and identity (3). In addition, it allows for new interpretations and varied possibilities of identification in dancehall that challenge the sexual and gender norms of the French Caribbean.

1.7 Overview of Chapters

The presentation of the chapters in this dissertation are as follows: Chapter one is on the Socio-Historical and Political Background of La Guyane Française. In this chapter, I examine Guyane's diverse population and constant migratory flows, and I argue that this context problematizes claims to Frenchness or even a collective Guyanais identity. Consequently, Guyanais people use popular culture as a means to navigate their identity by looking to the larger Caribbean to find modes of identification and resistance. In chapter two, on Dancehall Ka Global: Dancehall as A Status Granting Institution, I situate dancehall as a local Jamaican music genre and culture that has given rise to a transnational space. More specifically, I maintain that

dancehall is a status-granting institution that centers non-normative identities, languages, and ways of being. In chapter three, on Stylizing the Other: Theoretical Frameworks and Considerations, I engage with scholarship on performance, performativity, stylization, Blackness, gender, and sexuality in order to understand the processes of *Stylization of the Other*. Additionally, I introduce the two performers, Bamby and Jahyanai, their roles and status in the French Caribbean music industry and give an overview of their personas, the "bad gyal" and the "rude bwoy." In chapter four, on Rude King Jahyanai: From Cowboys to Rude Bwoys, I examine Jahyanai's persona, the Rude King. I illustrate how the figure of the "rude bwoy" in Jamaican culture is a part of the lineage of the cross-fertilization of the ideologies associated with the figures of the cowboy, outlaw, and gangster in American and spaghetti westerns that showcase the figure of the Maroon and Marronage, and the Rastafari. I argue that in performing dancehall, Jahyanai stylizes this persona and *petit marronage* by drawing on the history, cultural and political signification of the "rude bwoy." In chapter five, on Bad Gyal Bamby: From Real Wifey to Lyrical Guns and S'habiller Sexy en Body String, I examine the evolution of Bamby's "bad gyal" persona. Additionally, I illustrate the sexual politics and non-normative discursive femininity and sexuality that Bamby employs as she stylizes herself as a "bad gyal." I situate her persona amongst the lineage of the narrative of the *Vénus Noire* and argue that *slackness* allows her radical intersectional politics.

Chapter 2: The Socio-Historical and Political Background of La Guyane Française

Pour beaucoup de clandestins, la Guyane est l'el dorado. Au Surinam comme au Brésil, ils sont des milliers à venir de toute l'Amérique du Sud pour essayer de franchir la frontière... [Ils] affluent au Surinam, point de passage vers la Guyane qu'ils considèrent comme la porte d'un eldorado européen.¹² (franceinfo, 2017)

For many undocumented immigrants, Guyane is El Dorado. In Suriname as in Brazil, there are thousands coming from all over South America to try to cross the border... [They] flock to Surinam, a crossing point to Guyane, which they consider to be the gateway to a European El Dorado.

2.1 Introduction

The myth of El Dorado has had a long-lasting history throughout Latin America and the rest of the world. During the 1600s, Walter Raleigh wrote travel accounts that influenced many European explorations and expeditions for lost riches and the promised land of El Dorado (almost biblical). Throughout Suriname, Guyana, Amapá (Brazil), and Guyane in particular, this myth concerns the home of El Dorado in the gold town of Manoa near the shores of Lake Parime that has never been found (Wink 2014). The imagery of Guyane as a part of a mystical place of riches has lasted centuries and exists in present-day discourses on Guyane.

Taking the myth of El Dorado into consideration both literally and figuratively, Guyane can be conceived as both a geographical space that promises material wealth through gold, precious stones, or land, and a space that promises job security and a better means of life. Hence, there are three ways of understanding El Dorado. Firstly, it can be understood regarding the French government, since Guyane has always been considered a valuable location relating to the European conquest of indigenous land and resources. Its terrain, however, has been difficult to

¹² See franceinfo's website: https://www.francetvinfo.fr/replay-jt/france-2/13-heures/guyane-l-eldorado-des-clandestins_2438421.html.

maneuver and extract resources from. Whether it is through gold mining,¹³ or using Guyane's excess land space as a penal colony or for its space center, France has found a way to use Guyane's natural resources over the centuries. Secondly, Guyane is presently considered El Dorado in relation to immigrants from Suriname, Brazil, Guyana, Haiti, Saint Lucia, etc., seeking status under the French government. It is considered the door to the European Elysium, where immigrants seeking a better life can attain much higher pay and benefits than what they would receive in their home country. Lastly, for those who identify as Guyanais, there is a third conceptualization of El Dorado, where metropolitan France is seen as "El Dorado." To live there would guarantee better education and job opportunities (Hidair 2007, p. 634). Additionally, a European way of life would guarantee Guyanais people political and social power that they cannot attain in Guyane (634). Here, the idea of the paradisaical place is no longer Guyane. The discourse on El Dorado is projected onto metropolitan France where one can obtain wealth, resources, and a better life, far beyond the scope of life in Guyane.

The discourse on wealth, resources, and opportunity relating to El Dorado changes with one's positionality to both France and Guyane. Jones (1994) states that Guyane has always been a blank on the map much like a blank canvas waiting to be painted. Guyane has been "an empty space upon which [individuals] could project their fantasies: yearnings for the fabled riches of El Dorado, for a fertile garden of paradise, or conversely, nightmare visions of torment, a green hell of forced exile, confinement, disease, and death" (389). For immigrants existing outside the French State, any Overseas Department becomes a gold mine of opportunities and in this

¹³ France's quest for gold in the Americas includes: "1) the first gold rush (1858–1880) followed by (2) a peak production period (1880–1914), (3) a decline of activities spanning the world wars (1915–1945) and continuing after (1950–1970), and (4) a second gold rush, both artisanal and industrial, beginning in 1980" as well as current-day gold mining expeditions" (Jébrak, Heuret and Rostan 2021).

instance, Guyane becomes the ideal candidate. For the French, Guyane becomes a space filled with valuable land and natural resources, as well as a space associated with negative connotations such as exile and death. For Guyanais, Guyane is seen as a passageway towards the real El Dorado, metropolitan France, where their chances for a healthier and more successful life could possibly be actualized.

The multiple way of conceptualizing El Dorado provides us with a multifaceted view of Guyane and how it is perceived by insiders and outsiders. To understand the relationship between the new and old waves of immigrant communities, their relationship with each other and with France, in this chapter, I look closely at Guyane's demographics, history, political, and socio-economic context. More specifically, I give a brief history of Guyane, an overview of the various migratory flows that the Overseas Collectivity has undergone, situate Guyane geographically, as well as discuss Guyane's complex relationship to French universalism, and Creole particularism. By drawing on all the aforementioned information, I problematize Guyane's political status as a French Overseas Collectivity and its national status as French by examining how Guyane's diversity and issues around citizenship call into question notions of Frenchness and Creole identity. In doing so, Guyanais people, particularly Guyanais artists, look to the larger Caribbean to find modes of Caribbean forms of resistance and entertainment to negotiate identity.

2.2 Populations in Guyane

Discussing Guyane's migratory flows underscores the various identity politics at play in the Overseas Collectivity and how they complicate notions of Frenchness. Guyane has had a low population density since its inception. The plantation-based slavery system that the French

developed in Guyane was smaller than other French colonies. Thus, by the time of departmentalization, Guyane only had 21,837 people (Sabine 2011, 37). Since 1965, however, Guyane has had a rapid increase in population growth (of 2.6% per year), largely due to immigration (Cratère 2019). By the 1980s, its population had grown to 100,000 inhabitants; by 1999, it was up to 157,274; and by 2007, it had reached 215,036 (37). According to INSEE (2022), Guyane currently has a population of 276 128.¹⁴ The majority of the Guyane population lives along the coastline, which is considered the most developed area of the country. However, the largest part of the country is called the interior and is covered with the tropical forestry of the Amazon and remains isolated. Additionally, Guyane has a young population, with 50% of the population being 25 or younger (Cratère, 2019). Both Demougeot (2017) and Horatious-Clovis (2011) argue that in 20 years, Guyane's population will have surpassed the population of all other overseas territories and collectivities, if its population growth continues at a similar rate.

The following section gives an overview of the demographic changes that have occurred in Guyane in four parts: before slavery ended, after the abolition of slavery, after departmentalization, and modernizing Guyane.

Before the End of Slavery

Amerindian Community

The first inhabitants in Guyane were various Amerindian communities: Emerillon, Wayampi, Arawak, Palikour, Kalina, Wayana and Galibi (Tremblay 1992). They made up the first enslaved labor force during European colonialization. Due to bad treatment, the climate, and epidemics, these populations diminished, and European settlers decided to replace their labor

¹⁴ See website here: <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2011101?geo=DEP-973>.

with that of enslaved Africans. Additionally, Europeans were able to offer them protection against attacks from neighboring Maroon communities (Sabine 2011, 41-42). They have since been considered autonomous communities.

The Creole population

The Atlantic slave trade contributed to the first wave of migratory flows of white colonists and enslaved Africans in Guyane. By 1713, there were only 1,836 individuals, of which 1,454 were enslaved Africans, and by 1737, there were about 475 white colonists, 4,297 enslaved Africans, and 33 freedmen (Piantoni 2009, 200). By the end of 1830, there were 19,261 enslaved people in Guyane (Mam-Lam-Fouck 1999). The Creole population in Guyane are descendants of enslaved Africans who were forced to work on plantations.¹⁵ Unlike the plantation systems in other French colonies, Sabine (2011) argues that Guyane had fewer plantation owners and, hence, fewer plantations, because colonists could not stand the living conditions in Guyane. Furthermore, she maintains that "the plantation system in Guyane was a part of a vicious circle of unsuitability: the demand for slaves was low hence shipments of slaves were scarce, the labor force was often not renewed or reinforced which resulted in plantations producing fewer products, and plantations became poorer" (42).¹⁶

With the abolition of slavery in 1848, Guyane's society was restructured so that the newly Freedmen were able to attain social and political status. The white colonist population in

¹⁵ The cultivation on plantations included in sugar, cocoa, coffee, cotton, spices and bixa orellana (Sabine 2011, 28).

¹⁶ "Le commerce d'esclaves en a été ainsi perturbé : la demande était moins forte, les navires transportant les esclaves se faisaient rares, la main d'œuvre n'était pas renouvelée ni renforcée, le rendement diminuait et les plantations s'appauvrirent, les faisant ainsi entrer dans un cercle vicieux."

Guyane was outnumbered. Hence, newly Freedmen in Guyane's colonial society took on jobs and roles that were once only associated with white colonists, since they were greater in numbers (Sabine 2011, 43). They became known as the Creole population. Similarly to the rest of the Caribbean, color or differentiation based on skin color is one of the essential forms of social differentiation. Hence individuals were labeled as freed people of color, mixed blood, and mulatto (43).¹⁷

Maroon communities

Guyane's Maroon communities are descendants of runaway slaves from Dutch plantations (now known as Suriname). The Aluku (or Boni) have been a part of France since they sought refuge in Guyane during the 18th century (Granger 2012, 290). Additionally, they have lived on the Maroni River and have been able to cross the borders of Suriname and Guyane with ease.

After the Abolition of Slavery

Small immigration

After slavery ended, Calmont notes that newly freed people of color refused to work on plantations (2007). Instead, the settlers in Guyane had to resort to hiring contractual laborers. They hired 248 Madeirans between 1849 and 1851 (108). During 1854 and 1859, they hired 1,969 free Africans. However, the British advised against this, since it seemed similar to the

¹⁷ More specifically, Sabine states that "[d]ifférentes catégories d'affranchis composent ainsi la société coloniale ; les « gens de couleur » libres, les « sangs mêlés," les mulâtres s'insèrent dans les corps de métiers réservés habituellement aux Blancs, car ces derniers manquent. De sorte que les Créoles accèdent rapidement aux mêmes rôles sociaux que les Blancs et deviennent le modèle de référence de la société post-esclavagiste."

slave trade (108).¹⁸ Between 1956 and 1860, 8,472 Indian immigrants came to Guyane (108). They were rarely assigned agricultural work. They mainly worked gold mining jobs, which were arduous and dangerous.¹⁹ Additionally, Sabine (2011) states that the Chinese have been a part of Guyane's cultural and ethnic landscape for a long time. She notes three stages of Chinese migrations. The first stage was after the abolition of slavery, when the Chinese were used as a replacement for slave labor (50). In addition to the need for a labor force, China was experiencing a period of conflict and poverty, and Chinese people were looking for countries to which they could flee (50).

Brief History of Guyane

Guyane is often considered France's eldest daughter (Jones 1994). Cayenne was a French settlement in 1604 and a part of France's first empire (Lowenthal 1952).²⁰ The main goal of conquest of Guyane was to affirm French power in the Americas as well as to carry out their *mission civilisatrice*. Officially, Cayenne, now capital of Guyane, was founded in 1643 by La

¹⁸ Clamont's explanation of the reasoning: "Après l'abolition de l'esclavage, la France dut se préoccuper du recrutement des travailleurs pour ses colonies. A la Martinique, elle eut d'abord recours à l'immigration d'Indiens qui s'engageaient pour cinq ans, puis à des immigrants de race africaine. Ce dernier mode parut aux abolitionnistes une forme déguisée de la traite. Ils formulèrent des protestations qui aboutirent à une convention conclue le 1er juillet 1861 entre l'Angleterre et la France. Ce traité eut un double but : mettre fin au recrutement des immigrants sur la côte d'Afrique ; régler les conditions de l'immigration de coolies indiens dans les colonies françaises. Dans ces conditions nouvelles, l'immigration indienne fournit à la Martinique, de 1853 à 1884, 25.500 travailleurs dont 4.541 seulement demandèrent à être rapatriés. En décembre 1885, la Martinique a renoncé à ce mode de recrutement de travailleurs. La Guadeloupe a eu aussi recours aux immigrations indienne et africaine, jusqu'en 1887, époque de leur suppression. La Guyane, de même."

¹⁹ Clamont claims that even though the Indian immigration was massive, their current population is small. In 30 years after arriving in Guyane, 54% died, 16% went home or to Guadeloupe and the rest were only 2,283 (108).

²⁰ Known as equinoctial France at the time.

Compagnie du Cap Nord. In general, it took three-quarters of a century for the French to establish their presence in Guyane (1604 – 1676) due to the resistance of indigenous communities, as well as invasions by the British, Portuguese and Dutch (Mam-Lam-Fouck 1996, 25). In 1667, through the Breda treaty, the Dutch were forced to give up their land and plantations on what is known today as Guyane (Bernas 2020, 15). Both the Dutch and British then legally recognized French claims to land amongst the Amazon and the coastal areas in South America. The division of the three Guianas that we know today—Suriname, Guyana, and Guyane—is representative of a constant struggle and claims to territory along the border between the territories of colonial powers.²¹

Guyane then became a site for the expansion of the French empire and strategic placement for French economic and political gains. Firstly, it was a plantation-based society where the French enslaved Africans on small settlements across the coast during the seventeenth century to cultivate sugarcane and other cash crops (Wood 2018, 3).²² It has also been used as "a site of exile for refractory priests after the 1789 Revolution, and during the nineteenth century, plantation cultures and other settlement projects were formulated for the territory, including doomed plans for resettlement of free Black and Irish migrants and a more successful, utopian

²¹ With the treaty of Utrecht (1713), France conceded land and its navigation river Japoc to Portugal. This created more difficulties rather than solving the feud between France and Portugal because of the vagueness of the divisions. In present day Guyane, the border disputes about the Franco-Brazilian border as well as the Franco-Surinamese border have continued to cause issues between the two nations (for more information see Selegny 2006; Lam-Fouck 1996).

²² Comparing Guyane to Saint Domingue at the time of plantation slavery, one can highlight the fact that Guyane's "plantation sector was underdeveloped, [it] did not have a large, wealthy and influential white population or many absentee landowners" (Traver 2011, 111). Instead, Travers states that settlers hoped that Guyane would play "a crucial role in colonial defense" (111). They refused to abandon their goal of creating a colony that could defend and supply materials to the Caribbean islands. Furthermore, attempting new projects in Guyane was welcomed, even if they were accompanied by losses. Unlike in Saint Dominique, the impact was minimal (111). Hence settlers were willing to take more risks (111).

colony for freed slaves run by the Catholic Sister of Saint-Joseph-de-Cluny Anne-Marie Javouhey" (Wood 2018, 3). In 1851, it became a penal colony known as Devil's Island.²³ And in 1946, Guyane ceased being a colony of France and became fully integrated into the French Republic. Guyane was given the status of the Overseas Department. This move to departmentalization meant that those in Guyane who identified as French citizens had a chance to finally have equal rights and protection under the French state. Additionally, Kourou, a state in Guyane, became home to France's space station after France was forced to leave Algeria in 1964 (Wood 2018). The space center known as Centre Spatial Guyanais belongs to the European Space Agency and the French Space Agency. Furthermore, Guyane has large amounts of natural resources beneficial to both France and Europe. These include environmental resources, scientific expansions (biodiversity, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, pharmacology, developing renewable energies, and space technologies), mining opportunities, and green tourism (Sabine 2011; Lima- Perreira 2020).

From the Antilles

After the eruption of Mount Pelée in 1902, many Martinicans fled to Guyane. A year after, in 1903, around 517 Martinicans moved to Cayenne (Calmont 2007, 109).²⁴

²³ Devil's Island/ Île du Diable in French is what most people associated with Guyane. Evanson states that "[t]he *bagne* as hell is a timeworn metaphor that dates back to the early nineteenth-century descriptions of galley slaves and also mirrors the romantic descriptions of the prisons of Victor Hugo or Eugene Sue.... If Guyane and its prisons were Hell, its inhabitants were skeletons and cadavers already long gone. Guyane is not only a Hell but also a death trap" (in Wood 2018).

²⁴ Calmont states that many of the refugees were not counted both because they integrated easily into Guyanais society and because they already had family living there.

Penal Colony (Le Bagne)

From 1852 to 1938, Guyane became a penal colony for France, and about 70,000 prisoners from the metropole and Indochina were sent there (Calmont 2007, 108). The idea for this penal colony stemmed from the revolutionary period of 1792 to 1798, when France used Sinnamary in Guyane as a prison for 300 political enemies and priests. Sanchez (2016) states that the penal code created a "doublage" where:

transportés sentenced to less than eight years of hard labor were required at their release to remain in the colony a time equivalent to the duration of their sentence. Those sentenced to more than eight years had to remain in the colony for life. This allowed the prevention of the return of convicts to France and forced them to settle, temporarily or permanently, in the colony of French Guyana. (1)

The main goal of the penal colony was to introduce a substantial white population in Guyane.

Seconding this, Damas (2003b) says:

The slave trade is prohibited, we can imagine substituting it with the transportation of those who are condemned to forced labor and repeat offenders. We are counting on the abnormal, the defective, the scraps to populate Guyane, to give birth to large industries, to create a social environment that is comparable to that of the best collectivities.²⁵

The Gold Rush

The gold rush periods in Guyane during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries encouraged new migratory flows. Freed people of color and local migrants were the general workers during the first gold rush between 1855 and 1889 (Calmont 2007). Afterward, from 1880 to 1930, gold miners began to come from elsewhere: around 80% of the miners were from

²⁵ "La traite est interdite, on imagine de lui substituer la transportation des condamnés aux travaux forcés et des récidivistes. On compte sur les anormaux, les tarés, les rebuts, pour peupler la Guyane, y faire naître de grandes industries, y créer un milieu social comparable à celui des meilleures collectivités" (cited in Sabine 2011, 28).

the English Caribbean, such as Saint Lucia and Dominica and even Martinique and Guadeloupe (Calmont 2007, 109). During this period, there were around 10,000 gold miners; however, throughout the First and Second World Wars, their numbers dwindled to around 2000 at the time of departmentalization (Jolivet 1982 cited in Calmont 2007, 109).

Syrian-Lebanese Migration

During the nineteenth century, Lebanese Christians were experiencing religious persecution due to the Ottoman Empire's conflict with the Muslim empire (Calmont 2007, 110). The massacre of Christians in 1860 forced many Lebanese to flee to the Americas for safety (110). Those who ended up in Guyane obtained jobs in clothing and textile (110). The second wave of Lebanese migration began in 1914 through family reunification (Sabine 2011, 52).

2.3 After departmentalization

Small Immigration

The Bureau pour l'installation des personnes immigrées en Guyane (BIPIG) (Office for the Installation of Immigrants in Guyane) tried to establish European settlers in Guyane through their agricultural program (Calmont 2007, 110). However, they only received 263 political refugees from central and Eastern Europe (Hungary and Poland) who refused to return home after the atrocities in Germany (111). Additionally, the Bureau Agricole et forestier guyanais (BAFOF) (Office of Guyanais Agriculture and Forestry), during 1953 and 1957, hired Indonesians and Indo-Pakistanis from Suriname to help develop the rice farms in Guyane. Many people decided to return to Suriname; however, since 1955, there has been a significant number of Javanese families in Sinnamary (111). Furthermore, during 1951 and 1955, and then in 1959,

immigrants from Saint Lucia and Indonesians from Suriname came to Guyane to work in distilleries (111). Nearly 1000 Saint Lucians settled in Guyane (111).²⁶

French Metropolitans

After 1946, departmentalization gave way to migration from the Antilles and Metropolitan France. France decided to recruit many metropolitan French people as qualified personnel for Guyane's departmental administration because Guyane did not have the necessary socio-demographics (Calmont 2007, 112).²⁷ Additionally, many individuals from the Antilles decided to move to Guyane for work in the armed forces and eventually stayed in Guyane permanently (112). Calmont shows that at the start of departmentalization in 1946, there were only 1814 Antilleans and 1,017 metropolitan French people (112). By the end of 1999, there were 8,106 Antilleans and 18,560 metropolitan French people (112).

Chinese Immigration

By 1950, the Chinese population in Guyane began to grow due to family reunification and the grand exodus out of China in response to the formation of the Democratic Republic of China (Calmont, 2007, 113). Due to their constant migratory flow in and out of Guyane, Calmont (2007) states that it is difficult to number the Chinese population (113). He maintains that Chinese immigrants only reside in Guyane for a few months or a few years (113). Hence, Calmont (2007) argues that Guyane has become a place of transit for them rather than a place to

²⁶ Calmont highlights that Saint Lucians used to make up the largest immigrant populations in Guyane. In 1954, they made up 67% of the immigrant population and 8% of the total guyanais population (2007, 112). In 1974, they made up only 27% and in 1999% only 1% (112).

²⁷ Les fonctionnaires.

take root (113). In 1999, Calmont posits that there were roughly 3,000 Chinese people and half of them were French nationals (113). Today, the Chinese have become a huge part of Guyane through their monopolization of Guyane's commercial industry (113).

2.4 Modernizing Guyane

Le Plan Vert

*Le Plan Vert*²⁸ (the Green Plan) of 1975 served as a modernization initiative that the French thought would solve Guyane's problems (the population problem). Wood states that it:

proposed a large, initial investment in preparatory infrastructure by central government, followed by a programme of agriculture and industry to be implemented over the course of the next decade. This would be accompanied by the installation of around 10,000 families – counted as 30,000 people - from 'metropolitan' France and from other DOM-TOM, many of whom would work in forestry and associated industries; applicants could be allocated not only jobs but also property and resources to develop their own agricultural installations.²⁹ (2015, 98)

The *Plan Vert* was a failure and did not bring to fruition a number of improvements that were offered. However, it did result in a migratory increase of metropolitans: 6,000 in 1974 to 18,000 in 1999 (Calmont 2007, 114). Including their children, the metropolitan population makes up 11% of the Guyanais population (115).

Hmong Ethnic Group

The US-led war in Indochina and Vietnam in 1975 impacted the lives of those who resided in Indochina and Vietnam. Specifically, it resulted in numerous people from Laos

²⁸ Plan global de développement.

²⁹ Guyane people rejected the *Plan Vert*. Some elected officials from Guyane told the National Assembly that they saw the *Plan Vert* as an instance of "recolonization" (Mam-Mam-Fouck 1992). Even Aimé Césaire, Deputy for Martinique, described it as a "génocide par persuasion."

seeking refuge abroad. About one-third of this refugee population was a part of the Hmong ethnic group. Since the Hmong had fought for both the US and France, they were resettled from refugee camps in Thailand to the US, Canada, Argentina, France, etc. (Calont 2007). Around 900 individuals were sent to Guyane: 470 in 1977 in Roura and 430 in 1979 in Mana (Calmont 2007, 115). There are around 2,000 of them in Guyane today (Calmont 2007, 115).³⁰

Centre Spatial Guyanais

During the 1960s, Guyane underwent numerous social changes with monetary aid from metropolitan France. Even though there was not that much structural development in Guyane, France began providing a considerable amount of financial and social aid (Calmont 2007, 115). This meant that the cost of living in Guyane was lower than the cost of living in neighboring countries, even though it was underdeveloped. The catalyst for this dynamic, Calmont (2007) says, is the development of the Kourou space center (115). The building of the space center meant that France had to quickly find a labor force. They needed individuals to build the center itself, a modern-day city that could house 12000 people (their new staff), as well as infrastructure, such as a bridge over the Kourou river, lengthening of the Cayenne airport

³⁰ The resettlement of the Hmong population was during the period of the *Plan Vert* mission. The Guyanais people saw the inclusion of the Hmong people in their population as "racial substitution" similar to what was promoted in the original *Plan Vert*. Wood argues that in response to their apprehension, Chirac (the French prime minister at the time) "accused opponents of the *Plan Vert* of 'extremism'... the Prefect accused them of 'Creole racism' and party-political point-scoring" (111). Additionally, similarly to the aim of the *Plan Vert*, Hmong people had continued their interest in *marâchage*. Wood highlights that "[b]y the 1990s they had become the principle producers and suppliers of fruit and vegetables to the market of Cayenne, and had also developed something of an 'ethnic' tourism industry in the village of Cacao" (111).

runway, widening, and strengthening the Cayenne-Kourou Road as well as creating a new deep-water port (116). With its small population, Guyane had to recruit an international labor force. This included temporary contract workers from Brazil, Colombia, and Suriname (116). Eventually, the contractual labor was replaced with many undocumented workers from Brazil, Suriname, Haiti, and Saint Lucia (116). Since this event, Guyane has continued to experience high rates of immigration, with the largest group of foreigners being Haitians, Brazilians, and Surinamese (116).

Brazilians

Even though Brazil borders Guyane, Brazilian immigration is only recent. The contractual work needed to build the town, space center, and the infrastructure associated with it influenced the recruitment of Brazilians from Amapá in 1965 (Calmont 2007, 117). Additionally, they were able to find work in 1975 during the era of the *Plan Vert* in construction and land clearing (117). In the 1980s, there were other important works in construction, such as the construction of a new launchpad and a hydroelectric dam for the space center, construction of roads and schools, and gold mining (117). Today, the Brazilian workforce in Guyane is currently comprised of both legal and undocumented, where undocumented labor accounts primarily for illegal gold mining (Sabine 2011, 54). In 1982, there were only 3,300 Brazilians, and by 1990 that number had grown to around 5,600 (54). Today the Brazilian consulate estimates that there are 15,000 to 16,000 Brazilians in Guyane, while Granger (2007) says more than 20,000 (292).

Haitians

Haitian immigration started in the twentieth century but increased with Duvalier's dictatorship in 1957 (Sabine, 2011).³¹ Similar to Brazilian immigration, Haitians came to Guyane to work on the construction sites in Kourou. During the establishment of the *Plan Vert*, the number of Haitians increased from 479 to around 5,287 in 1980 (Calmont 2007, 118). In 1980, France closed their borders by requiring visas for entry into Guyane (118). However, Haitians found a way to Guyane through the Surinamese-Guyanais border (via Saint-Laurent), which is also used by the Chinese community (Sabine, 2011, 55).

During 1986, the civil war in Suriname and the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti halted the Haitian migration to Guyane (55). Many Haitians were given a chance to return home. However, even though many chose to return home, they eventually tried to come back to Guyane because Haiti's political and social situation was unstable (55). With the end of the civil war in Suriname in 1991, the constant migratory flow of Haitians recommenced, mostly through family reunification, which resulted in the feminization of the Haitian population (Calmont 2007, 119). Calmont (2007) states that it is difficult to count how many Haitians are in Guyane due to their undocumented status (119). There are various figures. However, he claims that there are more than 30,000 Haitians in Guyane, representing 15% of the Guyanais population (119).

³¹ After winning the Haitian general elections in 1957, François Duvalier known as "Papa Doc" eventually reworked the Haitian constitution to declare himself president for life. After his death, there was a transfer of power to his son. Collectively, they were in power for almost 30 years. For more information see Lewis (2004).

Surinamese Noirs Marrons

Before the civil war in Suriname, only around 2,453 (in 1982) Surinamese people were in Guyane (Calmont 2017, 119). The Surinamese civil war is representative of a struggle between the Ndjuka (and, in essence all Maroon communities) and Dési Bouterse's Surinamese government which took over using a coup in 1980 (119). In 1986, the Bouterse government began to attack civilian Maroons, and the Maroon communities fled to Guyane (119).³² There are 10,000 Maroon refugees (Ndjuka, Paramaka, and Saramaka) and more than a thousand Amerindian refugees (Galibi and Arawak) in Guyane (119 and 120).

Guyanese

The living conditions in Guyana have pushed migratory flows towards Guyane. Migration to Guyane promises better socio-economic advantages (Calmont 1994, 120). Hence there are currently around 4,000 Guyanese people in Guyane, most of whom are undocumented (120).

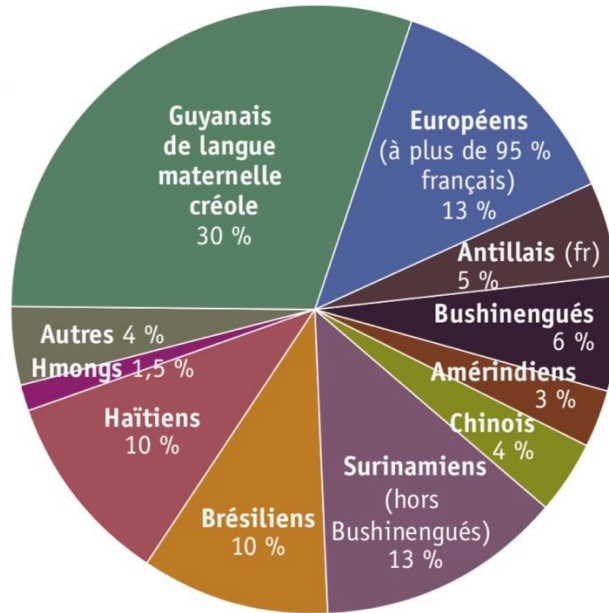
³² When Marrons were being attacked in Suriname, France remained quiet, stating that it should be thought of as an "internal affair" within Suriname (Wood 2015, 139). They had forgotten that the borders between them and Suriname were permeable. In December of 1986, however, the Surinamese government "committed a number of atrocities, levelling many Ndjuka villages and killing several hundred non-combatants" (139). This forced both the Maroon communities and the Amerindian communities to cross over to Guyane to seek refuge. The groups that came over were not given refugee status by the French. It was not until 1991 that they gave them the category of "Personnes provisoirement déplacées du Suriname" (PPDS) (Provisionally displaced persons from Surinam). Wood highlights that "[t]he policy was informed neither by a nuanced understanding of Maroons' and Amerindians' transnational mobility, nor by any sense the relationship of these involuntary displacements to previous, voluntary ones. Rather, it was driven by bureaucratic assumptions among the European and international powers involved (mostly France but also the Netherlands and the U.S.) that the displaced could be moved like chess pieces to the 'right' or 'wrong' side of an imagined political border" (142).

Summary of Current Population

Guyane, over the years, has been a location of opportunity for numerous populations from elsewhere. Most people who immigrate to Guyane come in search of better job opportunities and better overall livelihood. Currently, the INSEE's survey on migration, family, and aging lists the various motives of immigration: Family reunification, the search for jobs, wanting to live in a French Overseas Department, work transfers or work assignments, as well as for studies (Hurpeau 2012, 19).³³ Furthermore, choosing Guyane has numerous benefits: better life conditions including salary, social security, education, and housing, better working conditions, and the offer of healthcare (19).

Today Guyane's population is very diverse and includes people who identify as Amerindians (Emerillon, Wayampi, Arawak, Palikour, Kali'na, Wayana), Noirs marrons (Aluku, Ndjuka, Saramaka, Paramaka), French (but from the metropole), Creoles (descendants of enslaved people in Guyane), Haitian, Brazilian, Chinese, Hmong, Antillean (Martinican and Guadeloupean) (see table below). Around 85% of all immigrants are from Suriname (33%), Brazil (28%), and Haiti (24%) (Hurpeau 2012, 11). The formulation of a national identity based on *guyanité* is challenged by the increased migratory flow of foreigners (1/3 of the population) and metropolitans. This diverse composition asks us to investigate identity formation, identity politics, and language politics in Guyane.

³³ Currently more than 40% of immigrations come to Guyane because of family reunification.



© Population & Avenir, Ilyes Zouari (2015)³⁴

2.5 Situating Guyane

Guyane's geopolitical situation represents numerous levels of spatial divisions and imagined communities. Privat (2003) states that Guyane's history:

a toujours été et demeure marquée par la notion de frontière. Frontières extérieures tout d'abord, puisque son territoire a fait l'objet, depuis son appropriation par la France au XVIIe siècle jusqu'au XXe siècle, de contestations récurrentes avec ses voisins. Frontières intérieures également, à la fois physiques, politiques, économiques, sociales, ethniques et psychologiques" (cited in Sabine 2011, 24).

has always been and remains marked by the notion of the border. Firstly, regarding its external border: disputes with neighboring countries since its occupation by France from the 17th century until the 20th century. The notion of borders also relates to internal borders which include physical, political, economic, social, ethnic, and psychological borders.

³⁴ Cited in Zouari 2015, 16.

Guyane is politically French and European,³⁵ geographically a part of South America and the Caribbean, and culturally French, South American, and Caribbean. Even though it is physically located in South America between Brazil and Suriname, Guyane has a complex relationship with all the regions above. In this section, I discuss how Guyane's geo-political situation influences its positionality.

Regarding Guyane's relationship with France and Europe, in 1946, Guyane became an Overseas Department to obtain legal and social equality with France (Granger 2017). This changed the status of its inhabitants from "colonists" to that of being equal citizens under the French state. The bill (La loi de 1946) that called for departmentalization was supported and created by Aimé Césaire and Léopold Bissol of Martinique, Raymond Vergès and Léon de Lepervenche of Réunion, Eugénie Eboué of Guadeloupe and Gaston Monnerville of Guyane (Mam-Lam-Fouck 1992). With la loi de 1946, Guyane benefited from all the laws passed in French Parliament (Granger 2017). It also guaranteed that slavery would never be reinstated (Granger 2017).³⁶ Recently, Guyane's status as an Overseas Department and Region of France has been changed. Guyane is currently a single territorial community with special status—*collectivité territoriale unique à statut particulier*—of France. This means "that the collectivity in its territory carries out at the same time (i.e., embodied in one single authority) powers of the department and the region. This eliminated duplication of legislative and executive bodies" (Bernas 2020, 18). It provides "limited autonomy in a limited number of matters that must be determined by law," as well as state areas where Guyane cannot intervene such as "citizenship,

³⁵It is a part of the European Union's ultra-peripheral regions (des Régions ultrapériphériques de l'Union européenne).

³⁶ Slavery was abolished in 1794, then reinstated in 1802 by Napoleon's government, and finally abolished in 1848.

human rights, and freedoms, status law, judiciary, foreign policy, defense, security, currency, [and] electoral law" (19). Hence, similarly to its sister states, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, it still exists in a neo-colonial relationship with the French state.

Guyane's category as a part of South America has been complicated. It is geographically located in South America; however, it has often been ostracized by other South American countries due to its status as a French territory. It is the only non-sovereign nation country in South (and central) America since Belize's independence in 1981 (Granger 2012, 24). Unlike the other Guianas' (Suriname and Guyana), Guyane does not play an integral role in regional organizations. For instance, Suriname and Guyana are active members of CARICOM,³⁷ the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), and the Union of South American Nations (USAN) (Granger 2012). Guyane is only an associate member of the Association of Caribbean States. Recently, however, Guyane has started to get involved with CARICOM and Mercosud,³⁸ due to free trade agreements with the European Union.³⁹ Additionally, it was not until 2006 that Guyane participated in a gathering with countries that had ratified the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (Granger 2008).⁴⁰ This was the first time Guyane was recognized as Amazonian territory by its neighboring countries (Granger 2008). Conversely, the European Commission has funded the Operational Programme Amazonia by partnering with Suriname and Brazil in order to "encourage the territorial development of the cross-border areas, the protection and enhancement

³⁷ CARICOM stands for the Caribbean Community.

³⁸ Common Market of the South is a South American trade bloc established by the Treaty of Asunción in 1991 and Protocol of Ouro Preto in 1994.

³⁹ These connections seem more beneficial for France and the EU rather than integrating Guyane into regional organization and fostering Caribbean/and South American solidarity and cooperation.

⁴⁰ France has not signed this treaty.

of the natural and cultural heritage of the Amazon, the development of cross-border economic activities and social cohesion" (European Commission).⁴¹

Concerning Guyane's relationship to the Caribbean, it is an associate member of the Association of Caribbean States through France's membership and has trade agreements through CARICOM. Guyane is about 1600km away from the Caribbean basin, however, its history and cultural configurations are similar to that of other Caribbean countries. Taglioni and Romain (2020) state that the Caribbean can be defined as being "born from the "matrix" of colonial sugar plantations, the genocide of indigenous populations, the deportation of African workers, and to a lesser extent Asian and European" (26).⁴² In their opinion, this description fits well with descriptions of both Suriname and Guyana, since they are both attached to the Caribbean, and countries that are a part of the English-speaking Caribbean consider them as such. Additionally, even CARICOM's headquarters are in Georgetown (Guyana). Conversely, they state that Guyane as a part of the Caribbean raises a lot more questions since it is on the "periphery of the periphery" (26).⁴³ I would argue that Guyane can be considered a part of the Caribbean for the same reasons listed for Suriname and Guyana. All three states have similar histories of plantation slavery, indigenous genocide as well as indentured labor. Additionally, Guyane and Suriname both have unique political situations regarding their Maroon population and Amerindian population.

⁴¹ The European Union co-finances this program by 75%. See website: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/crossborder/operational-programme-amazonia.

⁴² "née de la « matrice » des plantations sucrières coloniales, du génocide des populations autochtones, de la déportation des travailleurs africains, et dans une moindre mesure asiatique et européen."

⁴³ "Pour la Guyane, périphérie des périphéries"

2.6 Complicating Guyanité

Guyane's history and composite culture complicate any claim to collective identity. At the national level, Guyane's diverse population questions Frenchness. As a French Overseas Collectivity, Guyanais people do have French citizenship, however, due to their liminal position in the French imaginary, individuals do not have access to social mobility and the same resources as people living in or from the mainland. The claim to Frenchness or French national identity is rooted in universalism defined by Schor (2001) as "the opposite of particularism, ethnic, religious, national, or otherwise"(43) that is "grounded in the belief that human nature, that is, rational human nature, was a universal, impervious to cultural and historical differences. Transcultural, transhistorical human nature was posited as identical, beyond particularisms" (46). These beliefs have become norms that inform political and cultural discourses in France so that, "citizens, regardless of their regional, ethnic, or religious origin, are entitled, even required, to come together as equals to enact secular rituals and to reinforce the shared values of the social order" (Terrio 1999, 441). Even as France claims French Universalism, not all members are treated the same, which reinforces multiple types of exclusions.

On one hand, the usefulness of French citizenship and being an Overseas Collectivity can be seen through the various immigrant communities that see Guyane as their Eldorado and as their chance for upward mobility. On the other hand, those who are descendants of enslaved people known as the Creoles, Indigenous people such as the Maroons or Amerindians have constantly experienced the social, political, and economic exclusions of being on the periphery of the periphery. For instance, over 53% of Guyane's population live under the poverty threshold in comparison with metropolitan France with a threshold of 14% (Audoux, Mallemanche, and Prévot 2020). Hence, Guyane is the second poorest department followed by Mayotte

(Audoux et al 2020). Additionally, Guyane has much higher rates of crime and violence in comparison to the metropole (Naulin 2017; Burrinand and Jamet 2017) and was ranked the eleventh most dangerous department in France (first amongst the Overseas Departments) (Linternaute 2020).⁴⁴ Moreover, not only does Guyane have a predominantly young population with 50% of the population being 25 or younger (Cratère, 2019), but around 20% of the population are unemployed (Cratère 2020). Hence, individuals living in Guyane, be they immigrants, Creoles, or Maroons do not receive the structural, economic, and social support that they need.

French universalism and the French republican model have been problematized by numerous scholars who claim the importance of ethnic identity (Bargallo 2018; Bessone et al. 2014; Bigea 2016). Guyane's population resists any claim that asserts solely Frenchness, given that individuals identify with multiple communities and are often a part of multiple linguistic communities. Guyane problematizes the dichotomy between citizens and non-citizens and the very notion of the nation – i.e., the French nation. In a place as diverse as Guyane, French universalism only contributes to the continued marginalization and stigmatization of already marginalized groups. Guyanais Creoles, for example, even as they acknowledge that Guyane is a part of France, also champion a Guyanais identity that is distinct from Frenchness. Furthermore, there have been efforts to integrate immigrant communities into Guyanais society and certain communities show resistance to assimilation, let alone assimilation into Frenchness. Hence, claims to French identity and Frenchness are not readily made since ethnic and racial identity is more important. Dancehall music in Guyane is an example of this privileging of racial and ethnic

⁴⁴ See websites: <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2565363>, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2563376> , <https://www.linternaute.com/actualite/delinquance/classement/departements/plus-dangereux>.

identity, as individuals choose to identify with Caribbean genres and Caribbean artists rather than looking to France for inspiration.

In regard to ethnic and racial identity in Guyane, claims of guyanité are also problematized, given that the colonial administration in Guyane stratified the population "according to legal, racial, and cultural criteria" (Mam-Lam-Fouck 2006, 10 cited in Réno and Phipps 2017, 8). Unlike France, Guyane has had to collect ethnic, national, and racial data in order to study and manage their increasingly globalizing population. The racial, class, and sexual hierarchy has established the distinction between Europeanness and *Otherness*. After slavery was abolished, Freed slaves (now the Creoles) were granted French citizenship through their acceptance and assimilation and integration into French republican ideals (8). Indigenous people were excluded from this declaration. By accepting inclusion into the French state, Guyanais Creoles created another hierarchy between them and the other individuals who were not granted citizenship. Those distinctions still exist today and are manifested in new encounters with various other ethnic/national groups in Guyane. Hence, Guyanais Creoles are considered distinct from all the other ethnic groups in relation to class, power, and social mobility. The hierarchy coincides with the Guyanais Creole populations' belief in "Creole ethics." Therefore, French republicanism becomes distinctly a Creole Project. Réno and Phipps state that:

In the South American context, Creole particularism is regarded as universalism, which explains both the social and political 'success story' of the Creoles, and the relative marginalization of other ethnic groups. The observation holds true at all levels of responsibility. From the local to the national the Creoles have the upper hand on positions of management and distribution of public resources. Represented in the central government and at the French parliament they also control the management of local affairs. They regard their trajectory as the normal way of building guyanité and accessing the state. From Félix Eboué to Christiane Taubira through Gaston Monnerville, the history of this French territory is a remarkable illustration of the effective fusion of the French republican ideal with the Creole ethics. The three personalities mentioned above are three outstanding Creole figures in the French political system. While the Caribbean islands – and Martinique in particular – are known for outstanding 'rejectionist' figures

like Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, French Guiana is, somewhat ironically, probably the French overseas territory with the greatest public servants. (9)

Creole particularism is considered the ideal process for understanding and uniting Guyane's multicultural society. It focuses on Creoleness and creolization in order to support cultural differences in Guyane. This is distinct from French republicanism in that Creole particularism promotes multiculturalism. It is interesting that Guyanais politicians see both Creole particularism and French republicanism as two political ideologies that can work together. Considering the premises of both ideologies, I consider them at odds. In the pages that follow, I locate some of the challenges to both French republicanism and Creole particularism in Guyane.

As previously stated, Guyane's diverse population problematizes French republicanism and Creole particularism. As Guyane's constant migratory flows diversified its population, it also created tension between various groups. Each new population that immigrates to Guyane is expected to assimilate into Guyanais society. Mam-Lam-Fouck (1992) highlights how various immigrant communities were perceived in the past. Freed Africans, Indians, Chinese who came to Guyane as contractual laborers, penitentiary workers, and Saint Lucians all were rejected in some respects by the dominant Creole culture and were negatively stereotyped.⁴⁵ Over the years,

⁴⁵ Mam-Lam-Fouck details how each group of immigrants was seen: "Les Africains fraîchement débarqués sont regardés avec une certaine condescendance, et lorsque l'un, d'eux du nom de D'Chimbo se transforme en hors-la-loi, l'opprobre retombe sur toute la communauté « africaine ». Les Indiens qui arrivent à la même période (1854-1877) suscitent mépris et commisération auprès des habitants de la première heure, lorsqu'ils voient « ces malheureux traîner dans la ville leurs corps amaigris et « couverts de haillons ». Les bagnards tant ceux qui purgent leur peine que les libérés sont l'objet d'un rejet unanime. Les « popotes », les « vieux blancs » sont partout et « salissent » le disent des Guyanais. Les bagnards sont les premiers immigrants victimes d'une mesure d'expulsion. Les hommes politiques réclament et obtiennent en effet la suppression du bagne et le rapatriement des bagnards. Les Sainte-Luciens du temps de l'orpaillage, puis ceux qui immigrèrent à partir de 1951 ne sont guère mieux accueillis que les immigrés précédents. Comme les autres, les Guyanais ont d'eux une vision stéréotypée. Pendant une bonne dizaine d'années (1950-1960) les chansons de carnaval brocardent les « neg anglé » (les nègres anglais) dont les mœurs vestimentaires et la frugalité sont tournées en dérision. La tension est si vive entre

those who immigrated and remained in Guyane have more or less integrated into Guyane's Creole society, becoming Guyanais. This history of immigration is crucial to the identity construction of what is meant by Guyane's "Creole society," since it represents the history of the quintessential Creole community that is typically told in the Caribbean.

Newer immigrants in Guyane, including that of the Brazilians, Haitians Surinamese, and Guyanese, however, are considered threats to the national conception of *guyanité*. This is partly due to their rapidly growing population numbers in Guyane, as well as how they are perceived by Guyanais society. Brazilians are positioned as both highly skilled and qualified craftsmen, as well as associated with partying and drinking excessively leading to violence (Sabine 2011, 55). Haitians are associated with a variety of different stereotypes such as ignorant or idiots (Mam-Lam-Fouck 1992, 373). They are also often accused of not actively participating in Guyane's economy because they remit money back home. Interestingly, however, they are one of the only immigrant populations that have a strong desire to integrate into Guyanais society and become "invisible" (Calmont 2007b cited in Sabine 2011, 55). Hmong people are seen as highly community-oriented and are often criticized for *communitarisme* as well as being consumers of Guyane who also generate money to remit back home, similar to Haitians (59). In a political

Guyanais et Sainte-Luciens qu'en 1955 ces derniers demandent au gouvernement britannique l'organisation de leur rapatriement. Quant aux Chinois leur poids économique a toujours fait d'eux boucs émissaires. Déjà le sort des 27 tout premiers Chinois est marqué du sceau du rejet. Arrivés à Cayenne, le 9 août 1820, ces Chinois qui devaient cultiver le thé en Guyane sont installés sur la rivière de Kaw. Mais, rapporte-t-on, ils mangent leurs provisions et refusent de travailler, sous prétexte qu'ils n'ont pas de femmes. On tente alors de les marier à des Nègresses. Si l'on en croit Victor Hugues, ces esclaves, indignées, repoussent une telle proposition: s'unir à un Chinois est alors considéré dans la colonie comme une abomination... Au siècle suivant, l'image de marque de la communauté chinoise change, mais sa richesse et son emprise sur le commerce suscitent des réactions négatives. On les accuse d'accaparer les entreprises de commerce, de contribuer au développement du chômage en refusant d'employer des Guyanais" (373-74).

sense, Guyanais Creoles are as French as the metropolitans. However, they draw on the word metropolitan to separate their identity from French European whiteness in order to highlight their oppositional relationship to the metropole.

With the increase in immigrant communities, Guyanais Creoles are experiencing a societal shift. They used to be the majority and are now slowly becoming a minority. Supporting Creole particularism would ensure that even if "the original" Creole population continues to decrease, their culture, language, and overall dominance in Guyanais society would still maintain. Hence, it would be beneficial if new and old immigrant communities chose to assimilate and integrate themselves into the larger Guyanais Creole society. This, however, has not been the case thus far. New communities have not necessarily chosen to assimilate into guyanité partially or completely or Frenchness. Réno (2016) states that even though Christiane Taubira says that "[t]he Guyanese identity can be analyzed as a kaleidoscope of clashing signs, that can be read as tokens of cross identities in constant negotiation of balance," he would argue that in reality, the "rich cultural kaleidoscope" hides the exclusions affecting numerous members of the Guyanais society.

The exclusion of Maroon and Amerindian communities from French citizenship also problematizes French republicanism and Creole particularism. Dissimilar to Martinique and Guadeloupe, in Guyane, the French government has had to navigate their model of colonialization, assimilation, and integration with regards to indigenous settlements and claims to land and self-autonomy (Réno and Phipps 2017). Hence, Guyane is more than a French Overseas Collectivity. It is a settler-colonial state that was once home only to indigenous

people.⁴⁶ Before Portuguese, Dutch and French exploration, there were around 30,000 indigenous people, however, due to sickness and enslavement, their population decreased severely. Today only around 5% (6000 individuals) of the Guyanais population is indigenous. It is also important to note that the term indigenous also refers to Maroon communities. These include the Aluku (or Boni) and other Maroon groups such as the Ndjuka, Saramaka and Paramaka who fled to Guyane during Suriname's civil war from 1986 – 1992. In total, there are roughly 37, 200 Maroons (Hidair and Ailincal 2015, 879).

Even though newly freed slaves were granted citizenship, neither Maroons nor Amerindians were given French citizenship when slavery was abolished in 1848. It was not until departmentalization in 1946 that the French state decided to integrate them into the larger Guyanais society. With integration into the French state, France began its *mission civilisatrice* by implementing assimilationist policies that would convert both Maroons and Amerindians who were seen as "savages and primitive" into civilized French citizens (Hidair and Ailincal 2015).⁴⁷ Consequently, "the prefect Vignon (in office from 1947/1955) declared in 1985 that 'these populations must be brought out of their dangerous isolation, led, of course very gradually and with great care, to integrate and participate in economic and social life'" (880).

The terminologies associated with both the Amerindian and Maroon communities in Guyane demonstrate the complex ideologies and complex relationship that Guyanais Creoles and the French state have with both groups. Drawing on Jolivet (1977), Hidair and Ailincal (2015)

⁴⁶ Morgensen (2011) states that "settler colonialism produces settler societies by pursuing the elimination of Indigenous peoples via amalgamation and replacement... Europeans establish Western law and a new People on settled land by practicing an exception to the law that permits eliminating Indigenous peoples while defining settlers as those who replace. Settler colonialism performs biopower in deeply historical and fully contemporary ways" (1).

⁴⁷ Important to note that the Wayana Amerindian group did not accept French citizenship (Mam-Lam Fouck, 1992).

state that the classification of "savage" and primitive, changed to "tribal population," to "forest-dwelling populations" to the notion of the "ethnic group."⁴⁸ In efforts to revalorize their Maroon communities and Maroon identity, currently, Maroons in Guyane refer to themselves as "Noirs Marrons" (Maroon), "Businenge" (Maroon) and/or "Indigenous people."

Given that Maroon communities are descendants of runaway slaves whose culture, language, and community have undergone processes of creolization in the new world, one would assume that the similarity between them and the creolized Guyanais Creole community would be evident. However, in Guyane and in Caribbean communities in general, the ideologies surrounding Maroon communities mark them as distinct from freed slaves and as ancient societies (Glissant 1992; Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant 1990). Chalifox (1989) states that Maroons are seen as "living symbols of the original resistance and of ancestral magical power, they [represent] the 'other possible civilization' since 'they know where they come from' (...)" (cited in Hidair and Ailincai 2015, 881). The use of "indigenous" to refer to not only the original Amerindian communities that occupied Guyane but also to Maroons might seem odd at first glance. However, in Guyane, the meaning of the word "Indigenous" becomes polysemic referring at the same time to both Amerindians and the mythical Maroon community that Guyanais Creole society views as in antiquity. In regard to the Amerindian communities, indigeneity is associated with "the natural qualities that Europeans supposedly have lost," "being integrated in nature," and "biological and cultural purity" (881-882).⁴⁹ The term indigenous can be understood as a way to refer to the population that existed before French settler colonialism as

⁴⁸ Eventually all the various populations living in Guyane were referred to as "ethnic groups."

⁴⁹ These stereotypes also refer to Maroon communities.

well as to populations that exist outside the French conceptualization of autonomy and their collective history.

Historically, the French government has struggled with affording indigenous populations in Guyane their rights to land and self-autonomy. Any political affirmation of these rights would directly go against article 1 of the French constitution which states that they cannot afford collective rights to various groups.⁵⁰ Additionally, the French State has refused to sign any international instrument on indigenous or minority rights. The French government maintains that:

France cannot recognise the existence of ethnic groups, minorities or not. Considering the religions and languages, other than the national language, the French government considers that these two matters do not come under public law but under the private exercise of public freedoms by the citizens. The role of the government is to guarantee to the citizens the free and complete exercise of these rights in the framework defined by the law and the respect of the rights of the individual. (Palayret 2004, 243)

Even though this is the political reality of living under the French State, it does not mean that indigenous populations in Guyane are not challenging French republicanism through various forms of activism. They are actively campaigning for their rights to land ownership and self-autonomy. Currently, they have been advocating against the adverse effects of gold mining and illegal gold mining on the Amazon, since their communities rely on its well-being for their livelihood.

Both the plight of Guyane's indigenous peoples and Guyane's growing population are crucial to problematizing both French republicanism and Creole particularism. French republicanism only considers the needs of the French nation without realizing that the Guyanais

⁵⁰ "France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race, or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organised on a decentralized basis" (The French Constitution 1958).

context requires a more nuanced approach in order to understand the needs of indigenous communities, Guyanais Creoles, and immigrant communities. Moreover, in a country where more than 30% of the population are foreigners or their parents are foreigners, national identity needs to be reimagined. Guyane's relationship to Frenchness has changed over the years and the discourse on exclusion and inclusion is no longer one solely about French citizenship and lack thereof. Guyane itself, asks us to question the notion of national identity both at the French State level as well as the Guyanais level. In regard to the French State, we can identify limitations in how it sees and protects the rights of various communities who may want to invoke "collective identities" as a political stance in order to fight the invisibilization of their own community.

It is also important to note that Creole particularism refuses to acknowledge the "failure" of Guyanais society to "creolize" and to "assimilate" the various communities that live in Guyane. The vision of an entire Creole society, then, that bases their identity on *guyanité* does not necessarily exist and is representative of another imagined community. It is only an aspiration. Guyane has numerous Amerindian communities and numerous different Maroon communities that are not homogenous. Additionally, Guyane is home to numerous groups of Creoles: Guyanais, Surinamese, Guyanese, Haitians, Martinicans, and Guadeloupeans. Furthermore, it is home to white metropolitans, Brazilians, Chinese, and Hmong people. This demographic, cultural, and linguistic composition challenges any claim to Frenchness.

2.7 What Does This Mean for Dancehall?

Situating Guyane socio- and geo-politically is important in understanding why Guyanais artists would choose to participate in a trans-Caribbean musical and linguistic discourse through dancehall. I argue that Guyane's diverse population, its history, and complicated relationship

with France force us to rethink the ways in which we understand current-day Creole societies and their negotiation of identity. Guyane's relatively small population has been undergoing rapid population growth due to immigration, and the Guyanais population has had to negotiate their identities both in relation to new immigrants as well as in relation to Frenchness.

The popularity of dancehall music and culture considered as a youth genre and culture in a place like Guyane is not surprising, given the fact that Guyane has a predominantly young population (Cratère 2020). Additionally, given the themes associated with dancehall concerning poverty, deprivation, violence, sex, and sexuality (Hope 2006), it is also not surprising that Guyanais people would be interested in the themes, since over half of the population is experiencing poverty (Audoux et al 2020), and because there are high rates of crime and violence (Naulin 2017; Burriland and Jamet 2017). Dancehall as a Caribbean music genre and culture provides a unique window into the lives of Guyanais artists and their audience, as they narrate the lived realities of Guyane, as well as engage in themes on turf politics, sex, gender, and sexuality. Dancehall represents a "status granting institution" (Stanley Niaah 2004) that offers a space for the contestation as well as the performance of non-dominant ideologies and non-dominant ways of being. Considering the discourse on French republicanism—that suggests sameness based on French nationality rather than cultural, racial, or ethnic difference—as well as the discourse on Creole particularism—that supports the dominance of the native Creole group and the marginalization of other ethnic groups—dancehall offers an interesting opportunity to investigate how Guyanais people are navigating national, ethnic, and linguistic differences at multiple levels; local, regional, and global.

Globalization in particular has contributed to the introduction of a plethora of cultures and languages in Guyane. In addition to French and Guyanais Creole, there are six Amerindian

languages, four Maroon languages, Hmong, Brazilian Portuguese, five Caribbean Creoles (Haitian, Martinican, Guadeloupean, Saint Lucian, and Guyanese), Chinese (Hakka, Cantonese, and Mandarin), Spanish as well as English (Guyanese). Given Guyane's connection to the English-speaking Caribbean as well as the French-speaking Caribbean, it is not surprising then, that Guyanais artists would choose to draw on a popular Caribbean music genre. Additionally, both its neighbors, Suriname, and Guyana, have been drawn to reggae and dancehall over the years. They both have local reggae and dancehall artists of their own as well as have invited Jamaican artists to perform at concerts (stage shows). The Maroons, on the border of Suriname and Guyane, specifically have continued to employ reggae as a means of fighting discrimination, creating a space for themselves as well as a means of forming solidarity within the Black Atlantic imaginary (Bilby 19991; 2000; 2001). Hence, the presence of dancehall in Guyane has to do with numerous factors relating to globalization which include the impact of the music industry in neighboring countries on the Guyanais industry, immigration from those countries, Guyanais people, and artists choosing to self-identify with the genre, as well as Guyanais local artists perceiving dancehall as an attractive global, local, and regional market.

Chapter 3: Dancehall Ka Global: Dancehall as A Status-Granting Institution

Real wifey pa ka fight ova man
Mo pa ké goumen ké to jis pou nonm.
To pé fè tou to simagri, voyé to kò monté
Mé dèpi to pa touch di bad one

[Real Wifey's don't fight over men.
[I am not gonna fight just for a man.
You can do all your cinema, get angry
But can't touch me.] (Real Wifey)

3. Introduction

In this chapter, I engage with scholarship on dancehall music, culture, and history. Firstly, I define dancehall music in the context of Jamaica's socio-historical and political situation. Secondly, I describe the musical elements that make up and are unique to dancehall music. Thirdly, I discuss the role of dancehall as a status-granting institution that champions non-normative ways of being even as individuals negotiate the hegemonic. Lastly, I discuss the global diffusion of dancehall music and culture as a transnational space.

3.1 Dancehall: Socio-Historical and Political Definition

Scholars Stanley Niaah (2010) and Stolzoff (2000) both approach the definition of dancehall as a historical continuation of Jamaican music, while Hope (2006) states that dancehall is an entirely new phenomenon born out of globalization and neo-colonialism. Concerning the first approach, Stanley Niaah (2010) and Stolzoff (2000) consider dancehall as a cultural production that represents the refashioning of the old to make new iterations. Stanley Niaah (2010) states that:

Dance halls date back to plantation culture. In tracing the story of the dance from the earliest records of dance activity on the slave ships through plantations and colonial cities, it is apparent that the kinds of marginal spaces negotiated for performance have mostly been consistent. Whether on ship decks, in school rooms or shrubs, or on the

streets, the enslaved and, later, the freed Africans or peasantry setting across the island of Jamaica, and especially in Kingston, occupied marginal lanes, river banks and gully (ravine) banks, not only for housing and subsistence, but for performance as well. (18)

Even before the emergence of sound systems, there were various "dance halls" and venues for Black Jamaicans to partake in. A key aspect of the genre known as dancehall, as well as sound system culture, is the venue in which the dancehall event takes place. These "dance halls" over the years have experienced a variety of Jamaican music genres. However, the socio-historical and political reasons for their formation, maintenance and use remains the same: a space for the expression of Black art, talent, and livelihood.

Similar to Stanley Niaah's argument, Stolzoff (2000) talks about the importance of the historical dimension of dancehall music and culture. He posits that:

While the global dimensions of Jamaican dancehall are generally recognised, the historical ones are not. Many commentators believe that dancehall culture is a new phenomenon because the term dancehall music entered the lexicon less than fifteen years ago at the same time that Jamaican music culture was undergoing a radical creative transition.... [He contends], however, that the dancehall has been a space of cultural creation and performance since the slavery era, even though the name given to this constellation of oppositional practices has changed over time. This is not to deny the significant disjunctures and radical reformulations in both the form and content of the dancehall performance over time, but it is to recognize that the current set of practices has changed over time. (3)

These historical approaches to the origins of dancehall emphasize the importance of space in the creation of Black Jamaican diasporic music forms and situate it as belonging to a long history of Saturday night dances during plantation slavery (34). My understanding of the historicity of dancehall, then, is similar to that of Stanley Niaah and Stolzoff. It acknowledges gatherings during slavery accompanied by music and dance as some of the initial venues of creativity and liberation that fostered the creation of Jamaican musical forms, dances, sound systems and cultural imageries.

The music that is now called dancehall and that is representative of a youth sub-culture emerged around the 1980s. Dancehall, the direct progeny of reggae, took over the "dance hall" spaces adding to the long history of musical evolution and creolization in Jamaican culture and the continued valorization of minority spaces. Differing from both Stanley Niaah and Stolzoff, Hope (2006) maintains that dancehall is an entirely new phenomenon that coincides with Jamaica's entrance into the world economy. While I am in agreement with Hope's argument, I do, however, give credence to Stanley Niaah and Stolzoff's argument that "dance halls" and gatherings during plantation slavery are connected to the rise of modern-day sound systems and the dancehall as we know it today. Hope's assertion that dancehall is a new phenomenon reflects Jamaica's constant processes of creolizing musical forms. It also highlights the socio-political and economic differences that influence the creation and popularity of various musical genres.

As the progeny of reggae, dancehall has received its fair amount of criticism and is often compared to reggae and its roots and culture movement. Reggae music and rocksteady represented a collective movement against oppression, Babylon,⁵¹ as well as a movement towards Black consciousness. Dancehall, however, was born out of a different political plight and thus, is representative of a different era in Jamaican socio-political and entertainment history. Hope (2006) names six socio-historical and political factors during the 1980s that may have influenced the rise of dancehall:

the fall-out of Jamaica's experiment with structural adjustment; the rise of free market capitalism; increasing urbanization; rising political violence; a growing ideological

⁵¹ The word Babylon is "derived from biblical language; many Rastafarians view western civilization as a Babylonian captor. Building from the ideas set forth in the Book of Revelations, any non-African location marked by excess or greed is called Babylon... Western authority figures such as police, military, and government are also viewed as Babylonian oppressors" (Chang and Chen 1998, 18).

convergence between the People's National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP); the explosion of Jamaica's informal economy and ongoing transformations in the class/status hierarchy, particularly among the middle strata. (1)

These factors resulted in extreme changes in the Jamaican economy and political systems, which brought about numerous new ideological discourses on class, race, gender, and power. With respect to dancehall music, this era of technological advances influenced the ways in which dancehall music was being made. It also shifted the culture and dynamics of sound system spaces, ushered in new themes in songs, new ways of dressing, as well as allowed Black lower-class Jamaicans to question the rigid status quo.

Elaborating on Jamaica's two political parties, Hope states that the JLP (Jamaica Labour Party) and PNP (People's National Party) contributed to the drastic shifts that took place in Jamaican society during the 80s. They both represented differing ideological viewpoints: The JLP held more right-wing views, while the PNP leaned more to the left. Thus, in the 70s the PNP leader Michael Manley championed democratic socialism,⁵² and attempted "to redistribute the economic gains that the country had been making during the past twenty years" (Hope 2006, 2). He was against the neoliberalist oppression of Western countries and wanted to find alternative ways to support his nation.

His move to democratic socialism is evident in his musical preference, as he used reggae music and its roots and culture movement to promote his political views. During his 1972 campaign for prime minister, he drew on the "the symbolism of reggae and Rastafari" to express his solidarity in respect to Jamaica's black consciousness movement (Stolzoff 2000, 95). Reggae music was seen as "the very expression of the historical experiences of the Jamaican working-

⁵² For more information see: John D. Forbes, *Jamaica: Managing Political and Economic Change* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1985), 10. (quoted in Hope 2006, 1)

class, unemployed and peasant" (Johnson 1976 quoted in King 1988, 1). Therefore, Manley drew on popular reggae songs at the time, such as "Rod of Correction" by Clancy Eccles's and "Better Most Come" by Delory Wilson (Stolzoff 2000, 95). In addition, he was able to get "leading reggae performers, such as the Wailers, Max Romeo, and Junior Byles, and sound systems to tour the country" during his election campaign (96). Even though reggae had already gained international fame, Manley's incorporation of it in his campaign solidified it as a national symbol for political change and as a symbol of resistance against the oppression of the West.

In respect to his governance, due to drastic economic and structural changes in Jamaica during Manley's second term as Prime minister, he was constrained to sign a two-year standby agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Hope 2006, 2). He eventually decided not to follow through with their agreement and tried to find other means of support. Hope writes that Jamaica "initiated its own non-IMF programme [which] placed controls on trade, stopped foreign debt payment for a period of eighteen months, reduced wage growth and sought aid from sympathetic left-wing governments" (2006, 2). The IMF wanted to "reinforce Jamaica's integration with the world economy, maintain the openness of the economy and preserve dependent capital" and Manley disagreed (Bernal 1984, 54). Between 1979 and 1980, Jamaica went without money from IMF. The government was able pay foreign debts, however Jamaica's economy still suffered. Manley's attempt at stabilizing a newly independent nation outside the favor of the IMF was commendable. However, in the end, Jamaica's move to democratic socialism led to more risks of destabilization.

The result of Jamaica's failing economy as well as the polarization between Jamaican political parties led to a general election in 1980 that Stolzoff claims was "marred by nearly 'war-like' political violence that claimed the lives of more than 800 people. Jamaican society

underwent a transformation from the socialism of Manley and the PNP to a new era of "free-market" neoliberalism" (2000, 99). The opposing party, the JLP won the election and drifted away from Manley's democratic socialist ideals and realigned the country in favor of US and capitalist ideals. The pro-United States and pro-Capitalist JLP, as Bernal (1984) calls them, then continued negotiations with the IMF. The overall impact of structural adjustment resulted in:

a contraction and deterioration in ... public transportation, street cleaning and maintenance, as well as road repair and maintenance... high mortgage interest rates, increasing rents, overcrowding and urban sprawl. Where basic food supplies were concerned, it meant the removal of price controls and subsidies; in the health sector it meant fee-for-service and escalating drug prices. In education, it brought over-crowding in schools, deterioration of physical facilities and declining performance. (Hope 2006, 5)

Moreover, Jamaican politics and political parties have influenced the dancehall space and culture since the inception of sound systems. Their preferred economic systems as well as their international agreements have contributed to difficult economic conditions and the deterioration of life in Jamaica in general. For instance, Stolzoff states that the intense rivalry between the JLP and the PNP has fostered "partisan support among the lower classes rather than fostering an allegiance to the independent nation state" (Stolzoff 2000, 73). This has led to deep-rooted party loyalty and state-sanctioned violence. Both political parties have frequently allied with various gangs from inner-city communities in order to influence the outcome of general elections. This has led to specific community and gang affiliations to one particular party as well as has raised the level of violence in Jamaica (84). With the influx of guns, gun violence became prevalent in Jamaica's inner-city communities. This culture of violence eventually made its way into dancehall culture and sound system spaces. Consequently, the larger Jamaica began to see dancehall culture as violent and the sound system space and its wider communities as garrisons. Dancehalls became a symbol of violence and crime as well as targets under constant police surveillance (87). The stigma associated with dancehall and their communities led to the decline

of sound systems. Accordingly, famous sound system groups started to distinguish themselves from "downtown" sound system culture by playing in "uptown" discotheques (90).⁵³ This is one of the many examples of the spatial, racial, and classed divisions that exist between Jamaica poor working-class communities and the middle/upper class communities.

Situating dancehall in the aforementioned political and economic conditions, it is evident that it evolved during a harsh period in Jamaica's history. It is representative of marginalized Jamaicans' preoccupation with their economic situation, with community violence as well as globalization. Hope writes that "the impact of local, regional and global forces on dancehall resulted in the creation of *a shiny new genre* of Jamaican popular culture that was unmistakably related to, but significantly distinguished from, its predecessor, the Rastafari-influenced reggae music" (emphasis mine) (2006, 10). Even though dancehall can be located within the history of "dance halls," as well as the evolution of Jamaican music, it is also important to note that it was born two decades after Jamaica's independence, when the island was struggling economically and politically to ground itself as an independent nation-state. Additionally, the ideological differences, as well as the fight against and for neoliberalism between its governing parties, contributed to its destabilization. Dancehall is representative, then of Jamaican's inner-city violence, harsh economic conditions as well as an ideological shift towards individualism and materialism.

⁵³ Jamaica's capital, Kingston is divided geographically and ideologically between north and south. "Downtown" refers geographically to Jamaican inner-city communities located in the center and southern most region, while "uptown" refers to the northern middle- and upper-class communities.

3.2 Dancehall: Musical Definition

Dancehall music can be characterized by its "unique toast and talk-over style... complemented by the development of computer-based digital rhythms' (Hope 2006, 14). The Sleng Teng rhythm of 1985 marked a turning point in Jamaican musical innovation. It illustrated how voices could be separated from their instruments so that other artists could produce songs on the same rhythm or *riddim* in Jamaican Creole. The *riddim* is very similar to how dub music is created. When the vocals and lead instrumentals are stripped from songs, the remaining drum and bass is known as a "dubplate" (Moskowitz 2006, 94). These versions were typically placed on the B-sides of 45PM recordings. Dub evolved toward the creation of the riddim. It was the first time "in which the sampling and remixing of pre-recorded musical materials were employed as a primary compositional technique" (Yoganathan and Chapman 2018, 92). The mixing (combining) and remixing of dubs from existing tracks, according to Vendryes,

thus provided a convenient way for producers to offer selectors a variety of tracks to compose their sets and specific tracks to attract an audience... dub was consubstantial to the emergence of the *riddim* production method, as it constituted a way to introduce diversified and specific interpretations of rhythmic patterns (2015, 15).

The introduction of the *riddim* in dancehall music has fostered a culture of competition between various artists, where they would produce songs to see who had the best lyrical flow over a particular *riddim*.

Talking about the significance of the Sleng Teng riddim in dancehall, Stolzoff highlights that:

The computer style of the "sleng teng" riddim was so popular that more than two hundred versions were released on record. Gradually, producers started using more and more synthesized riddims rather than live musicians in the studio. Eventually these digital riddims were used on a majority of new tunes. This combination of synthesized backing tracks and dancehall style performances became known simply as "dancehall music" toward the end of the decade. (2000, 106)

There were other key changes that made dancehall music distinct from other Jamaican music genres such as reggae, ska, etc. Stolzoff describes the innovations that occurred in dancehall. He states that:

the structure of dancehall songs changed from strict reliance on recycling classic reggae instrumental tracks- so-called Studio One riddims – to ones that drew on the rhythms of Pocomania and Kumina, two Afro-Jamaican sacred forms, and musical forms such as mento and buru. The distinctive drum pattern, two-chord melodies, and electronic overdubs of these songs have become the distinguishing markers of what is referred to as "hardcore dancehall," as distinct from early dancehall-style⁵⁴ musical arrangement that used live musicians in the studio. (107)

The musical innovations led to the incorporation of traditional or folk Afro-Jamaican musical forms that introduced different types of rhythmic patterns that makes dancehall distinct from other Jamaican genres.

With the popularity of dancehall, sound systems continued to be central to dancehall's culture. Stolzoff highlights that prior to this new iteration, the proliferation of violence in the dancehalls had caused the decline of sound systems for over a decade. However, technological innovations such as "thousands of watts of amplification, dozens of speaker boxes, sophisticated electronic crossovers, and sound effects (keyboards and samplers)" (109) rejuvenated the sound system space and invited people to participate in the liberatory space once again. In addition to all the technical innovations, there were also other creative innovations that became positive due to technology. For instance, this era ushered in a type of dancehall performance known as juggling where "a sound system selector w[ove] together a number of tunes on the same riddim to create a continuous dance groove" (109). With the implementation of juggling, the crowd became the central focus for performance rather than musicians, who would normally play live

⁵⁴ Refers to all the other genres such as ska, rocksteady, and reggae. Stolzoff sees all genres as iterations of the Jamaican dancehall.

in the past, as the selector played music to get positive responses from the crowd. All these innovations heralded a new age for Jamaican music and new possibilities for the sound system space.

The various themes located in dancehall are vastly different from that of reggae. Dancehall artists incorporate themes relating to the realities of life in Jamaican inner-cities, such as "poverty and deprivation, political violence, gun violence, police brutality, sex and sexuality" (Hope 2006, 13). This reflects the socio-economic and political state of the nation during the 1980's as dancehall evolved, and still holds true today. In contrast, reggae music and artists typically incorporate themes around "love, peace, race consciousness, black pride, and a cultural and social revolution" (13). Hope argues that dancehall artists did not purposefully try to ignore elements or themes commonly located in reggae music. However, there is a strong argument to be made for the influence of capitalism and the ideologies surrounding it, such as individualism and materialism, on dancehall themes.

3.3 Dancehall as a Status-Granting Institution

Dancehall music and its space, the dancehall, as a Black low class music genre and a racialized space, highlight the importance of racial, spatial, and classed lines of divisions in Jamaican society and how they manifest in musical preference. Additionally, dancehall provides a space for representation and entertainment for marginalized Jamaicans. Clarke (1980)

elaborates on the early perceptions of sound systems:

The sound system dance, or "blues dance" as it was called, was strictly a downtown phenomenon, which means it attracted black, lower-class people who lived in the ghetto areas. And, if you wanted to hear rhythm and blues you had to go to the dances, because the radio would not play it, preferring to cater to what one critic described as the "antiseptic tastes" of the uptown crowd. (cited in Stolzoff, 2000, p. 49)

Additionally, Bunny Goodison describes the sound system culture as:

They [the Black lower classes] couldn't afford the band dance, and this is what they had; you just pay a sound system man about three or five pounds, as the case in them day. Bring his equipment, stick it up on the sidewalk, or inna the yard, and bring in the boxes of beer and thing, and you have a dance and make some money. (quoted in in Stolzoff 2000, 42)

Sound system spaces were and still are sites that Black lower class Jamaicans could come together and enjoy affordable music. These spaces legitimize their class and racial status as well as their musical preference. All Jamaican indigenous musical creations have received their fair "share of criticism, snobbery and censorship at home" (Stanley Niaah 2010, 17). The Jamaican government has refused to establish "sustainable venues for dancehall culture," allocate "resources for infrastructural development that could produce, market and distribute Jamaican music," or provide "investment and incentive schemes for Jamaican musicians and producers" (17), even though music genres such as ska, dub, reggae and even dancehall have become international successes and account for 10% of Jamaica's GDP (1). Instead, the sound system space became the venue that championed Jamaican music. In particular, it showcased the musical and performance preferences of Jamaicans whose musical tastes were deemed vulgar or crude. At one time or another, any particular genre was frowned upon, and dancehall spaces legitimized the tastes of "downtown" inner-city folks, thus refusing to conform to the tastes of middle- and upper-class Jamaica.

Dancehall as a cultural art form inserts itself as a medium of self-expression that provokes debates on cultural, national, and gender identity that disturb the status quo. Stanley Niaah (2010) states that "dancehall culture occupies a tenuous place in the popular consciousness of Jamaica. Sentiments vary as to the life-giving nature of the space, as much as over the need for censorship" (17). This polarization of opinions has led some to consider dancehall as

‘disgusting’, ‘violent’, ‘horrible’" and its deejays as "boorish, crass, coarse and primitive" (Hope 2006, 18). But, for others, it is seen as a space known for its *boundarylessness* that transcends "not only turf, but categories, hierarchies, walls, styles, states, borders" (Stanley Niaah 2004, 122). This is evident in the various debates that it fosters that contest Jamaica's "high culture." By doing so, dancehall becomes "a status granting institution" (125). The notion of "a status granting institution," by Stanley Niaah is crucial in understanding dancehall as genre, but also in understanding the overarching goal of this dissertation. As a status-granting institution, artists from Guyane choose to draw on dancehall music in response to their lived realities and refusal to associate with the dominant.

Likewise, Stolzoff (2000) makes a similar assertion to Stanley Niaah in respect to the politics of subversion that dancehall music offers. He states that:

Dancehall... has functioned as a space where the symbolic distinctions and the social divisions of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and political affiliation in Jamaican society are reinforced, and undone. In this sense, it is both an emblem of Black identity and solidarity and a marker of social difference. As such, dancehall is not only important to poor blacks, but central to the society as a whole, because Jamaicans of all races and classes define themselves in relation to it. (6)

In dancehall spaces, individuals are able to perform their identities in ways that would not be accepted in mainstream society. Deejays, MCs, dancers, and partygoers are able to re-envision their personhood outside of the influence of respectability politics. This includes the prestige of Jamaican Creole in dancehall spaces and dancehall songs as opposed to Jamaican Standard English. It also includes the explicit performance of sexuality as well as the undermining of acceptable sexual practices, and gender identity. Additionally, it legitimizes the informal ways of manufacturing and disseminating music and culture so as to circumvent typical capitalist flows of culture.

3.4 Dancehall: Locating Space, Race, Gender, and Sexuality

The politics of subversion that exists in dancehall, allows marginalized communities to attain status, respect, and fame. At the same time, in participating in the dancehall, individuals are faced with issues surrounding race, gender, class, and sexuality. Dancehall artists and participants may challenge the status quo in some ways, but hegemonic ideologies along intersectional lines are still deeply rooted in the Jamaican imaginary.

For instance, patriarchy in dancehall culture and Jamaican culture at large has shaped ideologies on space, race, gender, class, and sexuality. Hope (2006) considers dancehall to be "the most contemporary manifestation of what is deemed Jamaican "low culture," [which] actively creates and re-creates symbolic manifestations of the tensions that operate in society" (9). Notably, there has been a racial and class divide between Jamaica's working class and educated middle class. This has been fueled by respectability politics as a form of strategic navigation of Jamaican society by Black lower-class Jamaicans, where they try to correct or reform behaviors that are deemed as non-normative so as to comply with the normative "high" culture.⁵⁵ These ideologies are rooted in European exceptionalism and standards of acceptability that have permeated Jamaica since the days of Plantation slavery (Hope 2006). The tensions that arise between high and low culture include issues on language use, colorism, classicism, beauty, sexism, sexuality, and gender identity.

There are many competing discourses in Jamaican society that have contributed to the ideologies that are at play in Jamaican dancehall. In regard to gender stratification in Jamaica, it "operates in a framework of patriarchy that can be clearly defined as a system or society reflecting values underpinning the traditional male ideal" that "is supported by all the institutions

⁵⁵ For more information on respectability politics see: (Higginbotham 1993, 187)

operating within that system or society" (Hope 2006, 37). Discourses on gender relations intersect with both race and class due to the history of racial hierarchy that emerged during colonialism. Black women and Black men were seen as deviant and "were credited with unnatural and insatiable sexual urges that needed the control and guidance of men – originally interpreted as white men" (38). Thus, white masculinity was labeled as normative and was placed at the top of the gender and race hierarchy. As Hope says, "both slavery and colonialism collapsed identities into sexed bodies, sexualizing Caribbean populations in racial terms and racializing them in sexual terms" (38). This resulted in a hierarchy that follows: White men, White women, Colored men, Colored women, Black men, and lastly Black women. These legacies have impacted the racialized class system in contemporary Jamaica such that various concepts, such as beauty, language use and definitions of culture, are still evaluated based on their proximity to whiteness.

Given that patriarchy has influenced numerous discourses on race, class, and gender, it is important to evaluate its role in dancehall. Particularly, Caribbean masculinity has to be analyzed as two-fold: an analysis of Caribbean hegemonic masculinity alongside subordinated variations of masculinity. Linden Lewis states that hegemonic Caribbean masculinity refers to:

an orientation which is heterosexual and decidedly homophobic. It prides itself on its capacity for sexual conquest and ridicules those men who define their masculinity in different terms. Hegemonic masculinity often embraces misogynist tendencies in which women are considered to be inferior. Departure from this form of masculinity could result in the questioning of one's manhood. (as quoted in Brown 1999, 5)

This type of masculinity is what is present in Jamaican dancehall and Jamaican society at large. This is seen in the glorification of gun violence, homophobia, sexual violence as well as the objectification of women. Men's status in dancehall relies on their association with "courtship, conquest and dominance of female sexuality, femininity and women" (48). Various scholars

have questioned the possibility of dancehall as a liberatory space, especially for women. The extent to which dancehall lyrics or modes of dress, as well as various other forms of representation can challenge gender relations, is often considered limited. One such author has been Hope (2006), who argues:

against any generalized labelling of dancehall as an arena that facilitates the sexual liberation of women based solely on its lyrical output. The dancehall is a black popular cultural site that is very patriarchal and heavily male dominated. Although popular women like Dancehall Queen Carlene, female artistes like Lady Saw, Tanya Stephens and Macka Diamond, and dancers such as Stacey and Keiva have gained prominence and economic and social power within its boundaries, the dancehall evolved as and remains a predominantly masculine space under masculine power and control. This is consistently evidenced by the high proportion of male artistes in relation to the limited number of female ones and the corresponding proportion of male versus female promoters, managers and producers in the dancehall. (77)

More specifically, she states that at first glance women's dress and erotic play may be threatening to gender relations in Jamaica and may be exemplary of a counter narrative that challenges the status quo. According to her, however, these displays are for the male gaze. Even though women may take pleasure from being the focus of the male gaze or homoerotic pleasure, the economic and social gains that women receive "come directly from men in an exchange that serves to underpin and legitimize the sexual identity of men and their superior position over women" (75). Likewise, Stolzoff (2000) argues that,

despite the growing prominence of lyrics oriented toward women's sexuality, and women's rise in economic power in the 1980s and early 1990s, their roles were still clearly constrained by traditional gender ideologies. Just as during the era of roots and culture, very few women became performers, and no women became sound systems operators. In this sense, women were now more a focus of attention than ever before, but they were still being treated as sexual objects rather than sexual agents... Thus slackness⁵⁶ never challenged the social hegemony based on men being the rightful owners of power in Jamaican society. (106)

⁵⁶ Slackness refers to sexually explicit lyrics, erotic public display, lewd language as well as any discussion on taboo topics in Jamaican society.

There are quite a few other scholars as well as Jamaicans, particularly those outside of dancehall culture, who would agree with these arguments about question dancehall's capacity to be a liberatory space. In positioning hegemonic masculinity as an overarching site for the production and legitimization of ideologies, I believe that scholars have inadvertently excluded other forms of gender and sexual identities that get constructed in dancehall spaces. For example, there are varying discourses on masculinity, hence the need to talk about them in plural: Caribbean masculinities. Even though dancehall masculinities may refer to ideologies taken from the dominant discourse in the larger Jamaican society, it is also representative of an arena for the counter hegemonic. By acknowledging the various ways in which both men and women position themselves in relation to each other, dancehall highlights how their performances of masculinity and femininity contest and sometimes even threaten the rigid boundaries of gender, race, and sexuality in Jamaican society.

Carolyn Cooper (2004), in her seminal piece *Sound Clash: Jamaican dancehall culture at large*, examines the various contestations of class, race, gender, sexuality, and language in Jamaican dancehall through an analysis of *slackness*. *Slackness* stems from the Jamaican Standard English definition of the word *slack* that means: "1. A slovenly person" and "2. A woman of loose morals" (3). Cooper argues that in Jamaican society, the gender-neutral description of a slovenly person becomes gendered and strongly refers to women and their non-normative performance of femininity. Slackness, then, tends to refer to "sexual looseness" and perhaps promiscuity. This is based on gendered, racial, and classed ideologies that consider all performance outside the norm as deviant. Cooper makes a radical shift away from this

understanding of slackness. She situates it as a counter discourse.⁵⁷ More specifically, she states that "slackness, though often conceived and critiqued as an exclusively sexual and politically conservative discourse, can be much more permissively theorized as a radical, underground confrontation with the patriarchal gender ideology and the duplicitous morality of fundamentalist Jamaican society" (3). She goes on to argue that:

Slackness is a contestation of conventional definitions of law and order, an undermining of consensual standards of decency. At large, slackness is the antithesis of restrictive uppercase Culture. It thus challenges the rigid status quo of social exclusivity and one-sided moral authority valorized by the Jamaican elite. Slackness demarcates a space for alternative definitions of 'culture'. (4)

Performances of slackness becomes *erotic marronage*, which she describes as "an embodied politics of disengagement from the Euro-centric discourses of colonial Jamaica and their pernicious legacies in the contemporary moment (Cooper 2007, 1). Not only can this subvert "uppercase Culture" or high culture, but it also provides an alternative worldview and an alternative configuration of national identity. By understanding slackness and erotic marronage as a part of the uniquely Caribbean processes of marronage, it can be seen as a means of resistance. My understanding of marronage stems from Bonilla's (2015) description of *grand marronage* and *petit marronage*. She states that marronage,

refers to the broad range of practices through which enslaved populations contested the system of slavery across the Americas. This includes permanent acts of flight and the formation of large-scale Maroon communities, but it also encompasses what has been described in French as *petit marronage*: provisional acts of fugitivity during which the enslaved would temporarily escape their confines to visit relatives in a neighboring plantation, recover from injury or illness, avoid being punished or sold, carry out illicit trade, or plot larger actions of revolt. (41-42)

⁵⁷ Tiffin (1987) argues that "Post-colonial cultures are inevitably hybridised, involving a dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology and the impulse to create or recreate independent local identity" (17). Hence their cultures and literatures are "constituted in counter-discursive rather than homologous practices, and they offer "fields" of counter discursive strategies to the dominant culture" (18).

I take dancehall to be representative of both *slackness* and *petit marronage* as counter discourse. As I analyze, the "bad gyal" and the "rude bwoy" personas, I understand their process of counter discourse as gendered. Hence, I undo Cooper's neutralization of *slackness*. Concerning respectability politics, *slackness* as a counter discourse speaks more to femininity and sexual liberation and is more fitting to my analysis of the "bad gyal." While *petit marronage* draws on the notion of the "outlaw" and "Maroon," which have historically referred to the masculine, hence I use it to analyze the counter discourse of the "rude bwoy."

Both *slackness* and *petit marronage* situate themselves in the larger hegemonic discourses, while also making space for the counter discursive. This is similar to how Hall (1992) defines cultural hegemony as not being "about pure victory or pure domination; it is never a zero-sum cultural game; it is always about shifting the balance of power in the relations of culture; it is always about changing the dispositions and the configurations of cultural power, not getting out of it" (86). Likewise, in a move towards *slackness* or *petit marronage*, dancehall highlights imbalances of power and suggests that both power and ideologies are constantly being negotiated. Consequently, dancehall becomes "a contradictory space" and "a sight of strategic contestation" (88). The negotiations that are made in dancehall spaces should "never be simplified or explained in terms of the simple binary oppositions that are still habitually used to map it out: high and low, resistance versus incorporation, authentic versus inauthentic, experiential versus formal, opposition versus homogenization" (88). Thus, in creating dancehall, Jamaican inner-city communities have fostered such a space to challenge binary notions through strategic contestation while also grappling with contradictory ideologies. Through dancehall's different modes of *slackness* and *petit marronage*, non-normative performances of masculinity and femininity, in lyrics and embodiment, emerge in dancehall's conflicting ideologies. At the

same time, *slackness* and *petit marronage* also allow Black marginalized Jamaicans to create an alternative state in an existing state within the same physical boundaries, which becomes "status granting" and urges individuals to legitimize their own experiences.

3.4.1 Manifestation of Slackness and Petit Marronage in Dancehall

In these next paragraphs, I talk about three distinct ways in which *slackness* and *petit marronage* manifest in dancehall. The first has to do with the politics of language in Jamaica focusing on the relationship between Standard Jamaican English and Jamaican Creole. The divide between high and low culture in dancehall also manifests in language use. High culture is associated with "high" language use, which tends to refer to Jamaican Standard English or other standardized varieties. High language variety is expected to be used in formal settings in public and is considered literary language. This is in contrast to "low" language varieties that are used in informal and private settings. Jamaican Creole is considered "low" language and exists in this diglossic relationship with Jamaican Standard English. Jamaican Creole is sometimes called by its speakers: "patwa," "dialect," "bad English," and "broken English" and is primarily an oral language. These ideologies associated with Jamaican Creole are similar to ideologies associated with Guyanais Creole in Guyane.

Elaborating on the subversive nature of Jamaican Creole, Brown (1999) states that:

Patois is only one of the many media that is politicized by writers, poets, singers and politicians to subvert dominant ideologies and advance commentaries on both the social and political inequalities within the society, with the intent to interrogate the Eurocentric discourse that acts as a background to their experiences.... Patois has a performative quality that is an integral part of its orality - a brash expressionism that challenges the conservative values, sensibilities, and ideas of middle-class Jamaica.... The communal use of patois makes it a medium that houses the tensions that temper the relationships among the different social classes, ethnic groups, genders, political factions, and even religious groups. Interestingly, the language, in so far as it makes cultural representations, is constructed and used in such a way that it others women and various categories of men.

The users of this dialect rely on the power of the "word" to situate them in a position of privilege within the dominant discourse.⁵⁸ (1-2)

Jamaican Creole is used to both subvert and reinscribe different discourses on race, gender, class, and sexuality. I argue that Jamaican Creole in dancehall does more than *Other* women and various categories of men. It is a form of stance-taking⁵⁹ that also positions those who speak, glorify, and use it as legitimate members of society. In the dancehall space, Standard Jamaican English has no value or social capital.⁶⁰ To speak it is to be considered posh and to be positioned as an outsider. Jamaican Creole, on the other hand, carries with it a type of prestige that allows both women and men to assert themselves as Queens and Kings of the dancehall, as well as talk freely about various topics, especially sex.

For instance, in Brown's article, he describes how Jamaican Creole is vehicularized by men to perpetuate patriarchy and sexual prowess. They construct identities and reproduce stereotypes concerning sex and women that view the female body as only a site for violence and sadistic pleasure. In response to various songs, such as Buju Banton's "Gal fi Beg,"⁶¹ female

⁵⁸ Jamaican Creole is generally referred to as Patois by its speakers.

⁵⁹ Stance-taking, according to DuBois (2007), is defined as "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field" (163). Through engaging in dialogue, individuals evaluate objects, position themselves in relation to an object, and suggest how they may or may not align with other people and their opinions.

⁶⁰ In Bourdieusian terms.

⁶¹ "Gal fi Beg" can be translated as "all girls/women should beg." It refers to both women asking their partners for sex as well as asking them to stop when intercourse becomes too painful. Commenting more in depth on the song, Brown states that "Buju's 'Gal fi Beg' seems to be the anthem for manhood. The idea that woman has to experience immense pain is identifiable in the title of the song. The title also highlights the hierarchical relationship that exists between the two individuals, male and female - woman as 'beggar' and male as 'provider'. In this case male is synonymous with power and authority, superiority and strength. The social stigmas that are inherent in the identity of 'beggar' that the female is relegated to are also echoed, as a beggar implies a person who is low in social status and therefore is dependent on others to survive. The idea that as a beggar one has no choice but to accept what one is given is also present in this title.

artists such as Tanya Stephens use language as a means to directly penetrate male hegemony in dancehall by reaffirming the importance of her status and power as a female who legitimizes male prowess. Specifically, in her song "Big Ninja Bike," she contests discourses that refer to females as passive and not in control of their situations. Explicit reference to sex and her desires become a means of subverting dominant discourses on the female body. Artists like Tanya Stephens assert their role as equal participants and equal holders of power when it comes to their sexuality. This representation of femininity is not in accordance with the dominant view of femaleness and sexual desire. Hence, this instance of slackness not only challenges the larger discourses on gender and sexuality in Jamaican society, but also challenges these same discourses that are perpetuated by male dancehall artists.

The second example of slackness in dancehall has to do with the intersections of race and gender. Dancehall is a space of possibility for Black lower-class Jamaicans, while still being moderated by color, especially in terms of how the larger Jamaican populace sees certain artists. For instance, Marion Hall, otherwise known as Lady Saw, is notably one of the most successful dancehall artists in Jamaican history. She is dark skinned and from rural Jamaica. Her musical repertoire includes various themes. However, her most popular songs are those that Jamaican society would consider vulgar. Hence, she has been crowned the Queen of Slackness. Cooper (2004) considers her as "a woman running neck and neck with the men," who has been able to give performances and produce songs that are as good as or even better than those from male artists (117). On the other hand, there is Carlene Davis who, according to Hope (2006) is

'Begging' can be thus understood to be not only a description of what the female does but also who she is and a marker for the place she occupies in hierarchy of domination" (1999, 7).

considered "the de facto dancehall queen,"⁶² who is able to traverse the borders of dancehall and mainstream Jamaican media (67). Carlene is considered a Jamaican browning,⁶³ who is positioned as more favorable in Jamaica's mediascape. Additionally, Hope states that she cannot claim "true" inner-city or lower-class status as she is from the lower middle class. Hence, she is perceived as "decent" in Jamaican society and her "public sexual posturings and gyrations are tolerated and subtly encouraged by traditional society" (66). Lady Saw's performance of slackness, however, is often "marked by intense and harsh criticism from traditional Jamaica" (67). Overtime, she has become more accepted as a female artist of slackness, however "she does not enjoy the level of acceptance, legitimacy and pampering from the wider society as does Carlene... nor has her image or voice been used in any advertising campaign in Jamaica" (68). The larger discourses on race and color in Jamaican society have moderated who can be acceptable as border crossers in mainstream society. A dark-skinned woman who performs sexually explicit songs and erotic displays of her sexuality would not be accepted in mainstream society. However, in the dancehall mediascape, she has the potential to achieve financial gains, challenge the discourse on colorism, proudly assert her sexuality and even threaten men's position as Kings of dancehall by being one of the best lyricists in dancehall.

The notion of beauty is also an area of contention where multiple discourses on race, class, and gender arise. Jamaican beauty pageants such as Miss Jamaica World, Miss Jamaica Universe, and Miss Festival Queen, are all examples of traditional beauty pageants that legitimize the standards of beauty and femininity in Jamaica. These contests have generally preferred lighter skin women who have higher levels of education and slender bodies. This

⁶² In the eyes of Jamaican media, not necessarily in the urban or rural dancehall spaces. The current Queen of the dancehall, I would argue is Spice (Grace Hamilton).

⁶³ A black woman of light skin complexion.

reinscribes the ideology of the racialized class hierarchy and glorifies women's closeness to whiteness. Dancehall queen competitions, on the other hand, focus on erotic display, dance prowess and curvaceous body types that undermine traditional standards of both beauty and femininity (Hope 2006 76). These competitions celebrate all body types, classes, colors, and ethnicities.⁶⁴

The third example of subversiveness refers to *petit marronage* and concerns the ways in which men subvert hegemonic Caribbean masculinity. An example of this is called *Fashion Ova Style*, which Hope describes as "feminized aesthetics, public presentation of the male body in dance performance and high levels of male homosociality in the public performance space" (Hope 2020, 223). What Hope describes as feminized aesthetics and rituals includes visits to cosmetologists for facials, manicures and pedicures and visits to hair salons for various hair styles and eyebrow threading. For those who can't afford these rituals, they use over-the-counter skin care and bleaching creams and visit their barbershop regularly.⁶⁵ This is seen as "a narcissistic focus" on the body and is considered as "a softened version of masculinity" (224). What would have once been branded as "'incriminating evidence' in Jamaica to identify a *mama*

⁶⁴ It is important to note that dancehall queen competitions are open to women from all over the world.

⁶⁵ Skin bleaching is common in Jamaican dancehall and in Jamaican society. For Jamaicans who cannot afford high-cost products and skin care, skin bleaching becomes a part of their aesthetics. Skin bleaching is commonly thought of as a form of self-hatred. It attaches itself to feelings of racial inferiority where Blackness is seen as a burden and whiteness/light skinnedness is seen as beneficial. Thompson argues, however, "that people who engage in different bleaching practices have high self-esteem and construct a range of non-white identities. They transform their skin rationally to attempt to secure and maintain power and destabilize understandings of race as naturally manifest on the body" (Stanley Niaah 2020, 224). Additionally, she states that those who bleach their skin "engage and intersect with a history of visual technologies and commodities and their production of ideologies of race. Skin bleaching appears to embody and reconfigure the ways bodies have often been racialized and gendered through the flesh and through technologies of light, like photography and video, and the techniques of lightning" (166).

man or *chi chi man*,⁶⁶ is now openly flaunted by 'hardcore' dancehall men" who assert that their focus on body care signals high status (224).

Dancing has also become an important aspect of *Fashion Ova Style* masculinity. Men in dancehall, in the past, have avoided dancing as well as careers in dancing, since "men who 'wear tights' (that is dancers) have been ritually denounced in Jamaican life and culture and often demonized as feminized, 'mama man' and 'battyman'" (232).⁶⁷ Dancing has been a central aspect of dancehall spaces; however, they were mostly central to female dancers, partygoers and modelers. Erotic or sensual dances with women were the only accepted forms of dance for men. *Fashion Ova Style* has resulted in a shift in this dynamic. There are now male and female dance groups who share the center stage in dancehall parties. Hope highlights that there is both an un-gendering of the dancehall space as well as an un-gendering of dance styles and movement that this type of masculinity has encourage. Hence, *Fashion-Ova-Style* masculinity is representative of one of the variants of masculinity that exists in dancehall that destabilizes the normative understanding of Caribbean Masculinity.

3.5 Dancehall: Locating a Transnational Space

Similarly, to its antecedent reggae, dancehall has acquired a global reach. It has become both a diasporic and transnational culture and music genre. Dancehall's ability to grant status, transcend borders, as well as act as a counter-discourse, creates a space of belonging for others. The globalization of dancehall outside of Jamaica includes its diasporic communities in the UK, Canada, and the USA (Hope 2004; Flynn 2014; Noble 2008; Skelton 2000; Wagstaffe 2006).

⁶⁶ Derogatory words to refer to gay men.

⁶⁷ Another derogative way to refer to gay men.

Outside the realm of the Jamaican diaspora, dancehall has become a transnational space and has ceased to be a uniquely Jamaican phenomenon. It has become a mode of expression for various international communities. For instance, there has been research done on dancehall in Germany (Pfleiderer 2018), dancehall in Australia (Spence 2019), and dancehall in Japan (Sterling 2006).

I am particularly interested in how dancehall encourages connections within the African diaspora and creates a space for the negotiation and navigation of African diasporic identities. Clarke and Thomas (2006) argue that "race and space" have been "conduits for the conceptualization of Blackness globally" (23). More specifically, they underscore the importance of popular culture in the form of music as a site in which "Black Atlantic populations have been able to articulate alternative political, economic, and social visions, given their historical marginalization from centers of political, economic, and social power" (24). In respect to dancehall communities abroad, it has fostered new configurations and collaborations between marginalized groups who are trying to navigate their experiences along racial, gender, class and national lines (Chude-Sokei 1994; Dube 2016; Ogunbowale 2019; Shaw 2005; Stanley Niaah 2008). Likewise, Stanley Niaah, drawing on Chude-Sokei's work on dancehall as a representation of African diasporic identity, emphasizes the spatial levels of diasporic and transnational identity that it fosters: "Ragga as inner-city, Ragga as national, and Ragga as postnational/transnational/Diasporic space and representation" (124).⁶⁸ These levels of identification allow its members to create alternative spaces that legitimize their ways of being. Hence, the dancehall space, music, and culture become "a dream space, freedom space, not bound by national boundaries, bound to the inner city it calls home, but not bound by it" (124). Dancehall's boundarylessness offers a plethora of possibilities in this "dream space" where

⁶⁸ Dancehall music is known as Ragga in the UK.

African diasporic communities have the opportunity to self-identify with each other and share various ways of knowing.

The globalization of dancehall has contributed to the diffusion of specific Jamaican cultural ideologies, sounds, and ways of embodiment. Each adaptation of the genre remains somewhat localized to whatever region or nation that appropriates dancehall music and culture. Consequently, dancehall undergoes new processes of creolization in which the new localized culture, language, and socio-political conditions contribute to continuous iterations of the genre. The French Caribbean is not new to processes of creolization. Additionally, Caribbean diasporic communities and their cultural products are constantly engaging in the *cross-fertilization* (Gilroy 1993) of ideas, music, and ideologies. This gives way for *cross-Caribbean* cultural products, such as the French Caribbean's adaptation and, more specifically, Guyane's adaptation of Jamaican dancehall music and culture as Guyanais dancehall.

Mo ka fè palé rélé mo Black Madonna.
[I'm making them talk, they call me Black Madonna.] (French Guiana)

Rude King Melanin
[The Melanated King] (Vitamine)

Chapter 4: Stylizing the Other: Theoretical Frameworks and Considerations

4.1 Introduction: Guyanais Dancehall

The popularity of dancehall in Guyane stems from the global diffusion of reggae, sound system culture and its roots and culture movement. Bilby (1991) maintains that alongside the French Caribbean Creole musical traditions of ballroom music, such as *Creole mazurka* and *beguine*, Guyanais afro-style drumming and dancing, such as *cassé-cô*, *belia*, *camougué*, and *Zouk*, reggae has been an important part of the Guyanais musical repertoire since the 1970s (34).

He states that:

[f]or some reason, French Guiana seems to have given birth to a more active and fertile reggae scene than the Antilles. There are plenty of reggae lovers, and local record stores are well-stocked with Jamaican music, alongside many other Caribbean styles. There is also a small but growing Rastafarian community, and yearly celebrations memorializing Bob Marley have been held since the mid-'80s in the Cayenne area. (34)

Reggae, he argues "has served as a means of expressing indigenous identity, loud and clear, and of opposing the French policy of cultural assimilation that has led to a devaluing of all things local" (335). Dancehall, which became a part of the French Caribbean musical landscape in the 1990s (Marie-Magdeleine 2013), has become the newest iteration of what Bilby describes. It has become one of the most popular music genres amongst Guyane's youth population. Similar to how there were/are numerous reggae artists in Guyane, currently there are also a plethora of dancehall artists. Some of them have achieved great success and popularity within Guyane, the Antilles, France and internationally. Over the years, there have been several famous Guyanais

dancehall artists such as Jahyanai, Gifta, Pompis, Poplane, Ken Vybz, and Lion P.⁶⁹ Similar to Jamaican dancehall and reggae, the deejaying aspect of sound system culture has been mostly dominated by men. There have, however, been a few female Guyanais artists who have been successful and have made a name for themselves: in addition to Bamby, Sista Sony, Chinee Queen, and Goldn.B.

Guyanais dancehall should be considered dancehall "lokal,"⁷⁰ where "lokal" refers specifically to how Guyanais dancehall artists have appropriated and locally reinterpreted dancehall to speak to their Guyanais experience. I draw this use of dancehall "lokal" from the work of Marie-Magdeleine (2013). He posits that dancehall lokal highlights the negotiation of identity and cultural norms that arises in French Caribbean dancehall music and culture. Dancehall lokal cannot simply be described as the "appropriation" of a Jamaican musical genre. French Antillean artists both identify with various themes and aspects of Jamaican dancehall culture, while also asserting that dancehall equally belongs to the Antilles.

Guyanais dancehall differs from dancehall in the French Antilles in that the politics of slackness is readily embraced by Guyanais dancehall artists and their audience. In his dissertation "The Paradoxical Destiny of Dancehall,"⁷¹ Marie-Magdeleine (2013) talks about the violence and sexuality located in dancehall and how it is translated into the French Caribbean dancehall sphere, particularly Guadeloupe and Martinique. He argues that there are both similarities and differences between French Caribbean dancehall and Jamaican dancehall. For instance, certain themes or ideologies exist in both Jamaican and Antillean societies regarding social demands, exhortation in parties, praise of and use of marijuana, the controversial image of

⁶⁹ Many others were not mentioned.

⁷⁰ "Lokal" is the French Creole spelling of the word "local."

⁷¹ *Le destin paradoxal du dancehall* (2013).

women and sexuality, views against homosexuality, and sound system spaces (dancehalls) (369). However, there are also key differences associated with ideologies, for example, slackness or sexually explicit conversations are often relegated to the private sphere and Antillean artists tend to choose to talk critically about gun violence rather than glorify it.

Guyanais dancehall, on the other hand, even though it does differ from Jamaican dancehall, embraces themes related to vulgarity, slackness, and violence. The so-called "slack" discourses are not relegated to the private sphere. They are a part of the public sphere and dancehall songs can be heard in and around various spaces in Guyane. Talking about the visibility and popularity of dancehall in Guyane, Samantha says that people listen to dancehall music:

Partout, partout dans les voitures, dans les boîtes de nuit, dans les magazines, partout on écoute que à la radio ... Guyanais dancehall c'est c'est vraiment dire que on est sur la même sur les mêmes rythmes comme les Jamaïcains sauf que nous comme on parle créole guyanais on parle en créole (Samantha, dissertation interviews, April 15, 2021)

Everywhere, in cars, in nightclubs, in stores, everywhere. We only listen to the radio ... Guyanais dancehall truly indicates that we are on the same rhythm as the Jamaicans except that we, as we speak Guyanais Creole, we speak in Creole.

Additionally, Jena talks about how dancehall music sung in Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole, are typically broadcasted on the radio without censorship. She says:

I am always amused because sometimes it seems to be the most crude expressions. I'm like do these people understand what they're listening. And what I found very interesting here is that in French Guiana on radio for example there is no censorship. So, whereas in Jamaica we understand the bad words, the curse words so there is usually a clean version and a raw version [an explicit version] ... based on how things are set up in Jamaica only the clean version will be on radio. Here everything is on radio, and I have never heard a clean version of any song. Is always the raw version With all the words with "claat" [expletives] you can think about, you know. And I'm like how is this... being played on the radio. The reality is, I don't think they understand what it is that they are saying, I don't know about the singers. Maybe the singers do understand. But the institutions here don't understand and haven't taken time to decipher the language to even know what the young people are listening to and what they are taking in. It's very surprising to me because we would never hear certain things on the radio. So here, I get the sense that it's

being used probably to pay homage to you know, the source of the music. (Jena, a Jamaican TESOL teacher living in Guyane, dissertation interviews, September 5, 2021).

These two excerpts from the interviews that I conducted highlight that dancehall music has become a central component of life in Guyane, especially through radio broadcasting. Jena's concern about broadcasters as well as listeners not being able to understand the true message of some dancehall songs, can be problematized a bit. Take Bamby's song "F*ck it" as an example, she says:

Fo pa to vèx si to pa bay bèt-a.
[You shouldn't be vexed if I do give you my pussy.]

and

You see deh sweet pumpum a me.
[Do you see this pretty pussy, it's mine.]

In both Guyanais Creole and Jamaican Creole, she is referring to having the right to refuse sex with anyone she is with. Additionally, she uses two lewd words to refer to her vagina, "bèt-a" (Guyanais Creole) and "pumpum" (Jamaican Creole). Since most Guyanais dancehall songs are song in both Creoles, I expect that the audience understands most of the songs or they can infer the meanings from context clues.

I characterize Guyanais dancehall by its assemblage of both Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole to express Jamaican dancehall codes and Guyanais cultural codes. Guyanais dancehall does not avoid controversial topics or performances. Hence, it includes songs on a spectrum of themes, such as social revolution (conscious music), violence, poverty and deprivation, sex, and sexuality. For instance, "Work" by Poplane (conscious music), "Real Outlaw" by Ken Vybz (Gang violence) and "Pum Pum Addiction" by Chinee Queen (Slackness). To take a closer look at Guyanais dancehall, in this dissertation, I focus on two of the most popular Guyanais dancehall artists; Bad Gyal Bamby and Rude King Jahyanäi. Guyanais

dancehall artists and their audience are drawn to the freedom that dancehall offers: to identify and celebrate identities that are typically seen as disreputable. Dancehall provides a space for its participants to revalorize certain aspects of their identity, as well as play with and contest the boundaries of hegemonic discourses on race, class, gender, sex, sexuality, and nationality. Accordingly, the core questions in the dissertation surround the global appropriation of dancehall, the performance of language and identity and the negotiation of identity. Hence, in this section, I discuss the theoretical and methodological frameworks that I employ in order to analyze Bamby and Jahyanai's performances. The scholarship that I draw on relates closely to performance, performativity, stylization, and identity in order to understand the processes of *Stylization of the Other*.

4.2 Dancehall as a signifier of otherness

In the next pages, I discuss Otherness and its importance in my conceptualization of both Jamaican dancehall and Guyanais dancehall. Additionally, a crucial term in this dissertation is the *Stylization of the Other*. Hence, I define stylization as well as the theoretical frameworks that I draw on to understand identity. In this section, specifically, I engage with the works of Hall (1999), hooks (1992), Said (1978), Sheller (2003), and Thomas (2004) to show why otherness is central to understanding dancehall.

I take my understanding of the *Other* from Edward Said's (1978) work on Orientalism.

Said argues that:

In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far. Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the

idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more skeptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter. (1978, 14-15)

In considering Orientalism as a discourse in the Foucauldian sense, it can be understood as a way of knowing and representing the *Other* (the orient) that highlights the unequal power relations between the west and the rest. With respect to the Caribbean, specifically Guyane and Jamaica, black, indigenous, and brown bodies were positioned as *Other* in regard to their colonial regimes, the British and the French. The colonial experience positioned them, their language, their culture, and ways of knowing as inferior. Hall argues that

[I]t is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that "knowledge," not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective conformation to the norm. (260)

This point of departure is a key component of identification in communities like Jamaica and Guyane, in particular those who identify as afro descendants. This colonial experience of otherness can be seen as one of the ways in which belongingness or in-group solidarity has been formed.

Dancehall music and culture can be considered signifiers of Otherness. It is the music of Jamaica's Black lower-class who, under the gaze of Jamaica's brown middle and upper-classes, have been positioned as Other based on race/color, class, language, gender, and sexuality.

Dancehall is representative of the embodied otherness of Jamaica's Black lower-class who, in performing dancehall, ultimately perform their otherness. Through various type of performances, such as deejaying, dancing, dancehall queen and king contests, beauty pageants, performing the

self, etc., both its audience and artists perform or represent aspects of race, class, gender, and sexuality that are all deemed unacceptable by Jamaican elites.

Thomas (2004) considers this otherness a subaltern aesthetics and politics called "modern Blackness" that constantly challenges and deconstructs Jamaica's national agenda of Creole multiculturalism. Creole multiculturalism was a national project after independence that aimed to "legitimize selected elements of previously disparaged Afro-Jamaican cultural practices in order to foster a sense of national belonging among Jamaica's (majority black) population" (Thomas 2004, 4). This was the first time that the middle and ruling-class agreed to view Jamaica's African heritage as valuable and worthy of being included in national discourses on culture. In the end, the new national identity reflected the motto "Out of Many, One People" and valued Jamaica's African syncretic culture (from the rural afro descendant communities) as folk culture, excluding the culture and experiences of the growing poor and urban black communities. Folk "Blackness" or culture, for Thomas, is seen as tamed because it was considered a local authentic national culture that mirrored the core values associated with the Creole middle-class (13). On the other hand, modern Blackness stemming from the Black working class was rejected. Defining "modern Blackness," she says that it is "unapologetically presentist and decidedly mobile" and "challenges the past-tenseness of "folk" Blackness and African heritage as well as the notion of an evolving future based on Creole nationalist' modernist visions" (13).

The racialized, classed, and gendered bodies of dancehall performers as well as its audience have been considered sites of both resistance and mirrors of hegemonic narratives that exist in Jamaica. The dancehall as a status-granting institution offers a space in which marginalized individuals can identify with the multilayered forms of otherness that they experience. Hence, it is a site that both contests and reproduces various ideologies on issues such

as beauty, sexual expression, and gender identities, etc. While reggae represented a revolutionary challenge to hegemony and a collective discourse on racial oppression and racial pride, dancehall offers new politics. Through its multilayered otherness, dancehall participants consciously choose to perform a form of Blackness that refuses to adhere to the politics of respectability. This form of subversion, as well as the multilayered otherness, is what dancehall artists and their audience in Guyane are interested in. Otherness, here, serves as a signifier of mutual solidarity and belonging where the dancehall space allows Guyanais artists and people to legitimize areas of their lives that are often demeaned as not legitimate.

Unlike hooks (1992), who calls the commodification of the Other, the "eating of the other," I consider dancehall to be a very different way of commodifying the Other similar to Sheller (2003). For hooks, the "eating of the other" refers to the way in which certain races and ethnicities are considered *Other* and are commodified in mass media. They have "becom[e] the spice, seasoning that will liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (29). The culture of slackness found in dancehall is one of the key reasons why it has been able to resist mainstream commodification. Regarding slackness, here, I mean nonstandard language use, explicit discussion of sex and violence, as well as an aesthetic that incorporates aspects, such as tightly fitted and revealing clothing for women and expensive and sometimes feminized aesthetics for men that all go against dominant middle- and upper-class Jamaican ideologies. It is this slackness or multilayered Otherness, that draws Guyanais people to dancehall. They have become lovers of dancehall rather than critics of the genre. As Sheller (2003) says "[i]f the language is 'raw' enough (e.g., 'deep' on the 'Creole continuum', vulgar, rough, crude, sexual, violent, harsh on the ear) it will repel any who might potentially 'eat' it" (10). Conversely, if one relates to the rawness of the language, the bass in the riddims and the crudeness of its aesthetics,

then dancehall becomes a site of identification and attraction. Additionally, both the centrality of the body and one's sexuality are "crucial elements of a culture of freedom in post-slavery societies," in particular "[a]gainst the forces of a world economy that commodified black bodies" (12). Accordingly, the commodification of dancehall and Jamaicanness in Guyanais dancehall represents a mutually intelligible way of negotiating identity that prioritizes non-Europeanness, bodily and sexual freedom, local vernaculars, consumerism, and the desires of the marginalized.

As I speak of similarities that create belongingness amongst Guyanais people and dancehall music and culture, it is also crucial to acknowledge that these similarities are also accompanied by differences. Taking Stuart Hall's (1990) description of Jamaica and Martinique into consideration, Guyane's culture and history differ significantly from that of Jamaica. In relation to their position to the west, they are both seen as, "belong[ing] to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the "Other." ... at the outer edge, the "rim," of the metropolitan world— always "South" to someone else's *El Norte*" (262). However, crucial differences still exist. For instance, Jamaica has been independent since 1962, while Guyane has always been dependent on France's support to sustain itself. It was first one of France's oldest colonies, then an Overseas Department and now is currently an Overseas Collectivity. Its current political relationship with France in many ways positions Guyanais people as second-class citizens in terms of language, culture, and history. Additionally, Guyane is a part of South America and has large groups of indigenous populations that are fighting for the right to self-govern. These populations are further marginalized by both metropolitan France's political and economic endeavors, by other Guyanais populations, as well as by other neighboring independent nations. However, I do think that Guyanais people can relate to the intersectional inequalities and marginalization that Jamaica's Black lower-class has experienced and continues to experience.

Through self-identifying with this specific Black diasporic genre, Guyanais artists and their audiences can create dancehall spaces that are also status-granting. They problematize ideologies on race, gender, class, and language that are held as truths. By examining these identities, dancehall offers an opportunity to examine the performance of identity, dancehall aesthetics and how dominant ways of being and knowing can be challenged. Specifically, dancehall in Guyane highlights the ways in which the *Other*, Black lower-class Jamaicans, as well as their multiple layers of marginality, can be appropriated, imitated, as well as performed.

4.3 Performance

In analyzing how Guyanais dancehall artists are self-identifying with Jamaican Black lower-class's music and culture, dancehall, I focus on their performances in their music videos. From these videos, I examine how they have appropriated and reinterpreted dancehall aesthetics and how they are performing various intersectional identities. In this section, I discuss key theoretical concepts, such as performance, enregisterment and stylization, and how they relate to the performing of dancehall by Guyanais artists.

Dancehall is firstly a performance in the Goffmanian sense. Goffman's (1956, 1981) work on theatrical roles in everyday life has been instrumental in understanding performance theory in cultural studies, anthropology, and sociolinguistics. Throughout his work, he argues that all forms of talk are performances and that speakers play a variety of different roles and are, hence, social actors. He describes performance as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (1956, 8). Drawing on Goffman's conceptualization of performance, Bell and Gibson (2011) describe two types of performances: everyday performances and staged performances. Everyday performance

is "when a speaker in everyday conversation steps out into a performance mode, often briefly"

(557). While staged performance is:

the overt, scheduled identification and elevation (usually literally) of one or more people to perform, typically on a stage, or in a stage-like area such as the space in front of a camera or microphone. It normally involves a clearly visible and instantiated distinction between performer and audience. Prototypically, staged performance occurs through genres such as a play, concert or religious service, and in venues dedicated to such presentations – a theatre, concert hall or place of worship. (557)

I consider Bamby and Jahyanai's performances to be aligned with the second type of performance. I focus on the music videos of their most popular songs which are staged, in the sense of being scheduled, preplanned, organized and in front of a camera. An important aspect of dancehall culture is the "dancehall" itself where artists can come and perform on an actual stage in front of an audience. This project, due to limitations, does not include this aspect of Guyanais dancehall. However, I do consider YouTube music videos as a digital stage for performers and the comment sections under the videos as a digital audience.

Goffman's conceptualization of "the self" is also useful in understanding dancehall as a form of performance. By creating the front, which is defined as "that part of individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance (1956,13), performers are able to communicate signs and the audience is able to interpret them. The front is accompanied by multiple constraints, such as setting, appearance and manner, which all influence the sincerity of any performance. Hence performances involve various levels of impression management (self-presentation) in order to regulate the ways in which performers are perceived by their audience. In regard to dancehall, Goffman's dramaturgical framework is useful in considering the requirements for genre conventions. Additionally, it centers the body as a locus of communication. Hence, dancehall is seen as an embodied performance where dance, gesture, clothing, fashion, hairstyles,

accessories, and language all index various social identities and culturally specific meanings. For instance, some genre conventions include hearing the interjections "Riddim!" and "Pull up!" at any dancehall performance. At the start of most dancehall stage performances, the performer will shout "Riddim!" which signals to the Deejay (and the audience) that they should start playing the first riddim/song that they will perform. Additionally, performers will yell "Pull up!" to stop the riddim to interact with the audience or to change to a completely different riddim. The audience knows how to interpret both interjections and typically follows with a performance of their own. They either yell in favor of either injection or point both their middle and index finger in the air making a gun sign while simultaneously saying "bop" imitating the sound of a gun.

4.4 Linguistic Stylization

In thinking in terms of the presentation of the self and focusing on how individuals are able to regulate their performances and, in essence, social identities, I study the ways in which Bamby and Jahyanai construct their personas. Furthermore, I examine the specific ways in which they represent the *Other* (Black lower-class Jamaicans), as well as dancehall as a signifier of multilayered otherness. Studying Bamby and Jahyanai's presentation of the self and presentation of the Other and otherness highlights the performers' intentional choices, as well as the audience's process (more specifically my process) of interpretation.

Bamby and Jahyanai's language use, dance moves, imagery, dress, and settings of their videos are all pre-planned and rehearsed. This allows us to draw conclusions from their language (repertoire) choice and the conventions of the genre "dancehall." In choosing to perform dancehall, they have identified both linguistic and cultural features that have been stereotypically associated with Jamaicanness and Jamaican inner-city communities. By strategically performing

slackness: wearing revealing clothing, whining/wining,⁷² explicit conversations, using Creole etc., both Bamby and Jahyanäi are able to perform or stylize their bad gyal and rude bwoy personas. I draw on scholarship on *enregisterment* and *stylization* to understand and describe how signs can be interpreted in dancehall, as well as the identities that they index.

4.4.1 Enregisterment

Enregisterment refers to "processes and practices whereby performable signs become recognized (and regrouped) as belonging to distinct, differentially valorized semiotic registers by a population" (Agha 2006, 81). Over a period of time, enregisterment results in the solidification of social meaning associated with various signs. Additionally, each instance of enregisterment includes "roles of communicative participants (senders and receivers of messages); its own genre characteristics; its own referents, and in particular, a set of depicted characterological figures or 'social personae' linked to speech" (Agha 2003, 243). Regarding dancehall in Jamaica, aspects such as speech, clothing, dance, riddims, gestures and social figures become recognizable as stereotypical imagery and expectations. Differing ideological stances and value are also attached to each sign. For instance, the stance that the 100- and 200-meter -record holder Usain Bolt does after winning a race, where he raises both hands diagonally upwards with his right hand across his chest and his left hand in the air while using both of his index fingers to point, is globally known as "Lightning Bolt," "Bolting," or "the Usain Bolt." In Jamaica that gesture is called "To di world" and is a popular dancehall dance move that was created in March 2008, 5 months

⁷²A whine/wine from the Jamaican Creole website, JamaicanPatwah.com is considered "a form of dancing normally done by women, which involves gyrating the mid-section of body, specifically the waist and hips. This is done in a sexual manner, either fast or slow and is mostly performed to West Indian music such as reggae, soca or calypso" (2013).

before the dancehall move became enregistered with new meanings at the 2008 Olympics. Here both gestures refer to Jamaica in some sense, however, "To di world" refers specifically to Jamaica's Black lower-class's dancehall culture. Given one's cultural knowledge of dancehall or track and field, one might have two different interpretations of the sign. In Jamaica, however, "To di world" does not mean "Lightning Bolt." Usain Bolt's use of the sign represents for most Jamaicans, an acknowledgement of both dancehall culture and its people on the world Olympic stage. On the global Olympic stage, however, it acquired new meaning, becoming a sign for Usain's Bolt's last name as well as his speed. This example demonstrates how signs can be made and interpreted in different ways by individuals inside or outside of a dancehall culture. Hence, enregisterment relies on indexicality: the process of attaching contextualized meanings to signs such as words (speech at large), gestures, hairstyles, riddims, dance moves, or any other signs that could possibly convey meanings.⁷³ Two things are at play: intention, and interpretation; hence, Bamby's and Jahyanai's performances are contextually and socially specific. This means that they expect their audience to understand and interpret the signs that they produce as they intended them to because they (the audience) are assumed to be participants/connoisseurs of dancehall culture.

2.2.2 Stylization

Through processes of enregisterment, linguistic features, as well as non-linguistic features, become solidified as belonging to or being stereotypically associated with certain communities. For instance, as previously stated, "Pull up" has been solidified as an enregistered style associated with dancehall stage performances (stage shows). Thinking in terms of style and

⁷³ For more on indexicality see Ochs (1992, 1996) and Silverstein (2003).

the semiotic register of dancehall performed by in-group members of Jamaican dancehall, the next term, *stylization*, becomes important to understanding how dancehall's semiotic repertoire from Jamaica can be appropriated and reinterpreted in Guyane.

My understanding of the term *stylization* stems from the scholarship of both Rampton (1995) and Coupland (2001; 2004; 2007;2011), who draw on the work of Bakhtin (1981,1986).

Bakhtin (1981) defines stylization as:

an artistic representation of another's linguistic style, an artistic image of another's language. Two individualized linguistic consciousnesses must be present in it: the one that *represents* [that is, the linguistic consciousness of the stylizer] and the one that is *represented*, which is stylized. (118)

Bakhtin highlights the fact that for stylization to occur, certain aspects of a language must be identified as stereotypical components of one's repertoire, while other aspects are ignored. When stylization occurs, the locutor can choose the content of their linguistic repertoire. Here, Bakhtin speaks of the term stylization in a very broad sense. For him, it is "a subversive form of multi-voiced utterance, one that discredits hegemonic, monologic discourses by appropriating the voices of the powerful and reworking them for new purposes" (Coupland 2001, 345). Coupland, uses the term *stylization* narrowly, he describes it as, "the knowing deployment of culturally familiar styles and identities that are marked as deviating from those predictably associated with the current speaking context" (2001, 345). Stylization occurs at "specific communicative contexts and at specific linguistic/semiotic levels" where "[s]ingle utterances can be stylized, when speakers are being studiedly "artificial" or "putting on a voice," ... [o]utside of speech itself, individual bodily gestures can be "stagey" or studiedly artificial, and visual images can be "over-drawn," defining the generic principle of cartooning" (2001, 346). Stylization then, refers to categorical ways in which members of a particular group index their language and identity. It allows us to examine Bakhtin's "multiple voicing" or "heteroglossia" literally. More specifically,

it allows us to consider speaking situations as opportunities to examine the possible voicing of the Other or of Others, as well as how they rework language, signs, and symbols to create new meanings and refer to old ones. For example, Jamaican Creole in Jamaican dancehall is one of the main vehicles through which Guyanais artists can stylize the Other. As Bamby and Jahyanai both code-switch between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole, they primarily personify slackness by using lewd and explicit language to express their desires in Jamaican Creole.

In Rampton's (1995) seminal work *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*, he also draws on Bakhtin to theorize *crossing*: "the use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker does not normally 'belong' to" (14). *Crossing* differs from stylization in that "it involves a stronger sense of social or ethnic boundary transgression, the variants being used are more likely to be seen as anomalously "other" for the speaker, and questions of legitimacy and entitlement can arise" (Rampton 2009, 149). Examples of crossing include the use of African American Vernacular English by white teenagers in hip hop or the use of Jamaican Creole by South Asians in Britain at sound system events. Taking categorically stereotypical elements of particular vernaculars, speakers appropriate specific parts of the Other's repertoire that they consider to be symbolic, useful, or meaningful, such as the use of Creole as a working-class British vernacular to index "coolness" and "toughness," since it is associated with arguing, assertiveness, and opposition to authority (Rampton 1995, 37). Furthermore, crossing offers the opportunity for interethnic solidarity, since participants in dancehall outside of Jamaica can identify with the themes in dancehall songs, as well as the identities and performances that are welcomed in the dancehall space.

What is interesting in both Coupland's and Rampton's understanding of stylization is that it is not done maliciously. As opposed to mock language (Hill 1998), where speakers appropriate

the Other's language in order to mock or exert superiority, the stylization of dancehall by Guyanais artists does the opposite. Bourdieu's (1991) theorizations of habitus and capital are useful concepts in understanding some of the reasons why Guyanais artists' stylization of dancehall is done in solidarity. Even though Bourdieu's work privileged the white middle-class, it can be used to think about the ways in which Black diasporic identity has been negotiated, appropriated, and revalued outside the lens of Otherness. With dancehall as the locus, all aspects of its culture (dance, language, gestures, styles, etc.) have been relegated to a "privileged" status not only in Jamaican-by-Jamaican inner-city youth but also by those in Guyane and are hence seen as a form of cultural, economic, and social capital. Owing to dancehall being positioned as a signifier of otherness in the Caribbean, its culture and dancehalls have continued to be a status-granting institution for marginalized identities, even outside of the borders of Jamaica (Stanley Niaah). Hence, the knowledge production, aesthetics, self-expression, and linguistic repertoire associated with Jamaica's Black lower-class are seen as valuable amongst individuals who have been equally historically marginalized, for instance, the use of Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole by Bamby and Jahyanai instead of French. As a part of the French State, artists are forced to both strategize and vehicularize French and other language varieties in ways that will be useful to them.

4.4.2 Language Varieties

Given that countries like France and Jamaica have a strong monolingual ideology, Creole languages are not offered the same privilege of standard languages, such as Jamaican Standard English or French. The diversity of Guyane's population includes linguistic diversity, meaning that Guyanais people are members of multiple language communities. As a French

Overseas Collectivity, French colonialism and current educational and linguistic policies support and maintain a strong monolingual identity. Léglise (2017) maintains that Guyanais educational policies are guided by mainland France officials who do not consider the importance of the different local languages (cited in Léglise and Migge 2021). Even though monolingualism focused on French may exist on the official or formal level in Guyane, Léglise and Migge maintain that French is not the main vehicle of communication. They state that "local languages such as French Guianese Creole and Amerindian and Maroon languages play an important role as primary means of self-identifications and local integration (Jolivet, 2007), and are widely used monolingually or as part of multilingual repertoires" (2021). This includes languages such as Guyanais Creole, Hmong, Nenge, Saamaka, Palikur, Kali'na, Wayampi, and Wayana which all carry the title of *langues de France* or *langues régionales* (Alby and Léglise 2018, 119-120).

Popular culture allows Guyanais dancehall the opportunity to resist colonial knowledge production and dominant linguistic ideologies. Through code-switching in song, dancehall artists offer a critique of French as a dominant language and a critique of monolingualism. More specifically, they change ideologies associated with Guyanais Creole by giving it a status of prestige in the French Caribbean dancehall space. This is similar to the use of Jamaican Creole in song in the dancehall space as was mentioned in the chapter on dancehall. Alternating between both Guyanais Creole and Jamaican Creole, artists strategically engage in the revalorization of Creole languages, the coming together of Jamaican and Guyanais culture as well as the forming of solidarity between similarly positioned individuals in states that position them as outliers.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ See Appendix 1. For specific research questions and methodology.

4.5 Performing Identities

In considering dancehall as a signifier of otherness, I draw on various theories on identity to describe the identities that Bamby and Jahyanai use to perform their bad gyal and rude bwoy personas, respectively. I take an intersectional approach to the study of dancehall in Guyane, which posits that there are interlocking systems of oppression and identities. In essence, any analysis of dancehall must consider intersections of "race, economic class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age" as "mutually constructing features of social organization" (Collins 1998, 278). This approach allows us to see the complexities of intersecting identities and how they complexify identity formation and identity negotiation. More specifically, this section draws on the works of Fanon and Hall to speak about Blackness in the Caribbean as a marker of otherness, and Butler's theory of performativity to think about the ways in which identities such as gender and sexuality (and race) have been naturalized. Additionally, this section talks about the subversive nature of identities that are deemed Other and their possibility to offer an intersectional politics of subversion through *slackness*, *petit marronage* and *queerness*.

4.5.1 The Fact of Blackness

At the core of any conversation on dancehall is its characteristic of being a Black diasporic music genre. Hall (2018) argues that,

Caribbean culture, in particular, has not been well served by the national frame. The imposition of national frontiers within the imperial system fragmented the region into separate and estranged national and linguistic entities from which it has never recovered. The alternative frame of "Black Atlantic," proposed by Paul Gilroy, is a powerful counternarrative to the discursive insertion of the Caribbean into European national stories, bringing to the surface the lateral exchanges and "family resemblances" across the region as a whole which a nationalist history obscures. (215)

Fanon's (2008) work *Black Skin, White Masks* offers a nuanced approach to the study of race, in particular, Blackness in the Caribbean, that I find useful in thinking through race as signifier of Otherness as well as a signifier of solidarity.⁷⁵ In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon provides an analysis of the effects of colonialism on Black people, French Antilleans specifically. This work offers an understanding of Black people's relationship with language, gender, internalized racism, and misrepresentation. In "The Negro and Language," he argues that speaking a language is how we construct our identities and our societies. He states that "to speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (8). To speak the colonized language results in a particular inferiority complex where Black people realize that by speaking the colonized language, they have chosen "to support the weight of [the colonizing] civilization" by alienating their own (8).

In the chapter "The Fact of Blackness," Fanon speaks about the misrecognition of Black people and how they become Othered. He provides examples of being interpellated through statements such as "Dirty nigger!" and "Look, a Negro!" (82). It is through the white gaze that a black man realizes and understands his Blackness. He says:

I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects. Sealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others."(82)

It is at the moment of interpellation that he feels his Blackness and realizes that he is an object that has been misrecognized. For him, and hence Black people, "consciousness of the body is

⁷⁵ Translation of *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952)

solely a negating activity" because a black "man" cannot just "be," he has to "be black in relation to the white man" (82-83). He later maintains that,

the Negro is comparison. There is the first truth. He is comparison: that is, he is constantly preoccupied with self-evaluation and with the ego-ideal. Whenever he comes into contact with someone else, the question of value, of merit, arises. The Antilleans have no inherent values of their own, they are always contingent on the presence of The Other. The question is always whether he is less intelligent than I, blacker than I, less respectable than I. Every position of one's own, every effort at security, is based on relations of dependence, with the diminution of the other. It is the wreckage of what surrounds me that provides the foundation for my virility. (163 - 64)

This is a summary of the Antillean experience of their black bodies and racialized language, Creoles. They are always experiencing alienation, positioning themselves on hierarchies where whiteness, whether pertaining to beauty, intelligence, or language use, is always seen as the ideal. This is the postcolonial reality: an embodied, linguistic, and mental alienation. In total, Fanon provides an analysis of "the black lived experience" that has been naturalized through the social, historical, economic, and political mistreatment and misrecognition of Black people.

This lived experience is a part of the historical marginalization of Black lower-class Jamaicans in dancehall and Jamaica at large. In Guyane, racial marginalization also plays a role in the stratification of its society. Owing to this, Guyanais artists like Bamby and Jahyanai choose to draw on a genre that positions itself outside the realms of whiteness, Europeaness and respectability in order to center the lived experience as well as the culture of similarly positioned individuals. Additionally, as previously mentioned in the section on Otherness, Black identity cannot be understood solely as a collective entity grounded in a shared history and culture. It is also important to talk about Black identity as multiple things. Stuart Hall, on cultural identity, argues that even though there are "many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather - since history has

intervened – ‘what we have become’" (1990, 225). This foregrounds some of the differences that between Jamaican dancehall and Guyanais dancehall.

4.5.2 Performativity

The notion of performativity is useful to think through the ways in which various aspects of identity have been ritualized and performed. Building on the work of Austin (1962), Derrida (1988), Althusser (1971) and Foucault (1977, 1980), Butler coined the term performativity, in relation to gender and sexuality. Austin proposes the notion of "performative utterances or speech acts." He divides statements into two categories: constative and performative. Where constatives refer to statements that can be considered true or false as well as not descriptive (Austin 1962, 4), performatives, on the other hand, refer to accomplishing "an act through the very process of their enunciation" or the act of carrying out a performance (Claeys 2007, 6). The performative act, for Austin, is defined as, doing something by saying something. Hence, there is a direct connection between words and actions, particularly in everyday life. He gives the example of getting married, where both parties say, "I do." In saying "I do," you are both saying the utterances as well as completing the action (Austin 1962, 5). Additionally, as onlookers or participants of a wedding, we all able to understand its genre conventions. For Butler, gender is performative in the Austinian sense because, "[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (1999, 33).

Butler also draws on Derrida's (1988) reinterpretation of Austin's work in "Signature, Event, Context." She underscores how Derrida offers a critique of Austin's work by introducing "iterability" or citationality. More specifically, Derrida (1988) says:

Could a performative utterance succeed if its formulation did not repeat a "coded "or iterable utterance, or in other words, if the formula I pronounce in order to open a meeting, launch a ship or a marriage were not identifiable as conforming with an iterable model, if it were not then identifiable in some way as a "citation"? (cited in Claeys 2007, 14)

Extending this critique, Butler argues that performative acts are "performative" because they are repeated and ritualized. Gender identity, for Butler, then, is the act of citing all previous performances of gender (iterability). Additionally, although genre conventions are important, it is also important to note that discourses/texts can be cited out of their genre conventions. As Butler says, there can be a "discrepancy between signifier and signified" which "becomes the operative and limitless *différance* of language, rendering all referentiality into a potentially limitless displacement" (Butler 1999, 51). This becomes useful for Butler in that it destabilizes fixed categories such as man or woman. It highlights that they are both socially constructed identities whose meanings may change over a period of time, contexts, and situations. It also gives way for the possibility of creating new meanings that do not partake of the normative discourses. This is particularly useful for Butler's argument, as she identifies the ways in which gender and sexual identity have been constructed and maintained, as well as how those categories can be problematized and troubled.

Drawing on the work of Althusser and Foucault, Butler uses the notion of performativity as well as iterability to think about discourse, power, and the subject in relation to gender and sexuality. Althusser's work on State Apparatuses highlights how various forms of power function. There is:

the Repressive State Apparatus – which- functions by violence' and the Ideological State Apparatuses function by ideology... the first type holds people in their place by sheer force (which can be physical but also works through manipulation, intimidation, commands, and interdictions), but the Ideological State Apparatuses exercise power in a much more subtle way (Claeys 2007, 34).

In general, Althusser argues that it is through ideology that a subject is made. By learning and internalizing social and cultural values, subjects become interpellated. Additionally, Butler draws on Foucault to highlight how discourses on sexuality have been constructed, maintained as well as controlled by those who possess power. Hence, when subjects are interpellated, they become a part of institutions that are interwoven into various discourses that exert power over their ideologies. With this understanding, Butler argues that the performativity of gender demonstrates that gender is not "natural," but is a part of larger institutional and ideological discourses grounded in specific historical contexts and ideological constraints. Additionally, these discourses, according to Foucault, are often competing in complex ways.⁷⁶

In thinking of gender, sex, and sexuality in Butlerian terms, firstly, one's gender and sex are assigned at birth through interpellation. Through maintained discourses and ideologies on what is considered male, female, or Other, gender becomes a regulatory frame. Additionally, through repeated actions or iterability, genre conventions are made and maintained. This allows us to look at the genealogy of how gender and its subjects are discursively produced. In sum, Butler argues that gender "proves to be performative— that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be... gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed" (Butler 1999, 33). Additionally, "gender is the repeated stylization of the

⁷⁶ He says, "we must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies.... Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault 1984, 100).

body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (43-44). Through various "acts" or repetition of acts of gender, gender becomes naturalized. Gender "conceals" its own genesis, and hence is not a natural phenomenon that precedes the self. It is something that has been ritualized by bodily acts and discourses.

The usefulness of Butler's theorization of performativity follows the postulation that identity, in general, is performed. More specifically, it allows us to interrogate the ways in which identities are produced and inherently shaped by society. Even though various aspects of identity, such as race and gender, are normally considered fixed categories, Butler hints at the fact that it is through normative discourses that identity is relegated to fixity. Understanding "race" as performative might seem a bit problematic, at first, and call into question some key assumptions surrounding interpellation and essentialism. However, when Butler's performativity is extrapolated to the concept of "race," we can consider how hegemonic discourses have shaped our understanding of whiteness, Blackness and Creoleness, etc. In understanding race as performative, we acknowledge the importance of repeated discourses, or the linguistic phenomenon of iteration, as well as ritual acts by the body in creating identities that we often consider to be natural.

Furthermore, Butler offers us a means of seeing the ways in which gender might be subverted. Gender subversion happens when:

the very notion of "the person" is called into question by the cultural emergence of those "incoherent" or "discontinuous" gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined. (Butler 1999, 23)

In the heterosexual binary, anyone who does not fit male or female or who embodies their identity outside the normative framework of what is acceptable as masculinity or femininity

becomes Other. Whether it is through interrupting the citationality of gender or in challenging discourses, gender can be troubled. Butler gives the example of drag in her analysis of *Paris is Burning* (1991), highlighting how aspects of gender that are performed are falsely understood as natural (175).

Both performativity and the fact of Blackness are important in understanding identity in dancehall. Both, Fanon and Butler highlight the importance of language or discourse, particularly hegemonic discourse, in producing and maintaining gendered and racialized identities. This allows us to examine the stylization of the Other and Bamby and Jahyanai's performances of various identities; Blackness, Caribbeanness, Antillanité, femininity and masculinity, both discursively and through embodiment.

4.5.3 Queerness

Concerning the aforementioned theories on identity, a conversation on queerness or queer theory is also beneficial to the larger conversation on identity in dancehall. In general, the works of Butler (1990, 1993), Fuss (1989/2013), Sedgwick (1990), Turner (2000) and Warner (1993), have been noted as seminal pieces in the development of queer theory. They have offered critiques of heterosexuality, as well as challenges to the belief that gender identity and sexual expression are stable and "natural" identities.

A simple definition of queerness is given by Turner (2008), where it is defined as "the failure to fit precisely within a category" (2000, 8). Building on, while also challenging, queer theory are queer theorists of color such as Cohen (1995; 2004), Collins (2002; 2004; 2006) and Johnson et al (2005), who highlight the importance of an intersectional approach to the study of queerness. Cohen (1995) argues that "[t]hrough its conception of a wide continuum of sexual

possibilities, queer theory stands in direct contrast to the normalizing tendencies of hegemonic sexuality rooted in ideas of static stable sexual identities and behaviors" (435). An expansive understanding of queerness incorporating the intersections of race, class, and gender according to Cohen allows us to better understand "how heteronormativity regulates sexual behavior and identities" (451). Taking this definition into consideration, conversations on queerness and the Caribbean are not new. Since the days of colonialism and plantation slavery, colonized subjects, according to Ghisyawan were seen as "falling short of societal norms of respectability" (2016, 161). Drawing on the work of Pragg (2012), she maintains that many aspects of Caribbean society do not fit the expectation of the Western world such as kinship, politics, and race relations. More specifically, King (2008) argues that the sexualities of Black and Brown Caribbean people, were "always considered by outsiders and elites (White Europeans) to be "queer," odd, deviant, and less moral, and were persecuted by the ruling classes – European colonizers and the small group of colored Caribbean persons who inherited power after them" (as quoted in Ghisyawan 2008, 162). These ideologies are still present in today's conversation on race, gender, sexuality, class in dancehall.⁷⁷

Drawing on the foundational work on queer theory as well as Juana María Rodríguez's *queer Latinidad*, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley's *queer Atlantic*, José Esteban Muñoz's

⁷⁷ There can also be a larger conversation with respect to same sex attraction and sexual identity in the Caribbean that incorporates and problematizes the term "queer." Both sexual identity and queerness are often viewed as Euro-American concepts, even though individuals may engage in sexual activity with men and/or women. Scholars such as Tinsley and Wekkler, argue that terms such as "identity," "lesbian" and "queer" etc. are ill-suited to refer to "Caribbean sexual identity given that "queer is only one construction of non-heteronormative sexuality among many – and that listening to other languages, and others' historically specific sexual self-understanding, is so crucial to broadening the field" (Tinsley 6 as quoted in Ghisyawan 2016, 163). For instance, terms such as *Zami*, *Mati*, *Man royal* all refer to degrees of women loving women in specific contexts.

disidentification and E. Patrick Johnson's "quare" poetics, Nadia Ellis offers a *queer performance hermeneutic* in Jamaican dancehall. She shows us how our understanding of "queer" can be queered by engaging with various conversations being had in Caribbean studies, particular amongst scholars of dancehall. She emphasizes:

that by queer I do not in any simple way mean gay, lesbian, bisexual, homosexual, or any of the categorical terms we use to define people's sexuality. To be sure, I do not mean to exclude those categories from view. But I mean, perhaps, to supplement or modify them. Queer functions for me as a signifier of sexual and gender nonnormativity, a break in the line of gender. This may include erotic exchanges between people of the same gender, but is not limited to them. It is very often bound up with the homoerotic, though it need not be sexual. Queer emphasizes practice, action, not categorical state. Queer shifts, it moves, it does not rest. It names a practice, it names a moment, it names a person, sometimes all three simultaneously. It might name a different practice, a different person in another moment. Crucially, in my analysis queer does not depend on knowing in any assured way what a person feels about his or her sexual orientation. Indeed, it refuses the sense that "orientation" tells us anything concrete or stable about who we are and what we do. It does depend on there being a discursive field, a social matrix, that defines normative sexual and social practices against which the queer stands. (2000, 209)

Ellis' understanding of "queer" is useful in describing the non-normative ways in which dancehall artists and performers embody their identities, for instance, Fashion Ova Style fashion or masculine dressing for female performers like Koffee. Additionally, Ellis' use of "queer" to speak of dancehall's queer performance hermeneutic is complementary to the conversation that I previously had that focused on locating space, race, gender, and sexuality in the chapter on dancehall. I discussed the ways in which gender, race, class, and sexuality "operate in a framework of patriarchy" (Hope 2006, 37). Through the performance of both *petit marronage* and *slackness*, Jamaicans challenge normative discourses/ideologies on gender, sexuality, and race. Where *petit marronage* and *slackness* refer to the constant and gendered negotiation of ideologies surrounding hegemonic discourses, while strategically (and sometime provisionally) challenging those ideologies. Throughout my analysis of Bamby and Jahyanai's personas, I engage with the

ways in which they are performing acts of *petit marronage* and *slackness* as well as *queering* our understanding of French Caribbean norms on race, gender, and sexuality.

4.6 Case study of Personas: Bamby and Jahyanäi

Both Jahyanäi King and Bamby have been extremely successful in the dancehall music industry. They have received numerous accolades that have positioned them at the top of Guyane's music industry. Consequently, they have now become ambassadors of Guyane and of dancehall music and culture. This section will briefly discuss the artists, as well as what they have accomplished as Guyanais dancehall artists.

Jahyanäi King owns his own music label called Rude Empire Music group. He and Bamby are both contracted artists under this music group. Jahyanäi was recently signed to Sony Music Publishing (France) and to Virgin Records (France), while Bamby still remains only signed to his music group. Bamby can be described as a dancehall deejay and sing-jay,⁷⁸ and as a song writer. Jahyanäi, on the other hand, has been an active member of all parts of dancehall production: He is a deejay, song writer and producer. He produces and writes most of the songs that he and Bamby deejay either alone or in conjunction with other people. He also creates "riddims" for which artists in his music group deejay on (individuals singles or medleys/mixes), for example, Jahyanäi's "Paranormal Activity riddim."⁷⁹ This collective "riddim over voice" feature is one of the key elements that sets dancehall apart from other Black diasporic music. Jahyanäi has also deejayed songs on numerous popular Jamaican riddims such as "The King riddim."

⁷⁸ A sing-jay is a form of toasting and singing like Mr. Vegas or Buju Banton.

⁷⁹ This is an example of medley.

Under the Rude Empire Music group, both Bamby and Jahyanai have recorded numerous songs that have had success outside of the geographic boundaries of Guyane and the boundaries of the French and French Antillean diaspora. Taking Jahyanai King's YouTube channel into consideration, as of today,⁸⁰ it has approximately 178,320,988 views. His account showcased songs for both Jahyanai and Bamby until February 2021, when Bamby created her own YouTube account which now has 1,570,437 views.⁸¹ Her account was made in February of 2021 and only has one music video uploaded in comparison to the 92 videos that are on Jahyanai's site.

In 2012, Jahyanai released his breakthrough single "Bubblin" on the popular Jamaican DJ Blue RDX Jump riddim. I classify "Bubblin" as the start of his international career, since the riddim is associated with one of the most popular dancehall songs for 2012: "Jump" by RDX. Other popular songs on the riddim for that year include "Dagga Dagging" by Mc Duc and "Willy man" by Rickman. It was not until 2017, when Jahyanai and Bamby recorded their first single together, "Real Wifey," that they both received immense international fame. This popularity prompted them to continue producing songs together. To date, their most successful songs have been together. These songs include "Real wifey" (16M⁸²), "Fix up" (3.9M), "Run di place" (32M), "Who mad again" (27M), and "Bag a Gyal" (3.3M). Since "Real Wifey," they have each produced numerous other singles.⁸³ Collectively, all their songs have over 82.2 million views on Jahyanai's YouTube channel. This number is more than half of the total views on Jahyanai's YouTube. Furthermore, Jahyanai has won Hit Lokal awards for song of the year and

⁸⁰ April 22, 2022.

⁸¹ April 22, 2022.

⁸² "M" is an abbreviation for millions of views on YouTube.

⁸³ Bamby's repertoire includes "Downtown" (403K), "F*ck It" (5.6M), "Sugar daddy" (2M), "Bad from mi born" (2.8M), "Fo ba mo lè" (4.1M), and "This Bwoy" (3M). While Jahyanai's repertoire includes "Pa a demi" (350K), "Back again" (2.1M), "Sa to ka wè" (3.8M), "Bruk it off" (2.6M), "We nuh like run" (911K), "Dweet so" (11M), and "Pumpaction" (1.2M).

best new male artist in 2012, best dancehall duo of the year with Bamby in 2018, as well as two Lindors (National Guyanais awards) for best male performer and song of the year in 2013.⁸⁴

Bamby, on the other hand, has won the Hit lokal awards for best new female artists in 2017, best dancehall duo of the year in 2018, and best female dancehall artist in 2019.

In sum, their popularity and success make them ideal for my case study of Guyanais dancehall. They both perform various intersectional identities through their stylization of the dancehall personas "the bad bwoy/the rude bwoy" and "the bad gyal." In the pages that follow, I describe both personas in relation to their specific connotations in dancehall music and Jamaican culture.

4.6.1 Bad Bwoy/Rude Bwoy Persona

The original rude bwoy was Rhygin Ivan, a well-known Jamaican criminal who was praised by his community as an anti-hero. He was anti-Babylon, meaning anti-police and state control. His story was recorded in the 1972 movie titled *The Harder They Come*. This movie, according to Cooper (1994), was the ideological justification of the making of the rude bwoy that popularized the "symbolic power of the ghetto gunman" (433). Even though working-class Jamaicans had already self-identified with Rhygin, this film deified all that he stood for (much like the story of Robin Hood).

The popularity of Rhygin created what we now call "badmanism." It can be defined as a theatrical pose created by the Jamaican inner-city youth who have been socialized into the hero

⁸⁴ A French Overseas Department Music Association's music award ceremony for Antillean artists producing music in genres such as dancehall, reggae, zouk, bouyon, and hip-hop. Best album and collaboration of the year, best new male and female artists of the year are also awarded. All categories are divided by male and female.

vs villain dichotomy, particularly through American films (Cooper 1994, 430-431). To be a badman means to be aggressive and glorify gun violence. For them, dancehall becomes a space in which men can negotiate their masculinity and exert power. Consequently, the original rude bwoys, in general, were typically murderers, robbers and looters. McFarlane (2012) argues that the rude bwoy aesthetics became an important part of their identity. They would:

parade the streets of Kingston in their 'arrow shirts, narrow ties, their short trousers, leather jackets, ballet shoes, bum-freezer jackets, wraparound sunglasses, with a towel thrown on one shoulder, ratchet knife ever present either on their waist or in their hands, hair worn short and well groomed. (395)

Over the years, the rude bwoy aesthetic has been greatly influenced by American mainstream media, more specifically black American materialism, instead of looking to Africa with respect to Reggae (395). Rude bwoy fashion, then, became a bricolage of high-end fashion and low-end fashion that met the needs and economic constraints of its participants. This is typically accompanied by the badman/rude bwoy performance of having a rough coarse voice, the use of expletives and regular references to violence, slouching and having a "screw face" (Hope 2010, 225).⁸⁵

Contemporary aesthetics of the rude bwoy are primarily influenced by gun violence, narco-culture, and political tribalism in inner-city communities in Jamaica (Hope 2006, 117). Additionally, in contemporary dancehall, the terms "rude" and "rudeness" have begun to have sexual connotations (Gordon 2011, 27). For example, Beyoncé's (2002) "Bad boy" with Sean Paul and Rihanna's (2010) "Rude Boy," all encourage men to show their dominance and eagerness to pleasure women (27). At the top of male dancehall artists' lyrical content are hardcore and explicit conversations on sex, homophobia, and anti-oral sex stances that go hand-

⁸⁵ Jamaican Creole phrase for having an angry looking face (or a poker face).

in-hand with lyrics that are about gun violence and violence in general (Pinnock 2007). In sum, the rude bwoy has come to represent anti-law and order, violence and the hyper-sexualization of Caribbean men,⁸⁶ who now have a particular interest in fashion and materialism. Some contemporary Jamaican artists who fit these descriptions include Movado, Vybz Kartel,⁸⁷ Aidonia, Popcaan, and Govana.

4.6.2 Bad Gyal Persona

Deejaying in dancehall music has predominantly been a space for men to express themselves lyrically. However, there have always been women who challenge the status quo of the male-dominated field. One of the most notable female deejays is Sister Nancy, who is known as the first female deejay in dancehall. She created the most sampled dancehall version of all time; "Bam Bam" (1982). Additionally, deejays like Lady Saw, Lady Patra,⁸⁸ and Tanya Stephens have also carved a name for themselves amongst dancehall artists. These women became symbols of Jamaican women's (specifically Black lower-class women) femininity, and sexuality that did not follow respectability politics in the 1990s. Instead, they represented pro-sexual pleasure and a counter-hegemonic discourse to masculinity. Additionally, Lady Saw, has

⁸⁶ When I say hyper-sexualization of Caribbean men, I am thinking in terms of the rent-a-dread phenomenon and the ways in which the bodies of Caribbean men and women have been positioned as transactional and readily available for the pleasure of individuals coming from the west with their Euros, USD, or pounds.

⁸⁷ Vybz Kartel has been one of the most influential dancehall artists in the last 20 years. His dancehall persona embodies the descriptions of a rude bwoy (bad bwoy), and the fashion ova style and out and bad aesthetics. He is currently serving a life sentence for a murder. Even though he has been in prison since 2011, he has managed to release numerous top dancehall hits as well as three albums.

⁸⁸ Patra was the first woman in dancehall to be introduced to mainstream US media through her record deal with the US label Epic Records (Bascomb 2014, 198).

been considered one of the *slackest*⁸⁹ deejays because of her sexually explicit lyrics and performances on stage.

Bad Gyal, in simple terms can be considered the counterpart of the rude bwoy. More specifically, they symbolize a type of gendered and racialized Caribbean femininity that is considered deviant in the eyes of the larger community. Thomas (2004) argues that there is an embodied and lyrically gendered politics of the ghetto that is at play. It involves the "ghetto feminist" who does not seek "the pursuit of respectability and the acceptance of paternalistic patriarchy," but seeks to have her own agency (152). The erotic displays of the body and sexually explicit lyrics are at the forefront of some these bad gyal dancehall artists' repertoires. Additionally, their aesthetic includes "anarchic, confrontational and openly sexual" styles that include "irreconcilable colors," while also mixing high- and low-end fashion (Bakare- Yusuf 2006, 465). Like the rude bwoy, the bad gyal both challenges hegemonic notions of gender while conforming to other notions.

Contemporary artists known for the bad gyal aesthetics are Ce'Cile, Spice, Shenseea and Jada Kingdom, etc. In the newspaper article entitled "I created the phrase 'bad gyal' – Ce'Cile - Artiste upset at adoption of name by Spanish artiste" from the *Jamaican Star*,⁹⁰ Ce'Cile speaks out against the Spanish artist, Alba Farelo who goes by the name Bad Gyal and claims that she is against the cultural appropriation of Jamaican culture. She emphasizes that the term "Bad Gyal" was popularized by her. She says:

⁸⁹ Slackest refers to the superlative of "slack" coming from the definition of slackness given in the dancehall chapter.

⁹⁰ Jamaica's entertainment tabloid owned by the news publishing company the Gleaner Company limited. See website: <http://jamaica-star.com/article/entertainment/20191122/i-created-phrase-%E2%80%98bad-gyal%E2%80%99-%E2%80%93-ce%E2%80%99cile-artiste-upset-adoption-name>

Bad Gyal didn't just come out of nowhere. It was a song that I had with Elephant Man that I created a whole image around and what 'bad gyal' meant to me. Bad girl comes from somewhere, 'bad gyal', I started saying that when I had the song and I created the gyal spelling. Check it pan Google, it never existed before 2002... I also have that word 'bad gyal' registered as belonging to me in this country. For her to create that persona and taking it further and saying that she's dancehall bad gyal, it's just a slap in the face. Disrespectful. (Grizzle 2019)

Many other artists, such as Rihanna as well as even Bamby, have used the title "Bad Gyal;" Bad Gyal Riri, and Bad Gyal Bamby, respectfully. Their use of the title has not been frowned upon. This allows us to delve into a larger conversation on cultural appropriation, racialization and stylization by individuals who are outsiders to Caribbean culture. It asks us to question the ways in which, white Europeans in particular, are able to profit off Caribbean culture and, in some examples, even become more successful than artists from Caribbean. Hence, Ce'Cile questions the positionality of a white Catalan woman's use of "Bad Gyal" as her stage name, given that she has not lived the gendered and racialized lived experiences of black women in dancehall (soca, zouk, bouyon, calypso etc.), the Caribbean and the Caribbean/world music industry. Bad Gyal, then, seems to be a specifically Caribbean form of identification amongst Caribbean girls and women who have stepped outside of traditional standards of femininity.

In the two chapters that follow, I look closely at Jahyanai's and Bamby's embodied performance of Guyanais dancehall to describe how they perform their "rude bwoy" and "bad gyal" personas respectfully.

Chapter 5: Rude King Jahyanai: From Cowboys to Rude Bwoys

Bamby, yuh a di bullet.
Yuh kno mi a di gun.
If dem violate yuh betta kno blood ago run.
Cya yu a di queen an mi a di king.
An yuh kno till di end.
We go sidung pon i throne.

[Bamby, you are the bullet.
You know that I am the gun.
If they disrespect us, they should know that blood's gonna flow.
Because you are the queen and the king.
And until the end. We will reign.] (Who Mad Again)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at Jahyanai King and his performance of the "rude bwoy" persona. Firstly, I contextualize the figure of the "rude bwoy" as a part of the cross-fertilization of ideas owing to the influence of the American westerns and spaghetti westerns. Secondly, I situate the "rude bwoy" as a unique Caribbean phenomenon. Even though the "rude bwoy" has been influenced by media coming from the West, it also represents specific Caribbean processes of Marronage in terms of theories of resistance. In the second half of the chapter, I look closely at Jahyanai as a dancehall performer. I analyze his Rude King persona as a part of the lineage of the Jamaican "rude bwoy." I separate his performances into three categories: the Rude Bwoy, the Gyalis, and the International Rude Bwoy. I end with a conversation on his multilingual repertoire and use of Jamaican Creole to market himself to a larger global audience.

5.2 From Cowboys to Rude Bwoys

Through the globalization of Hollywood cinema, the figures of the "cowboy" and the "outlaw" have influenced Jamaican culture and music. Most notably in the stylization of the persona known as the "rude bwoy." Jahyanai King's appropriation of the "rude bwoy" persona is

a part of this lineage of cross-fertilization. American cinema, particularly during the 1960s and 70s, became an important leisure activity in the Caribbean. Keith Warner (2000) says:

From one end of the archipelago to the other, from Jamaica to Trinidad, the lure of the cinema – popularly referred to as ‘pictures’ or ‘theatre’ – was inescapable. It provided a relatively inexpensive activity for the masses, affording them a look at another world beyond the confines of the islands, and allowing them to submerge themselves in other adventures, albeit from a distance. (cited in Harewood 2008, 27)

The genre that gained the most popularity was the American Western. Warner argues that Western films were popular because they:

were dominated by men trying to carve out their turf, to establish their manhood through their quick draw and their overall toughness. They showed values that appealed to the spirit of adventure and fair play in the hearts of many of those cheering on the cowboy, the star boy who could not die – or in any event, not till the last reel... There was an air of ‘triumph of the underdog’ combined with ‘might is right’ that permeated many westerns, a tailor-made situation for a colonized citizen anxious to prove his mettle, if only subconsciously, against a colonial master. The western, par excellence, typified the struggle of the good guy versus the bad guy, and the colonial filmgoer could identify with both elements as it suited his fancy. This duality of association explains the ability of the Caribbean viewer to identify with John Wayne leading his assault against native American Indians, who were . . . made in many instances to be the villains. (cited in Harewood 2008, 27-8)

The "rude bwoy" persona is a direct example of the cross-fertilization of the figure of the "outlaw" and the "cowboy" from these Western films. These figures have been reappropriated and reworked in Jamaican popular culture and the Jamaican imaginary. The ideas on manhood grounded on toughness, the myth of being invincible, the underdog, and the good or bad guy were all applicable in the lives of many Jamaicans, especially regarding expectations surrounding Caribbean masculinity.

On the origins of the "cowboy" and the "outlaw" as a part of Western dime-store novels, Susan Hayward (2000) says that:

These novels dramatized lives that were both real and fictional and elevated the cowboy to mythic status. In the early days of cinema, at least, these novels were the primary

sources for the Western movie, which is a part explanation for the highly ritualized nature of this genre. These novels also heroized outlaws (Jesse James being a favourite) and indeed lawmen. And as we shall see, the heroization of the outlaw also became a typology of this genre. In fact, real-live outlaws and cowboys – especially cowboys who had been rodeo riders – came into the film industry up until as late as the 1930s and 1940s. (464)

The figures of the "cowboy" and the "outlaw" both championed themes relating to the mythic hero, frontiers, the American dream, American democracy, and manhood. The Western is, at its core, a nationalistic myth that encouraged expansion and conversations on moral virtue. On the contradictions that Westerns raise, James Folsom (1967) argues the Western leaves:

a persistent nagging doubt in American life about whether the choice which America made to become a great, capitalist, industrial power was indeed a wise one. Not surprisingly, objections to modern American life have often taken the form of myths about alternative American destinies, destinies which at least for artistic purposes Americans like to think they positively chose against. The Western, therefore, is not so much true to the facts of American western history as a mirror image of modern American life, in which the virtuous Westerner, representative of an older and different order, is contrasted with a morally inferior modern - and often Eastern – world. (196-197)

The Western, above all, represents larger discourses on nationalism, conquests, American masculinity, and the American Dream in opposition to Otherness. The key difference between the figures, the "outlaw" and "cowboy," in Westerns, is the moral code that the "cowboy" is presumed to follow. This "moral code" can also be put into question given the role of the "morally just cowboy" in conquering the "West" and all other contradictions associated with the quest to civilize the Other.

In addition to Westerns, American Gangster films have also been influential in the ideological configuration of what is defined as the "rude bwoy." The gangster film is described as:

a paradigm of the American dream... [It] is a vehicle that responds to our wish to have our dreams made visible to us in a form that retains their dreamlike qualities but contains

a narrative that is the living dream of its hero who makes it happen, actualizes it.
(Shadoian 2003, 3-4)

Even though the gangster may face a tragic fate, he celebrates his individualism and self-determination in his quest for the American Dream. The gangster is in opposition to society. Shadoian argues that the gangster differs from the "outlaw" in that the gangster "violates a system of rules that a group of people lives under" and "is a product of an advanced, urban civilization" (4). In contrast, the "outlaw" is concerned with the conflict between "the individual versus the land or civilized versus uncivilized forces" (4). The gangster "by definition... is outside, or anti-, the legitimate social order" (4). Through the romanticization of the figure of the "cowboy," "outlaw," and the "gangster," Jamaicans found ideologies that reflected their own lived experiences in their state. More specifically, Jamaicans, according to Louis Chude-Sokei (2007), "found space within American allegories to navigate and explore the conceptual and economic meanings of 'West,' the 'frontier,' the 'border,' as well as the various promises and challenges made by the relentlessly global and borderless technological signifying of America" (139). In conversation with Chude-Sokei's work, Neil Campbell (2015) states that these films were able to be translated from one register to another and then reappropriated for new political purposes (273). Consequently, the themes and characters associated with Westerns and Gangster films influenced Jamaican contemporaneous music genres like ska and rocksteady reggae (273). Artists would constantly refer to films in their songs or album titles, like "Django," "Return of Django," "Clint Eastwood," "For a Few Dollars More," "They Call Me Trinity," "Magnificent Seven," "True Grit," "The Good, [and] the Bad and the Upsetters." The stage names of some artists even reflected the characters from popular films, like Josey Wales, Lone Ranger, Johnny Ringo, Clint Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef, and John Wayne.

5.3 The Rude Bwoy

The crucial moment when the figures of the gangster, the outlaw, and the cowboy were fermented in the Jamaican imaginary can be identified in the Jamaican film *The Harder They Come*,⁹¹ a 1972 Jamaican film starring the ska, rocksteady, and reggae singer Jimmy Cliff. Louis Chude-Sokei (2007) considers *The Harder They Come* as "the first black post-colonial western [which encouraged] broad transnational cultural conversation" (137). He states that it is:

Black, obviously- but a *post-colonial western* in that it is in direct conversation with two disparate film traditions: blaxploitation and "spaghetti westerns," both of which critiqued American culture and politics by reversing, rejecting, and revising its moral structures. These moral structures were explicitly linked to racism in the former and to the global hegemony of the United States in the latter.... As critiques of America- in a visual dialect of its own filmic language- they are linked by these questions of violence, morality, and the intimate relationship between resistance and crime. (137)

As previously explained in the chapter on theoretical and methodological considerations, the notion of the "rude bwoy" was ideologically solidified in Jamaican culture with *The Harder They Come's* release. Not only did it deify Rhygin Ivan as the tragic outlaw and gangster figure, but it also glorified the ghetto and guns. Carolyn Cooper (1994) states that:

The symbolic power of the ghetto gunman in *The Harder They Come* is amplified because the gunman is also a reggae singer. The power of the gun is magnified by the fire power of the singer's music and lyrics. Real life Rhygin was no singer. The Perry Henzell/Trevor Rhone adaptation of the Rhygin legend for film brilliantly distills the essence of urban revolt: the fusion of reggae music and badmanism, shaping the sensibility of duppy-conquering ghetto youth like Bob Marley. Rhygin's control of literal and symbolic gun fire is one of the earliest examples of an oral performance tradition of which contemporary Jamaican dancehall music is an organic part. Masking, spectacle, role play and sublimation are essential elements of the theatre of Jamaican popular culture. (433)

As I analyze the persona of the "rude bwoy" (and the bad gyal), the oral performance, especially the lyrical gun, becomes crucial. As Cooper highlights, guns and gunfire in dancehall music do

⁹¹ Directed by Perry Henzell and co-written by Trevor Rhone.

not always mean an actual gun. Sometimes there may be real gunfire that goes off in appreciation or acknowledgment of the music being played. However, lighters or gun fingers may also be symbolic of gunshots. The gun can also be metaphoric in the sense of a verbal statement. For instance, saying "pram, pram!" or "boop, boop!" These examples, according to Cooper, are "the rhetoric of the 'lyrical gun,'" a turn of phrase used by Shabba Ranks in the song "Gun Pon Me." She continues by saying:

"Lyrical" is not a word one would ordinarily use to describe a gun. "Lyrical" is the language of elegiac poetry, not willful extermination. "Lyrical gun" is a dancehall term, the language of subversion and subterfuge. Mixing things up. Turning them inside out and upside down. A lyrical gun is the metaphorical equivalent of a literal gun. Words fly at the speed of bullets and the lyrics of the DJ hit hard.⁹² (435)

This oral performance of the lyrical gun can be seen in older performers by "Clint Eastwood, Lone Ranger, Josey Wales, Bounty Killer, Dillinger, Trinity, Ninjaman, Red Dragon, and Bandolero, [who]...perpetuate this complex relationship with guns and frontier imagery" (Campbell 2015, 277). The themes of guns, gun violence, and turfs have continued to permeate the musicscape of reggae music and its offspring dancehall in various ways.

⁹² I think that is it important to note here for both outsiders and insiders of dancehall scholarship that I do agree and employ Cooper's use of "the lyrical gun" concerning Shabba Rank's "Gun Pon Me" in my analysis of both the "rude bwoy" and the "bad gyal" personas. In her 1994 article, Cooper talks about Buju Banton's controversial song "Boom By-By." She uses the metaphor of the lyrical gun to talk about the words "Boom By-By," abstractly stating that it is a conversation about an anti-homosexuality stance in general and does not refer to the person, "the homosexual," as she says. Though I agree that the lyrics of "Boom By-By" have been mistranslated, particularly by the US LGBT group GLAAD, I do not agree with her analysis that it has to be taken too literally and out of context. Dancehall artists and dancehall culture have continuously highlighted how Jamaican masculinity foregrounds itself in conversations on male genitalia and anti-gay rhetoric. With that being said, "Boom By-By," whether taken as an abstraction or not, promotes homophobic sentiments, and that cannot be misconstrued. Hence, in this example, I acknowledge the metaphorical lyrical gun's usefulness, while also disagreeing with Cooper's overall argument in her article.

According to Hutton (2010), in his article "Oh: Jamaican Popular Music and the Narrative of Urban Badness in the Making of Postcolonial Society," the phenomenon of the "rude bwoy" specifically emerged in the 1960s, two to three years after Jamaica's post-independence (22). He illustrates that the origins of Kingston gangs stem from:

the early post-emancipation period, when attempts by the former slave-making classes and their British colonial backers to corral emancipated Africans into an ontologically degraded labouring class shaped by the epistemology, psychology and culture of enslavement, bred a class of African-Jamaicans which colonial reports and society called vagabonds, among other demeaning names. By denying emancipated Africans reparation for their enslavement, and artificially increasing the price of land up to sixty times the market rate for African-Jamaicans so as to strategically fetter black access, as well as using state intervention to prevent or to curtail black proprietorship, the post-emancipation elites engendered a class of African-Jamaicans with little option but to make a living primarily by anti-social means. (24)

Kingston, Hutton argues, "became the cultural, psychological, and ontological bloodline of the social formations from which youth gangs... would emerge in Jamaica in the second half of the twentieth century" (25). Relevant to this discussion, is the story of Rhygin Ivans who, along with Whoopy King (another well known "rude bwoy"), Hutton argues, became known for their "bold reckless courage, defiance and impish adventurousness usually identified in Hollywood cinematic characters, especially those in Western and gangster movies" (27). Additionally, they both "became part of [an] evolving culture of honour, respectability, and mythical invincibility in the iconographic terrain of Jamaican ontology which led to some degree of admiration for badmanism among the populace" (27). "Badness" and "Badmanism" as ideological stances eventually became characteristics of the politics of the urban ghetto. This power has even been used to (has been manipulated) by Jamaican elites to push partisan politics.⁹³

⁹³ In the first chapter on the origins and definition of dancehall music and culture, I demonstrated how post-independence party politics between the Jamaica Labour Party and the People's National Party influenced gang affiliation. Additionally, I highlight how Jamaicans economic

For this chapter my working definition of the "rude bwoy," which is synonymous with the term "badman," is someone who supports a politics of the ghetto. In sum, they:

[defy] political authority, [reject] the dominant cultural sensibility, and [affirm] ghetto culture and ideology as legitimate rivals to the dominant Anglophile. This celebration of ghetto morality exalted a combative refusal to be submissive, a spontaneous militant affirmation of Blackness, a disposition to adopt menacing postures toward those perceived as "oppressors," and a readiness to challenge those found guilty of vaunting their class position and "high" skin colour. (Gray 2001, 97)

Concerning songs about the "rude bwoy," Hurton suggests that most songs during the 1960s and 70s took anti-rude bwoy stances and did not glorify badness. Additionally, some pro rude bwoy songs even referred explicitly to the socio-political and historical creation of the "rude bwoy," "as a social being shaped in the socio-historical culture of slavery, colonialism, and prejudice emanating from the postcolonial Jamaican state" rather than as a product of their own doing (53). Songs in contemporary dancehall music on the figure of the "rude bwoy," who is now often called "badman" or "gunman," on the other hand, do focus on the oral performance of the gun and other subjects, such as being a player, dancing, and even conscious music. Notably, the metaphor of the gun is still a present theme, and current songs tend to glorify and promote literal or physical gun violence. The popularity of gunman songs in dancehall is not new; however, recently, there has been a rise in dancehall songs related to scamming, gun trafficking, and gun violence by artists such as Popcaan, Intence, Skeng, Skilibeng, Alkaline, among others. For instance, some of the most popular songs in 2021 all glorify the previously mentioned theme: "Gunman Shift" by Skeng, "Yahoo Boyz" by Intence, "Coke" by Skilibeng, "Update" by Masicka, "Protocol" by Skeng, and Tommy Lee Sparta, among others. Furthermore, one of the

and development commitments in the 1960s affected the country's growth and contributed to growing inner-city communities and violence.

most famous dancehall artists, Vybz Kartel, was imprisoned for life after being convicted in 2014 for murder.⁹⁴

The more circular debate in dancehall revolves around the issue of violence in dancehall music and Jamaican society at large. For instance, 2021 was the second year in a row that Jamaica has had the highest murder rate in the Caribbean and Latin America, according to InsightCrime (2021).⁹⁵ Hence, I can ask the generic question, does dancehall reflect the violence throughout various communities in Jamaica? Or does dancehall music contribute to the rising rates of violence in Jamaica? Situating the "rude bwoy" figure in Guyane raises similar questions. Does the figure of the "rude bwoy" in Guyane reflect what is going on socio-politically in Guyane? Or is it just the stylization of one of the many personas in dancehall that Jahyanai or other Guyanais people find interesting? Additionally, does the performance of the "rude bwoy" persona by artists like Jahyanai (and dancehall in general) contribute to violence? In a 2016 interview by *France-Guyane* entitled "Jahyanai King and Rude Empire X France Guyane: "Une famille plus qu'un label."⁹⁶ Shatta, one of Jahyanai's protégé's says:

Certains disent qu'on pousse à la violence, mais la violence est déjà là. On ne fait que dire ce qui se passe... Et puis je suis sûr qu'en disant qui je suis, beaucoup vont se reconnaître. Car on est tous pareils dans le ghetto.

Some people say we are pushing violence, but violence is already there. We just say what's going on... And then I'm sure that by saying who I am, many will see themselves in me. Cause we're all the same in the ghetto.

⁹⁴ Ironically, even though in prison, he is still producing music on guns, violence, and women.

⁹⁵ https://insightcrime.org/news/insight-crimes-2021-homicide-round-up/#:~:text=*Jamaica%3A%2049.4%20per%20100%2C000&text=The%20Constabulary%20Force%20recorded%201%2C463,wave%E2%80%9D%20of%20COVID%2D19.

⁹⁶ "A family more than a label." YouTube interview at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTgsROjGNhc>.

Shatta hopes that his fans will see themselves in him and his music. More importantly, he says that dancehall reflects the violence that is already currently present in Guyane, and, as dancehall artists, it is their job to retell the lived experiences of those in the ghetto. Looking at the socio-economic conditions of present-day Guyane, specific neighborhoods may be like those in Jamaica. To reiterate the socio-political and economic context of Guyane, as discussed in the second chapter, here, I discuss the findings of Cratère (2019; 2020), Audoux, Mallemanche, and Prévot (2020) and Linternaute (2020) in a bit more detail. For instance, Cratère (2020) maintains that 20% of people in Guyane are unemployed. This is higher than the rates in France at 8%, and Martinique at 15%, and almost equal to Guadeloupe's rate of 21%. Furthermore, Cratère explains that this is primarily due to structural issues: the narrowness of the Guyanais market, the mismatch between supply and demand, and the fact that most of the population does not have the qualifications for skilled labor jobs that have been increasing. It is important to note that Guyane also has a very young population, with half of the population being under 25 (Cratère 2019). In addition to unemployment, Guyane is the second poorest department with a poverty threshold of 53%, following Mayotte at 77% compared to metropolitan France's 14% (Audoux et al 2020). Moreover, when all total crimes and offenses are grouped for each department in France and evaluated by the number of violations per thousand inhabitants, Guyane reigns number 11th most dangerous department in France (first amongst the Overseas Departments) (Linternaute 2020).⁹⁷ Considering all this information, life in certain parts of Guyane is comparable to life in Jamaican Urban Inner-city communities known for high rates of violence and structural inequities. As a Black inner-city music genre, Dancehall offers Guyanais youths an outlet to describe what is going on in their daily lives. Consequently, the "rude bwoy,"

⁹⁷ <https://www.linternaute.com/actualite/delinquance/classement/departements/plus-dangereux>

who is known for his politics of the ghetto, has been appropriated by Guyanais dancehall artist Jahyanai King in his effort to rework the "rude bwoy" figure into his specific persona, the Rude King Jahyanai.

5.5 Petit Marronage

The figure of the "rude bwoy" represents a Caribbean-specific form of resistance, the embodiment of marronage, and the symbolism of the marron. Bakari (2018) argues that the "rude bwoy" as "outlaw" can be situated in the lineage of marronage. He states that the "rude bwoy" figure can be "mapped onto the chronology of Caribbean slave revolts, rebellion... and post-emancipation riots," signifying agency and will. This ultimately situates the "rude bwoy" and his posse as "fully cognizant of the differences between slavery, absolute or modified, and freedom" (Bakari 2018). In this project, I situate "rude bwoy" as a figure who engages in petit marronage to challenge dominant discourses. This means that the "rude bwoy" is constantly negotiating hegemonic discourses, while strategically (and sometimes provisionally) challenging those same discourses.

Furthermore, the "rude bwoy" reworks both the figures of the "cowboy" and the "outlaw" to offer a critique of, not only the US as state power and American ideologies, but also their (Jamaican) post-independent state or non-sovereign state. On the one hand, Jamaica gained independence in 1964 and still relies heavily on economic and structural support from the West. On the other hand, Guyane is still tied to France politically and economically as an Overseas Department and region. The actions of the "rude bwoy," whether in real life or the musicscape problematize concepts such as "freedom," "justice," "violence," and "sovereign/non-sovereign." More precisely, in engaging in acts of *petit marronage*, the "rude bwoy" draws on the symbolism

of what it means to be a Maroon. Historically, the figure of the Maroon, according to Bilby (2000), has served an essentializing function in the Caribbean for the conceptualization of the Black diaspora. The Maroon, he maintains, is associated with positive connotations, such as defiance, resistance, and autonomy (265). In addition, they also represent uncompromising authenticity and purity (265). In essence, they "stand for the survival and regeneration of all that was noble in the African character before [it] was corrupted by colonialism and slavery, [embodying] qualities such as cultural integrity, social wisdom, and an ability to live in harmony with the forces of nature" (265). As a mythical figure, the Maroon is also an "outlaw" in the sense that they oppose settler colonialism, contingent independence, and French assimilationist practices. Their existence, continued presence, and fight for autonomy problematize the previously mentioned notions of "freedom," "justice," "violence," and "sovereign/non-sovereign." Moreover, issues surrounding the frontier or, in this case, land and the negotiation of cultural or ethnic identity, are all elements that are closely related to the figure of the "Maroon."

Likewise, the Rasta and Rastafarianism are also representatives of anti-state, anti-colonial control and have contributed to the ideologies associated with the "rude bwoy."⁹⁸ Mackie (2009) states that:

[b]oth the Maroons and the Rastafarians enshrine an African political and spiritual past lost to slavery.... The "Africa" replicated in the New World Maroon communities survived only by means of the collusion of these communities with the colonial military machine... the Rastafarians reconfigure an inevitably New World and mythical Africa as both the locus of lost origins and the site of redemption and return. (122)

⁹⁸ Mathes (2010) states that the Rastafari "can be traced to early-twentieth-century revivalist groups such as the Bedwardites, the diasporic syncretism of African and East Indian worldviews present on the island [Jamaica], Marcus Garvey's Pan-African ideals, Jamaican trade union activism, and the 1930s countercultural prophetic figure Leonard Howell's establishment of what would become the first Rastafari encampment at Pinnacle" (28).

The mythical Africa that the Rastafari focuses on, Mackie argues, is "a utopian site of resistance" from which they can demand justice.⁹⁹ With Africa as its locus, Rastafari signifies more than "a rejection of Christianity" (Mathes 2010, 29). At its core, it is a "reframing [of] post-independence Black identity, African diaspora consciousness, and historical knowledge outside of the frameworks of a colonial and postcolonial Jamaican state seen as complicit in the intellectually and politically stagnating Babylon system" (Mathes 2010, 29). Talking about Peter Tosh's speech at the 1978 One Love Peace concert,¹⁰⁰ Mackie states that both the "rude bwoy" and the Rasta come from the same underclass. They are both "battling poverty, political exploitation, and social ostracism in the shantytowns of West Kingston" (127). The ways in which they choose to negotiate their lived experience, in his opinion carries on the tradition of two outlaw cultures. He argues that the "rudies perpetuate the ethos of the armed desperado, with his glamorized violence, personal stature, territorialism, and bravado" and that the Rastas embody "the separatist Maroon communities with their focus on spiritual righteousness, consciousness of African tradition, and resistance to cultural and political colonialism" (127). I read the figure of the "rude bwoy" as being a part of a lineage of Caribbean-specific forms of resistance stemming from the figure of the Maroon to the outlaw, the gunslinger, and the Rastafari, as they all embody anti-state, anti-law, and order positions, and resist the dominant culture. Even though Jamaicans have

⁹⁹ The Rastafari and their radical ideologies on colonialism, neo-colonialism, racial consciousness, and Black nationalism have been frowned upon by Jamaican elites. They have also been viewed as threats to the nation-state and Creole multiculturalism (particularly in the 1960s); see Mathes (2010).

¹⁰⁰ Peter Tosh is one of the most well-known reggae artists and a proud promoter of Rastafarianism. He was one of the main singers in the reggae group known as the Wailers. He performed at the Once Love Peace concert, which was a reggae concert held during the political uprising of 1978 between the two opposing political parties in Jamaica, the Jamaican Labour Party and the People's National Party. It included individuals like Peter Tosh, Bob Marley, Jacob Miller, Bunny Wailer, among others.

been influenced by globalization and Hollywood, artists still draw on *petit marronage* rooted in Caribbean processes of creolization and ways of negotiating power.

Central to the "rude bwoy" and the various figures that are a part of his genesis are conversations on Caribbean masculinities and violence. On the one hand, there is the "bad gyal" who embodies slackness, sexual and erotic displays of the body, and on the other, there is the "rude bwoy" who displays a type of machismo that draws on toughness, establishing one's turf, male promiscuity and a reworking of the respectability politics that works in their social networks. Additionally, in his mission to establish his turf, the "rude bwoy" draws heavily on a discourse of metaphorical and physical violence in real life and the musicscape.

In the case of Guyane, marronage and the figure of the Rasta and reggae music as forms of resistance are not new. Owing to the numerous Maroon communities that are a part of Guyane's history and landscape, such as the Aluku and Ndyukas, among others, their constant fight for land rights and indigenous rights, as well as their continued use of reggae as a means of negotiating Black diasporic identity, *petit marronage* (and *grand marronage*) is equally a part of Jamaica as it is a part of Guyane. Ideologies surrounding anti-state, anti-colonial control, and resistance to French assimilationist practices are a part of how individuals in Guyane have deployed reggae music (Bilby 2000), since its themes of social revolution, racial consciousness, and the shared struggle for freedom speak readily to various Black diasporic communities across the globe. The type of resistance that dancehall music and culture offer is quite different than reggae. As a genre that focuses on the lived realities of individuals in Guyanais and Jamaican urban communities, it critiques conservative ideologies and a view into the rigid notions of Culture in Guyane, France, and the wider French Antilles. The "rude bwoy" actively plays a part in the maintenance of dominant ideologies related to Caribbean masculinity and femininity, gun

violence, and violence, while also providing performances and commentary at times on those same topics to provide an alternative view of Caribbean masculinity, language use, sexuality, and Blackness. I place Jahyanäi King amongst this lineage of the Caribbean "rude bwoys" and their non-normative performances of masculinity.

5.6 Rude King Jahyanäi

Jahyanäi King began his musical career as a reggae artist interested in roots and culture. He drew explicitly on the figure of the "Rasta" and Rastafarianism as a spiritual and moral compass. In Trace Caraïbes' 2020 interview, "Jahyanäi King:" Dans 5 ans je serai connu à l'international..."¹⁰¹ Jahyanäi explains the origin of his stage name. He says :

J'ai voulu créer une espèce de pseudonyme qui représentait la Guyane. Dans "Jahyanäi," il y a "Yana," Guyane d'où je viens. Et puis, "Jah," tout le monde sait un peu, je suis locksé, je suis... parce que j'ai démarré avec du reggae à l'époque, avec le reggae. Et voilà sur coup, j'ai fait "Jahyanäi King" quoi.

I wanted to create a stage name that represented Guyane. In "Jahyanäi," there is "Yana," which signifies Guyane, where I'm from. And then, "Jah," everybody kinda knows, I have locs... because I started with reggae back then... And suddenly, I did "Jahyanäi King," you know.

His stage name represents his journey into music as he started as a reggae artist then gradually became a dancehall artist (which is not uncommon). Concerning the meaning of his stage name, "Jah" is the Rastafarian word for "God," originating from the words "Yahweh" and "Jehovah."¹⁰² In his original name, "Jahyanäi," he underscores the two most essential aspects in his life: his love for his country, Guyane, and his passion for "Jah." In his full stage name, "Jahyanäi King,"

¹⁰¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRkWy4NQQO1o&t=101s>

¹⁰² Possibly from the shorting of Yahweh or Jehovah from the Old Testament bible.

the "King" seems to refer to his nickname for himself as the "Rude King," drawing on the title of the "rude bwoy" and asserting himself as the "King" of dancehall music, possibly in Guyane.

The first popular Guyanais song that Jahyanai released represents his interest and commitment to reggae music and its rude and culture movement. In "Fanm Guyanaise," he positions himself as a member of the Caribbean musicscape as he sings on the 2005 Jamaican Istanbul Riddim.¹⁰³ Thinking about the "riddim over voice" phenomenon that I discussed in the chapter on dancehall, there are at least 20 Jamaican artists alone who have written songs on that riddim, such as "Gangster Lover" by Bounty Killer, "What Will It Take" by Jah Cure, "Marijuana" By T.O.K, "Friends" by Fantan Mojah, among others. This is just one of the many examples of how Jahyanai incorporates dancehall and reggae riddims from Jamaica into the songs he produces for himself and others. Additionally, the themes in "Fanm Guyanaise" relate to common themes in reggae, as Jahyanai sings about natural beauty, admiration for Guyanaise women, and nationalism. He says:

Lô to ka krwazé roun bel ti fanm gwiyanèz...
[When you meet a beautiful Guyanese woman]

Mon bleudeu mon mati fo mété to kô alèz, pass sé
[My boy, my friend, you have to put yourself at ease, because]

Fanm gwiyanèz a dè fanm ki gen djèz....
[The Guyanaise women are women who have style...]

Gadé ké to wéy mè pa manyen ké to lanmen,
[Look with your eyes but do not touch with your hands.]

Nivo dolanmen sé fanma kou dé Jacobin.
[Backhanded slap, these women are on point.]

Si to fè kouyon to ké pran roun rafale kou d'pwen.
[So if you act stupid, you will get loads of punches.]

¹⁰³ Produced by Purple Skunk Muzik music label and DJ Wayne Morris as the composer.

Guyanese, mo kantan Mo guyanese ké so wéy Chinese.
[Guyanese women, I love my Guyanese women with their Chinese eyes.]

In the previously mentioned interview, Jahyanai states that "Fanm Guyanaise" is the song of which he is proudest, since it highlights his love for his country and, more specifically, his love and respect for Guyanese women. He says:

Le titre dont je suis le plus fier? Je dirais "Fanm Guyanaise" parce que c'est le titre qui représente plus ma Guyane. Enfin, le mariage de cultures, de personnes. Il y a des Guyanais, des Haïtiens, des Surinamiens. Il y a tout et je trouve que c'est un titre dans lequel j'avais vraiment mis ça à l'honneur à l'époque.

The song that I am the proudest of? I would say "Fanm Guyanaise" because it is the song that represents my Guyane the best. Well, the marriage of cultures, the people. There are Guyanese, Haitians, Surinamese. There is everyone, and I think it's a song in which I highlighted all of that at the time.

"Fanm Guyanaise" also illustrates how Jahyanai initially stylized himself as a reggae artist linked to Rastafarianism and committed to singing conscious music to uplift the masses. As his persona evolves, he stylizes his "rude bwoy" persona, even referring to himself as the "Rude King," as he performs more dancehall.

5.7 The evolution of Jahyanai's Rude Bwoy persona

As mentioned in the previous section, Jahyanai started his musical career as a reggae artist. As he developed his musical taste and figured out his persona, he began to present himself as a dancehall artist. The song that placed him on the French Caribbean dancehall scene was "Bubblin." In 2012, "Bubblin" incorporated the voice-over riddim method using the famous RDX Jump riddim DJ Blue from the same year. In the song "Jump" by RDX, the artists urge women to dance, specifically to do various types of dances associated with "whining."

Throughout the song, the members of the group RDX give a list of dancing instructions to women. Jahyanai's "Bubblin" draws on a similar theme and musical layout. He says:

Tout mo sexy ladies ka whine up.
[All my sexy ladies are whining/dancing.]

Like RDX, he too created his lyrics specifically for the enjoyment of women or "the ladies," urging them to dance as he gives them instructions. The fact that Jahyanai draws on the riddim over voice method for a popular riddim and song during that period of time indicates his interest in traversing spatial boundaries and markets as a dancehall artist. By using the riddim, he was able to participate in a trans-Caribbean musical discourse. In addition to Jahyanai's version, other francophone artists produced versions that also became popular, contributing to the trans-Caribbean discourse. These include Mc Duc from Réunion, who sang "Dagga Dagging," and Rickman (G Crew) from Guyane, who sang "Bougé to gogo."

In this section of the chapter, I categorize Jahyanai's persona thematically. I group his performances into three main categories: the Rude bwoy, the Gyalis, and the International Rude Bwoy. By analyzing Jahyanai's music videos and lyrical code-switching and code-mixing content, I illustrate the three categorical groups that make up his persona and multilingual repertoire. Additionally, I describe how Jahyanai employs dancehall tropes and his repertoire to reach numerous audiences; lokal, regional and global. Jahyanai has also released previous songs associated with "rude bwoy" ideologies; however, for this dissertation and this section, I only analyze songs after he and Bamby rose to international fame in 2015, after the release of "Real Wifey."

5.7.1 The Rude Bwoy

In this section, I use four of Jahyanai's music videos and songs, "Fix Up" (2015), "Run di Place" (2016), "Who Mad Again" (2017), and "Bag A Gyal" (2019) to illustrate how he stylizes the "rude bwoy" persona. Jahyanai draws on the dancehall camp, which is like the notion of the

hip-hop or rap "crew." In dancehall, the crew can refer to dance groups that produce the latest dance moves to accompany songs that a particular artist records. The crew can also refer to the musical group or label that an artist is signed under, or it may refer to a group of artists' allegiance to a famous artist. For instance, Bounty Killer, Vybz Kartel, and Mavado are three well-known Jamaican dancehall artists who each have their own alliance of dancehall artists. Both Vybz Kartel and Mavado were once under the tutelage of Bounty Killer and were members of his group, known as the Alliance. Over time, they both exited the Alliance and created their own groups: The Portmore Empire, otherwise known as Gaza for Vybz Kartel, and Cassava Piece, otherwise known as Gully (side) for Mavado. Both Mavado's and Vybz Kartel's groups can be geographically and ideologically defined since they also represent their physical turfs; Waterford (Gaza) and Cassava Piece (Gully). Additionally, the artists associated with these groups and their fans hold strong feelings of respect and allegiance to their groups. This sometimes results in lyrical confrontations amongst dancehall artists of the groups, such as sound clashes between artists (Stanley Niaah 2006). These clashes are common amongst the heads of the groups, such as a clash between Mavado and Vybz Kartel at a stage show. Additionally, these clashes may escalate into physical or actual violence in the form of gang wars (Stanley Niaah 2006). Throughout all the songs in this section, discourse on turf, rivalry, and lyrical and physical violence are crucial to the stylization of his "rude bwoy" persona.

In "Fix Up," both Bamby and Jahyanäi set the stage for a discussion about the music group that they are a part of, Rude Empire. Jahyanäi starts the song by referring to an issue he wants to address. He deejays:

Fix up.
[Let's sort this out/Make yourself small/ make way.]

Toute problème ké fix up.

[All issues will be sorted out.]

Allé déryè nou pa ka mix up.
[Get behind, let's not start any problems.]

He presents his audience with a problem that needs to be addressed as he says, "Fix up." As the Rude Empire music group leader, he must clear up any confusion, malice, or negative ideologies associated with him or his group. Taking a "Nou/we" versus "To/You" (and at times Yo/Them)" stance in the chorus to distance himself from outsiders, he says:

To ékip a to ékip.
[Your crew is your crew.]

Nou équipe a nou pa.
[Our crew is our crew.]

Pa vini confund to équipe ké nou pa.
[Don't confuse your crew with our crew (We aren't the same).]

To assert his willingness to engage in lyrical or physical confrontation to represent and defend his group, in the first verse, he says:

A cry yo ka cry lè nou rivé.
[They are crying when we come into the place.]

Nou charjé an lyrics, anlè yo nou ka dévidé.
[We loaded with lyrics, we gonna empty the clip on them.]

Nou ja di yo pa speedé.
[We've already told them not to go fast.]

Following a similar line of argument, in the second verse, he says:

Roun patjé big matic pou pété an yo tèt
[A big automatic firing shots in their head.]

Fo pa yo cry...
[They shouldn't cry...]

Nou pa a tjek pies snitch isi-a
[We don't deal with snitches around here.]

He creates a scenario in which there is a rival crew that his Rude Empire group is opposing. Through a "Nou/We" versus "To/Yo" or "Us" versus "Them/You" discourse, he positions himself, Bamby, and his crew Rude Empire as a "Nou" and the "snitches" or "to ékip" as outsiders, as "Yo." Here, Jahyanai highlights one of the central themes of the "rude bwoy": creating and maintaining one's turf and supporting and defending one's crew. Additionally, he draws on both the lyrical and physical gun to assert his toughness and dominance as he says in "Nou charjé an lyrics, anlè yo nou ka dévidé" and "Roun Patjé big matic pou pété an yo tet."

In Jahyanai and Bamby's most famous song to date, "Run di Place," Jahyanai demonstrates his sexual bravado and his position as Bamby's partner in crime. "Run di Place" refers to both Jahyanai being the leader of his musical turf and group as well as sexual dominance. The phrase "run di place" refers to being in control of something or doing an excellent job at something (in this case praising his sexual prowess). This is illustrated in the following lyrics from the chorus sung by both him and Bamby:

A bad man Jahyanai, yeah mi like dat.
[It's badman/rude bwoy Jahyanai, yes, I like that.]

Gyal yuh body good, tell mi a weh yuh find dat?..
[Girl, your body is beautiful, tell me where you got it from..]

Ba mo tout position, a mo ki pilote.
[Give me all the different positions, I am in control.]

In his second verse, he continues a similar discussion:

To pussy good gyal, mi love dat enuh.
[Your pussy is good, girl, I love that.]

Mo obligé tapé sans arrete comme domino.
[I have to hit like when playing dominoes.]

To bien savé baby a mo ki domine enuh.
[You already know that it's me who dominates.]

Addressing himself as a "badman," Jahyanäi directly associates himself with ideologies on "badmanism" and sexual prowess. He asserts these ideologies by praising Bamby for her performance as she dances and whines for him. Additionally, he tells her that he is the one in control of their dancing and sexual experience. Throughout the lyrics, he urges Bamby to contort her body in various positions and even says that he is the one piloting. This is illustrated in the lyrics, "Ba mo tout position, a mo ki pilote" and "To bien save baby a mo ki domine enuh."

"Run di Place" also includes a larger conversation on Bamby's and Jahyanäi's bravado concerning their Rude Empire crew. They both claim that together they make up Rude Empire, who "run di place." This assertion indexes ideologies related to frontiers, crew respectability politics, and "badness." Additionally, stylizing his "rude bwoy" persona through explicit conversation on sex, Jahyanäi also indexes ideologies on hypermasculinity and sexual prowess.

The song and music for "Who Mad Again" best illustrates the "rude bwoy" preoccupation with their musical group and geographical territory. In the music video, both Bamby and Jahyanäi are in a getaway car attempting to outdrive a rival group chasing them on bikes and jeeps. Eventually, they stop driving and park on the side of a dirt road, and the chase ends. The rival group's leader then walks up to Jahyanäi. He sees Jahyanäi's gold chain with a pendant in the shape of Jahyanäi's upper body and the words Rude Empire engraved underneath.

Acknowledging both the Rude Empire Music group status and being in the presence of both Bamby and Jahyanäi, the rival group's leader and his crew bow down to Rude Empire.

The setting and imagery in "Who Mad Again" share similarities with the film franchise *Mad Max*. The Australian franchise includes the futuristic and apocalyptic films: *Mad Max* (1979), *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* (1981), *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985), and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015). The music video resembles the *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior*

film in the initial scene where the audience is introduced to the Road Warrior himself and the gang who chases him. The film itself follows the life of Max in a desert Waste Land, similarly to the setting of the music video. The premise of the Mad Max films has to do with the conflict between gangs who are seen as outlaws and scavengers and the Main Force Patrol (MFP or The Bronze) (Winn 1997, 1). Aesthetically, there are critical differences between both groups of people. The Main Force Patrol "wear[s] tight-fitting leather uniforms and patrol in high performance automobiles," while gangs "ride motor-cycles and dress in a variety of styles ranging from leather to rags" (2). In *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior*, the conflict is between Lord Humugus' gang and Max, an ex-Main Force Patrol officer. In the initial part of the film, Max is being chased by Wez, a member of Lord Humugus' gang, along with other members. In this scene, Wez himself wears all leather with animal hides around his neck and has a Mohawk with black at the base and red on the ends. The clothing and vehicle choices in "Who Mad Again" are similar to the distinction between Lord Humugus' gang and Max's or the Main Force Patrol vehicles and clothes. For instance, Jahyanai and Bamby are dressed in all leather driving an expensive sports car, Aston Martin D87 in contrast to the rival gang members chasing them, dressed in leather, other black clothing items, while riding dirt bikes, mini jeeps, and jeeps. Additionally, the leader of the rival group who leads the chase has his dreadlocks in the shape of a Mohawk with black roots and red tips.

The cinematographic references to *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* underscore the importance of Westerns in the ideological configuration of the "rude bwoy." Even though it represents an apocalyptic and futuristic Western type, the film still draws on themes concerning frontiers, rivalry, and conflict. Additionally, it draws on the trope of the civilized versus the savages or the primitive (non-western) and the cowboy versus the outlaw. As one of Bamby and

Jahyanai's most famous songs, "Who Mad Again" embodies the "rude bwoy" discourse and preoccupation with one's geographical turf and status. These themes are also evident in the lyrics of the song. In the first verse, Jahyanai highlights that no rival group is ready for a confrontation with him and his crew. He deejays:

Dem nuh ready fi dis.
[You aren't ready for this.]

Empire government we a set di tren.
[Rude Empire sets all the new trends.]

From dis start, from di beginning.
[From the inception, from the beginning.]

Lyrical confrontation.
[Lyrical confrontation.]

Jahyanai is confident that he and his counterpart, Bad Gyal Bamby, could win in any type of confrontation. In the chorus, he says:

Who Mad again?
[Who is mad now?]

A pou sa nou ka clap it clap it clap it clap it.
[That's why we are hitting it hitting it hitting it hitting it.]

Das why we a buss it buss it buss it buss it.
[That's why we are firing, firing, firing, firing.]

In these lyrics, he draws on both lyrical and physical confrontation as he describes the sound of a gun firing shots with "buss it" and "clap it." In saying, "Who Mad Again?" Jahyanai asks, "Who is mad now?," which indicates that his Rude Empire group is constantly under scrutiny from other rival groups. In response to the hostility and question of "Who Mad Again?" in the first verse, Jahyanai says:

Bamby, yuh a di bullet.
[Bamby, you are the bullet.]

Yuh kno mi a di gun.
[You know that I am the gun.]

If dem violate yuh betta kno blood ago run.
[If they disrespect us, they should know that blood's gonna flow.]

Cya yu a di queen an mi a di king.
[Because you are the queen and the king.]

An yuh kno till di end.
[And until the end.]

We go sidung pon i throne.
[We will reign.]

Situating his discussion in the realm of lyrical confrontation, he draws on the metaphorical gun by referring to himself as the "gun" and Bamby as is the "bullet." This indicates that they are both on the same team, and in any sound clash, they will be each other's right hand. As a team, Bad Gyal Bamby and the Rude King will protect their turf and defend their group's image in any challenge or adversity that may arise. As Jahyanai continues, he describes the outcome if he and Bamby were to participate in a lyrical confrontation. In his second verse, he says:

Badman deh ya to konèt a crime scene.
[The Rude Bwoy is here, you know it's a crime scene.]

Bamby, gadé straight di jungle concrete.
[Keep watch, it's dangerous out here.]

Dancehall Queen come sidung and whine pon di king.
[Dancehall Queen, come and sit and whine on the Rude King.]

Before see anotha crime scene.
[Before there's another crime scene.]

Here, he refers to himself as a "badman" who will turn any lyrical confrontation into a metaphorical crime scene. He tells Bamby to keep watch, meaning to stand on her own as she participates in the lyrical battle. In addition, he refers to both Bamby's and his positions in the

Guyanais dancehall music industry. He calls her the Queen of Guyanais dancehall in specific addresses and refers to himself as the King.

In "Who Mad Again," Jahyanai draws heavily on the discourse surrounding hypermasculinity, frontiers, and bragging about his lyrical versatility. "Who Mad Again" clearly illustrates the ideologies that both Bamby and Jahyanai associate with their Rude Empire group. As the Queen and King of Guyanais dancehall, they champion lyrical violence to assert their dominance. Additionally, Jahyanai's aesthetic choices in fashion in the "Who Mad Again" music video highlight his braggadocio and concern with looking successful and wealthy through clothing and jewelry. In the video, in the first scenes, he wears a black leather jacket with a black t-shirt, black pants, black boots, and his dreadlocks at various times in a bun or loose. He also wears his chain with the words Rude Empire and an engraved shape of his upper body. During certain scenes in the music video, he does not wear a t-shirt, but wears a leather jacket and his golden chain. In the last scene, he wears a black sleeveless waistcoat vest with gold buttons, black jeans, black boots with his Rude Empire chain, and gold watch as accessories. Apart from his golden chain, his aesthetic choices, particularly in the first part of the music video, resembles Max's outfit in *The Road Warrior*. I would classify this music video as the start of his aesthetic embodiment of a different type of "rude bwoy," who not only draws on the politics of the ghetto, but also on high fashion.

In the song "Bag A Gyal," Jahyanai stylizes himself as a wealthy "rude bwoy," which is different from his previous presentation of the self. In this video, both he and Bamby present themselves as the King and Queen of dancehall. Jahyanai walks down an imperial staircase to be with a dancing crowd dressed in a black suit jacket covered in golden leaves, black pants, and black boots that match Bamby's outfit. He has no dress shirt on, and he shows his bare skin

accessorized by golden chains around his neck, gold earrings, a gold watch, and his dreadlocks in a bun. In the second scene, he is wearing black pants, a full-length fur coat without a dress shirt that shows a gold chain with a circular pendant that has the words Rude Empire engraved. In addition, he wears black boots, and his dreadlocks are in a bun. As for accessories, he wears gold glasses, earrings, and a golden ring while he smokes a cigar. In the last scene, he wears a white suit jacket with a slim fit double-breasted tailored vest showing a large section of his chest accompanied by the Rude Empire chain, black pants, black boots, and his dreadlocks free and flowing.

This video builds on the version of the "rude bwoy" that Jahyanai stylized in "Who Mad Again." He draws on fashion to stylize himself as wealthy by using the color gold or actual gold accessories, particularly his gold Rude Empire chain. Additionally, his clothing style in this video is a bricolage of high fashion and his personal preferences. For instance, he chose to wear no inside shirt and show off her abdominal muscle while wearing formal attire.

In the first verse, Jahyanai draws on themes related to lyrical and physical confrontational. He sings:

Whine pon di thing dem dead.
[Whine on me, they're done for.]

Done him.
[Embarrass him in a lyrical fight.]

Empire play, dem dead.
[Empire Music Label is playing; they have lost already.]

We a run it.
[We are controlling things.]

Confidently, he asserts that both he and Bamby are ready for lyrical battle as he says, "Done him" and "Empire play, dem dead." As he continues, he describes the rival group's metaphorical

death when they encounter Rude Empire Music group's sound system. In the same verse, he says:

A pa pou ari, dem dead.
[It's not for laughs, they're done for.]

Nou gen tout sa yé bizoin au fond nou crew dem seh.
[We have everything we need, it's our crew they pledge to.]

We nuh play, magazeen full mi nuh care.
[We aren't messing around, our guns are loaded, I don't care.]

Bay a kon lépok Bardot, we nuh fear.
[Do it like the Bardot era, we don't fear.]

Any weh mi deh mek badmind disappear.
[It doesn't matter where I am, I will make jealous people disappear.]

Drawing on the metaphorical gun, Jahyanai says, "magazeen full mi nuh care" to assert that he is willing to lyrically destroy or "murder" anyone from other groups who are jealous, "badmind" of Rude Empire. More specifically, he says "dem dead" and that he will make them "disappear."

Jahyanai also refers to "lépok Bardot," which I translate as "the Bardot era," referring to Brigitte Bardot and the Westerns she acted in. For instance, *Viva Maria!* (1965) with Jeanne Moreau, *Shalako* (1968), Sean Connery, and *Les Petroleuses* (1971) with Claudia Cardinale, among others. Scheie (2019) argues that not much attention has been paid to French Westerns, particularly Brigitte Bardot's contribution to French Westerns. Scholarly work has been most concerned with her sexuality in the film "Et Dieu... créa la femme" and her contribution to the Nouvelle vague era (104). Describing Bardot's role as a revolutionist in Central America in the film *Viva Maria!*, Scheie states that even though Bardot as Maria, "engaged in rough-and-tumble escapades or sexual exploits, [she] remains a hunter, pursuing men both to kill them in the name

of the Revolution and to satisfy her desire" (107).¹⁰⁴ This description can be readily applied to Jahyanāi's counterpart, Bad Gyal Bamby, and how she not only uses her sexuality and beauty in dancehall music videos, but also stylizes herself as someone equally ready to use the metaphorical or physical gun. Furthermore, Scheie's description of *Les Petroleuses* helps us understand a woman gunslinger's role in creating and maintaining their crew or Empire. He describes Bardot's last Western, *Les Petroleuses*, as:

the story of Frenchie King, a notorious bandit played by Bardot, who, with her gang of female-to-male cross-dressed train robbers, gives up a life of crime and men's clothing to settle down on a Texas ranch as 'Dr. Miller', the name on a deed acquired during a heist. The women encounter a hostile welcome from their neighbours, four half-Corsican brothers and their domineering sister Maria (Claudia Cardinale), who know there is oil on the property and wish to drive away the newcomers. The animosity culminates in a fistfight showdown between Bardot and Cardinale before the return of the real Dr. Miller leads to their reconciliation, a quadruple marriage of Maria's brothers to Frenchie's sidekicks, and the reconstitution of an expanded King gang, now led by both Bardot and Cardinale. (113)

Here, Bardot oversees her own gang, the King gang, and engages in a rivalry that ends with the expansion of the Bardot gang led by her and the other female lead Maria (Cardinale). These two Bardot films represent a challenge to the stereotypical position of women in American or spaghetti westerns as secondary characters: saloon girls or schoolmarms (106). By referencing "l'épok Bardot," Jahyanāi draws on the history of French Westerns and, more specifically, the cinematic history of the sex icon Bridgette Bardot and her role as a gunslinger and the lead actress in a male-dominated genre. Bardot represents the female gunslinger who is beautiful, has sex appeal, and is concerned with matters of turf, guns, and rivalry. As Jahyanāi sings about being ready to engage in a lyrical or physical confrontation, he draws on the symbolism of the gunslinger and sex icon Bardot to refer to the importance of his counterpart, Bad Gyal Bamby.

¹⁰⁴ Revolution against a dictator.

Likewise, he also references the symbolism of spaghetti westerns and situates himself as a part of the "Rude bwoy" lineage that draws on "cowboy," "outlaw," and frontier discourses.

After referencing Bardot, Jahyanai continues the song by highlighting Bamby's role and importance as his partner in crime. In this second verse, the similarity between Bardot as a gunslinger and Bamby as a Bad Gyal, is evident. He says:

Bad Gyal Bamby, we a do crime.
[Bad Gyal Bamby, we are committing all the crimes.]

We a dweet, a dweet from morning till di night.
[We are doing them, doing them from morning until night.]

Yuh fi whine it up, yeah yeah, my gyal
[You should dance/whine, yeah yeah, my girl.]

How yuh bad so, yuh a dweet longtime.
[How are you this good at dancing, have you been doing it for a long time?]

Weh yuh do fi bruk it off fine.
[How did you whine like that.]

Bamby, Rude King, pon di headline
[Bamby, Rude King, headliners.]

Jahyanai talks about Bamby's role as the counterpart to the "rude bwoy," highlighting a "We" that always includes her. He does not engage in any lyrical or physical confrontation without his "bad gyal," as he says, "Bad Gyal Bamby, we a do crime," "We a dweet," and "Bamby, Rude King, pon di headline." Even though Jahyanai also praises Bamby's sexual prowess and dancing skills, he also recognizes her role as a member of Rude Empire, the Queen to his Empire.

Overall, Jahyanai uses his lyrics and bricolage fashion to stylize his "rude bwoy" persona. Throughout the songs analyzed in this section, he draws on themes associated with the frontier focusing on an obsession with turf politics. Additionally, he draws on themes related to sexual

and violent braggadocio to assert a hypermasculinity that complements his leadership of Rude Empire and his relationship with his counterpart Bad Gyal Bamby.

5.7.2 The Gyalis

Caribbean men's identity is closely associated with their multiple relationships with Caribbean women. Plummer and Simpson (2007) draw on the works of Brown and Chevannes (1998), Bailey et al. (1998), and Crichlow (2004) to illustrate the ideologies associated with Caribbean masculinity and male promiscuity. This reading is essential to understand the definition and the role of a "gyalis." Manhood, according to Brown and Chevannes (1998), "is demonstrated by sexual prowess... it is usually measured... by the number of female sexual partners" (cited in Plummer and Simpson 2007, 3). Additionally, men who have multiple partners often receive praise and status for the ability to court and have various sexual or romantic partners (Bailey et al. 1998, cited by Plummer and Simpson 2007, 3). Furthermore, Crichlow (2004) states that men who do not engage in multiple partnerships are often seen as "sick," "suspected as a buller,"¹⁰⁵ or not "the average young black male" (cited in Plummer and Simpson 2007, 3). Thinking in terms of these ideologies, the "gyalis" is also a part of the "rude bwoy" persona's worldview of life.

The "gyalis" can be defined as a man who is "skilled at seducing women... by tricking them into thinking they are the love of his life" (Jamaicanpatwah.com). He is only interested in a sexual relationship with the women he courts. He is able to maintain and support his life of having multiple partners without the different women finding out about each other. The literal

¹⁰⁵ Buller here refers to a derogative term to refer to gay men.

translation of the word in English is the "girl-list."¹⁰⁶ In this section, I analyze songs in which Jahyanai speaks directly to women about his appreciation and sexual desires for them. His interests in women focused exclusively on Bad Gyal Bamby in the previously analyzed songs. In the songs that follow, he talks to a broader female audience.

In his and Bamby's debut single "Real Wifey," his "rude bwoy" persona drew on ideologies associated with the "gyalis." In the song and music video, he places Bamby, his partner, in a precarious situation. A mystery woman approaches their house and demands that he try to set the record straight about the second relationship with her. This lady assumes the role of one of, probably, many of Jahyanai's outside partners and starts a quarrel with Bamby. Throughout the song, Jahyanai does not deny that he is in an emotional or physical relationship with the mystery woman. Instead, in the first verse, he says:

Manzèl san bitch! Yuh ah di official wifey.
[This woman is a bitch! You are the official wifey.]

Pa speed! Mo savé patché don't like me.
[Don't worry! I know a lot of them don't like me.]

I ka palé, palé a yenk'sa yo prop'...
[All they can do is talk, nothing more than that...]

Mé si yo vin tro pròch momenm pa ké palé tròp
[But if they approach, I'll no longer be talking.]

Yo pa pè hitch, yuh ah di official wifey.
[They aren't afraid to "hitch," you are the official wifey.]

Yo ka snitch, lò mo ka désann kon lighting.
You can snitch if you like, but I'll come down on you like lightning.]

Followed by these lines in the second verse:

Sé fanm-la mad or what?
[Is this woman mad or what?]

¹⁰⁶ <https://jamaicanpatwah.com/term/Gyalis/1197#.YjXy4XrMK3A>

Yé lé fè mo touné murdera.
[They want me to become a murderer.]

I gen tròp fanm asou latè-a, pou zòt pran mo tèt kékouyonnad!
[There are too many women on the earth for me to be taking your foolishness!]

In "Real Wifey," Jahyanai reassures Bamby that she is his "official" wife or partner, meaning that she is the main woman for whom he provides and to whom he chooses to give his time and respect. He belittles his secondary partner that comes to their house by saying, "Manzèl san bitch." Additionally, he claims that she, the outside partner, is the one who always chooses to be around him, as he says "hitch,"¹⁰⁷ and that, no matter what, Bamby will always be the "official wifey." He resorts to threats to get the woman out of his "official Wifey's" territory and says, "Yé lé fè mo touné murdera." Instead of apologizing and acknowledging that he has cheated, Jahyanai tells the outsider that "I gen tròp fanm asou late-a, pou zòt pran mo tèt kékouyonnad!" He highlights that he can find other female partners who will understand and accept their presumably only sexual role in his life and who will respect the boundaries between him and his official wifey. Taking "Real Wifey" as a basis, I analyze Jahyanai solo songs that he has done that employ "gyalis" ideologies; "Dweet Suh" (2018), "Bruk it off" (2019), "Vitamine" (2020).

"Dweet Suh" translates to "Whining like this that/Doing it like that," often alluding to the dance moves or the sexual performance of a woman. The music video starts with Jahyanai meeting Miss Guadeloupe 2016, Morgane Thérésine, as he is traveling to Cape Town, South Africa, after which, he begins to sing about his experience with her as they travel and explore

¹⁰⁷ When someone is being a nuisance, chooses to be in your personal space at all times and refuses to leave.

Cape Town together. Additionally, various women dance choreographed dancehall routines throughout the music video. In the chorus of the song, Jahyanai says:

How yuh dweet suh?
[How are you whining like that? /doing it like that?]

Every time-ta-time, yuh make mi speak so...
[Every time, you make me stutter.]

Mm, bite yuh lips suh.
[Mhm, bit you lip like that.]

Whine pon di riddim like calypso.
[Whine on the riddim like calypso.¹⁰⁸]

He shows his praise for Miss Guadeloupe 2016 with the question "How yuh dweet so?" that indicates that he has been left in awe. He gives the dancers and the lady he is singing to dancing instructions throughout the entire song.¹⁰⁹ For instance, when he says, "Whine pon di riddim like calypso." In the first verse, he continues to give similar instructions as he says:

Whine pon de hood...
[Whine on the dick...]

Whine pon di table, whine pon di pole...
[Whine on the table, whine on the pole...]

He then talks about the different substances he uses to heighten his sexual experience with women. He says:

We under di kush.
[We are smoking weed.]

Under mi Guinness, under mi magnum.
[Drinking my Guinness, drinking my magnum.]

Under mi Hennessy, under mi rum
[Drinking my Hennessey, drinking my rum.]

¹⁰⁸ Referring to whining.

¹⁰⁹ Which also have sexual connotations.

Baby, you ago see di long gun.
[Baby, you are going to see thing long gun.]

Weh you run go?
[Why are you running away?]

He refers to the most popular alcoholic Caribbean drinks, Guinness, Magnum, Hennessy, and Rum. Magnum from J. Wray and Nephew Ltd., Jamaica's leading Rum distiller and bottler, has been crowned "the" dancehall alcoholic drink.¹¹⁰ Under the same name, an annual dancehall music competition named Magnum King and Queen brings together various dancehall entertainers, DJs, producers, and managers in the entertainment industry. The goal is to find and mentor new dancehall artists, similar to shows such as *The Voice* or *American Idol*. Magnum plays an important role in dancehall culture because it is one of the preferred drinks at dancehall events and for its role in intoxication. Furthermore, it is also regarded as a substance that boosts one's libido and grants a worthy performance during sexual intercourse. Jahyanai refers to the drink and draws on these ideologies in this song as he says, "Baby, you ago see di long gun" and "Weh you run go."

In "Dweet Suh," Jahyanai also praises the sexual prowess of his partner. In the third verse, he says:

She kno how fi dweet, my don.
[She knows how to do it, my don.]

Dweet pon di bed, pon di street, my don
[We did on the bed, in the middle of the street, my don.]

Neva kno a so di thing tight for real, my don.
[Didn't know she'd be so tight, my don.]

Better lift her up pon di big divan...

¹¹⁰ Magnum Tonic wine is an alcoholic tonic wine that contains 17% alcohol and is filled with vitamins. It is considered a sexual stimulant to help with one's libido, and boosts energy.

[I had to put her on my divan bed...]

Who run di place right now...?

[You control everything right now...]

Who a represent straight fi every island?

[Who is representing the islands?]

You all a di man dem wan gi di mansion

[It's you who all the men want to provide for.]

Baby weh you get it from?

[Baby, where did you learn your skills?]

In this verse, Jahyanai is no longer talking about his sexual prowess but his mistress's performance in bed. For instance, he says, "She kno how fi dweet, my don." He states that she is wanted by multiple men who wish to provide for her financially, now that they know what she is capable of. Similar to the first line in the song, "How yuh dweet suh?" this last verse ends with "Baby weh you get it from?," indicating that he has been impressed by her dancing and sexual prowess in bed. Throughout "Dweet Suh," Jahyanai draws on ideologies associated with Caribbean men's concern with sexual prowess and conversations around their sexual experience. In the third verse, Jahyanai refers to "my don" three times, indicating that he is talking to another male friend and bragging about his experience with his mistress. Hence, he says, "She kno how fi dweet, my don."

In general, Jahyanai's lyrics about women and sexual relations in this song differ from other dancehall artists, who typically use lyrics alluding to female pain and violence as pleasure. Additionally, male dancehall artists tend to position themselves as the dominant partner who decides how the experience will take place. In this song, however, Jahyanai complicates that script and says:

But a you

[It's you, girl.]

Who run di place right now?
[Who controls everything right now.]

Not only is he impressed with his mistress's sexual prowess, but he admits that she is the one in control.

"Bruk it off" is similar to "Dweet Suh" in that it also refers to whining/dancing and can also have sexual connotations. Throughout the song, Jahyanai gives dancing instructions to women inviting them to participate in the dancehall spectacle. The music video begins with a lady sleeping in a full-size white bed. She wakes up to the sound of Jahyanai's singing and finds that he has left her some gifts on a table in front of the bed. The camera then moves between an upper body view of Jahyanai deejaying in the dark and a waist-to-thigh view of a dancer doing the dance move "bruk it off." The camera then returns to the main mistress, and we see that attached to the gift box is a sign that says, "Don't Touch." She disregards these instructions and opens the box. The camera then zooms into the open box and reveals a new dimension or hidden aspect of Jahyanai's life.

In the content of the open box, we see eight different scenes and settings with female dancers and Jahyanai singing to them. The first scene is set in an all-white room covered with red flowers. Three female dancers are dressed in short qipaos with oil-paper umbrellas doing dancehall dance moves. In this scene, Jahyanai matches the dancers in an unbuttoned red changshan with a black inside shirt and gold chain. The next set features a dancer dressed in an all-black leather jumpsuit with white designs as she does the "bruk it off" on a bike. The third scene is set on September 23, 1991 and has an old camcorder filter with three dancers dressed in 1990's clothes. The fourth scene is set at a fake beach party with women sitting on floaties and enjoying the music. The fifth scene is set in a white room with a multi-colored Rubik's cube in

the middle. After this scene, the camera goes back to the bedroom where Jahyanai's leading lady opens a small brown box and finds an engagement ring. The video then goes to the sixth scene in a black and gold room. There are three dancers dressed in gold tights and black blouses and a lady covered from head to toe in gold shooting euros from a money gun. Jahyanai is also present in this scene. He is shirtless, wearing his Rude Empire chain with engraved silhouette while his hands play in a gold liquid. The camera then returns to the fifth scene with the multicolored Rubik's cube and shows that a dancer is now dancing inside of the cube. The seventh scene shows another dancer dancing inside a cage with red and white poles indexing "danger." The video ends with Jahyanai arriving in the room where his lady is, and they happily greet each other. The camera then zooms out and shows the audience the eighth scene. We, as the audience, realize that we were also in another box the entire time. The camera shows a child's room with toys and a chalkboard with the word "Saint."

The visual imagery of "Bruk it off" indexes "gyalis" ideologies. I understand the camera movement in and out of boxes to be hidden aspects of Jahyanai's life. The video starts with his main mistress and then moves to scenes where he encourages other women to do the "bruk it off." As with all other dance moves, "bruk it off" has sexual connotations. Throughout the different settings, Jahyanai interacts with various women, even though he eventually returns to his lady. Despite his promiscuous past and a possible promiscuous present, he proposes to her, as we see in the third scene. The last scene shows that he also has a child, maybe with his main lady, or he could have an entirely different family. Hence, we learn another hidden aspect of his life during this scene. At the end of the music video, the camera spans across the chalked words "Saint." Is it that "Saint" is the name of his child? Or, in this aspect of his life, where he presumably has a family, he is seen as a Saint? Visually, Jahyanai reveals and conceals his life

and hidden secrets to his audience and shows us the different fronts (in the Goffman sense) that he puts on; the family man, the good boyfriend who proposes to his girlfriend, and the "gyalis."

Lyrically, Jahyanai talks about his experience with courting women. He starts the song by asserting that "bruk it off" is specifically for the ladies. More specifically, he states that he, the Rude King, belongs to the ladies. He says:

Di Rude King fi di ladies.
[The Rude King for the ladies.]

He indicates his interests in multiple partners. Even though the music video shows that he has a main romantic interest throughout the various scenes, we see that he sings "Bruk it off" for a wider audience of women. For instance, he describes his party experience and gives instructions to the women on the dance floor. He says:

Bruk it off Bruk it off suh.
[Whine, Whine.¹¹¹]

Whine pon di riddim yuh fi set it off suh.
[Whine to the riddim, you should whine like that.]

Whine pon di riddim dem cyaan whine like yuh.
[Whine to the riddim, they can't whine like you.]

Cause yuh bad like wow
[Cuz you're talented.]

So me tell har seh.
[So I told her.]

Me reach innah di party and
[I arrived at the party and.]

Me know you a di champion.
[I saw that you were a champion dancer.]

Gyal yuh a di number one...
[Girl you are the winner...]

¹¹¹ Jamaican type of whine where one moves their hips.

Evidently, one lady in particular on the dance floor has impressed him. He says, "Me reach innah di party" and "Me know you a di champion." He then decides to cheer her on, as he says, "bruk it off" and "whine pon di riddim..." Indexing his "gyalis" persona, in the first verse of the song, Jahyanai has a conversation on his Rude Empire group's fame and the love and admiration that women show him. He deejays:

Toute moun bien savé rude empire.
[Everyone knows Rude Empire Music group well.]

Kouman nou patché galang.
[How our people get on.]

Gen gyal ki ka dance anlé chak coup de bass.
[There are girls who dancing to every sound of the bass.]

Yé savé a mo ki King bloodclaat la Guyane.
[They know it's me the King of Bloodclaat Guyane.]

Patché gold anlé mo ka shine kon talisman.
[A lot of gold around me shining like a talisman.]

All a di gyal dem seh a mi a di hottest man.
[All the girls say I'm the hottest guy.]

Vamos mi amor whine pon di fucking don...
[Whine my love, whine on the fucking don...]

Cya she kno mi a di man.
[Cuz she knows that I am the man.]

Boastfulness is a key component of the "rude bwoy" persona and, thus, "gyalis" ideologies.

Jahyanai highlights that Guyane, and his Rude Empire group are well known. Additionally, not only are women constantly interested in him, as he says, "All a di gyal dem seh a mi a di hottest man," and "Cya she kno mi a di man," but he considers himself the "King" of Guyane.

Furthermore, he draws on discourse related to his wealth. For instance, he talks about the fact

that he always has gold around him, which is evident in the accessories that he chooses to wear and the sixth scene of the music video, the golden room.

Jahyanai also homage to Vybz Kartel and indicates his stance on Jamaican dancehall rivalries. He says:

Neva ungrateful, Dem haffi free up Vybz.
[I have never been ungrateful; they need to free Vybz Kartel.]

Cya him a di the trendsetter fi di dancehall.
[Cuz he is the trendsetter for dancehall music.]

A problem when the rude king seh suh.
[Y'all know it's true when the rude king says it.]

One's allegiance to a particular music group is crucial in dancehall, as I have shown with Jahyanai's alliance to his own group, Rude Empire. In these lyrics, Jahyanai proudly affirms his admiration and respect for the Gaza Empire, Vybz Kartel's music alliance. He acknowledges Vybz Kartel's role in current-day dancehall music and culture, even as he is imprisoned for a life sentence. This underscores a larger trans-affiliation within Caribbean music, specifically a trans-Caribbean alliance between Rude Empire and Gaza Empire. It also highlights some of Jahyanai's possible musical influences.

There are currently two versions of "Vitamine": the original and a remix with Ya Levis.¹¹² For this chapter, I analyze the original version with only Jahyanai. "Vitamine" is an ode to lovemaking, where Jahyanai talks about his sexual prowess and promises to please his partner. He starts the song by singing:

Dah one ya name cock up mi gyal.
[This one is called "get ready to have aggressive sex.]

To savé to kantan sa mi gyal...
[You know you like that, my girl...]

¹¹² A Congolese rapper.

To save to sa mo baby doll.
[You know you are my baby doll.]

In the first verse, Jahyanai reassures his partner that she will have a good experience, since he knows what she likes, as he says, "To savé to kantan sa mi gyal..." He then lets her know that he wants to spend quality time with her and even asks her to turn her phone off. He says:

O swè a di nou
[This night is ours.]

Étiend' to telephone
[Turn off your telephone.]

Yé pa ké tandé nou...
[They will not hear us...]

Tout' sa simène a di nou
[All week long is ours.]

He then explicitly talks about his sexual desires and how he envisions the mutual experience. He says:

Mo ké bay to love, Mo ké bay to fuck...
[I will give you loving, I will fuck you...]

To toujou o top mo pé pa di non
[You are always on top, I am not afraid to say no.]

Oh my gyal, please tun it up
[Oh my girl, keep doing such a great job.]

Drawing on ideologies associated with sexual prowess, he promises to fulfill his partner's sexual desires. Like "Dweet Suh," Jahyanai is willing to allow his partner to lead as he says, "Oh my gyal, please tun it up." Concerning his sexual prowess, Jahyanai talks about engaging in aggressive sexual intercourse. He says:

Gyal mo ké bay bon vitamine.
[Girl, I will give you some good vitamin.]

Chak coup de bass daggering.
[Every beat of the bass, daggering.]

Ké fè to fly, é to ké cry.
[It will make you fly, will make you cry.]

In 2006, dancehall artist Cham released a single called "Vitamin S" on his album *Ghetto Story*.

In the song, he describes a scenario where multiple lustful women are aggressively courting him.

He says:

She miserable, seh she stressed.
[She is miserable, she said she's stressed out.]

So me give ar some S.E.X.
[So I gave her some S.E.X.]

A jus di lovin', dem a repress.
[It's just their sexual desires, they choose to repress.]

Dem hear say a we have di best...
[They heard that I give the best loving.]

Throughout the song, Cham talks about his sexual prowess and his stories about women who would like the chance to engage in sexual intercourse with him. Jahyanai's "Vitamine" draws directly from the ideologies associated with this song. As he says "Gyal mo ké bay bon vitamin," he is referring to "Vitamin S." He describes how he would like to please his partner. He says, "Chak coup de bass daggering" referring to the dance move "daggering," which imitates various aggressive sexual positions. Hope (2010) elaborates on the concept of "daggering" in Jamaican dancehall culture. She says:

Dancehall myths and fantasies project the doggy style or back shot as the most physically demanding and painful sexual position for women. Dances like 'Tek' and 'Daggerin' are extreme manifestations of the male desire to exert power and control over a woman coupled with the woman's wilful acceptance of this act. (28–29)

Jahyanai refers to the rhythm of the bass as he mentions "daggering." "Vitamine" has a slower tempo than most dancer "daggering" songs like RDX's "Ben Ova," indicating that Jahyanai takes

a different, gentler approach to sexual intercourse rather than thinking in terms of pain and pleasure. Additionally, he states that sexual intercourse will make his partner "fly" and "cry."

Then he assures her that sex with him will be "sweet," and "good" as he says in:

Sweet fuck, good fuck yeah mi honey
[Sweet sex, good sex, yes my honey.]

To ké senti papillon o fond to belly
[You will feel butterflies deep inside your belly.]

In this song, Jahyanai draws on ideologies related to "toughness" and rough sex that differ from the previously discussed songs. Drawing on words and phrases such as "cock it up," "daggering," "fuck," and "cry," he promises his partner a sexual experience centered around aggression.

Similar to the discussion I had on "Dweet Suh," Jahyanai does not seem to glorify pain as a key component to sexual pleasure. In his first verse, he underscores the importance of mutual consent and desire, even though he draws on a more aggressive discourse. He says, "this night" and "all week" is "ours" as he says "a di nou" highlighting that he conceives of his experience with his lady as a partnership and not one that is centered only on the male experience and male dominance. Additionally, not only does he talk about pleasuring his partner, as is indicated through the majority of the lyrics, but she also reciprocates. As he says, "To toujou o top mo pé pa di non" and "Oh my gyal, please tun it up."

Throughout this section, I have described the element of Jahyanai's "rude bwoy" persona that prioritizes his love, appreciation, and attraction to women. His "gyalis" persona underscores ideologies associated with male promiscuity and sexual prowess. As he stylizes his "rude bwoy" persona through "gyalis" ideologies, I locate a difference within his approach to sexual desire, as he prioritizes the female experience as much as he does his own.

5.7.3 International Rude Bwoy

In this section, I describe Jahyanai's move away from the local representation of Guyanais dancehall and his engagement with the global music market to market himself as an "International Rude Bwoy." I analyze three songs, DJ Battle's "Take Control" (2018), featuring Mr. Eazi, Jahyanai, and Bamby; Driks' "TT" (2019) featuring Jahyanai; and DJ Leska's "Buddy" (2021) with Chily, Jahyanai and Bamby. I use these songs to locate themes and ideologies associated with Jahyanai's "International Rude Bwoy" persona.

Before "Take Control," Jahyanai and Bamby had only collaborated internationally with French rappers Naza and Keblack on the song "Équilibré" in May 2018. The "Take Control" music video has over thirteen million views on YouTube and is their most-viewed international collaboration. The artists they collaborated with include Dj Battle, a Parisian producer and club deejay, who produced and composed the riddim for the song. In addition to Dj Battle, Mr. Eazi,¹¹³ a famous Nigerian afrobeat and dancehall artist, is also on the track. Both Mr. Eazi and Jahyanai wrote the lyrics for "Take Control."

"Take Control" is set at a pool dance party where all three artists and Dj Battle are partying and having a good time. Jahyanai starts the song smoking a cigar and showing off his gold grills on the bottom row of his teeth. Jahyanai wears his signature gold chains around his neck throughout the song, a gold Cuban chain bracelet around his right hand, his gold watch on his left, and his matching sunglasses. These all index ideologies about wealth and the success of his Rude Empire group. In the song's first lines, Jahyanai talks specifically about the international collaboration that his Rude Empire music group has managed to obtain with Mr. Eazi and Dj Battle. He says:

¹¹³ Mr. Eazi has released songs such as "Leg Over," "Skin Tight," and "Akwaaba."

From Guiana straight to London.
[From French Guiana to London.]

Battle drop di beats cya mi love how it soun...
[Dj Battle, please play the music...]

Yeahhh... (Eazi)

Spem wi owna cash.
[We have our own money.]

No we neva beg none.
[We never have to ask for any.]

Hear me now. (Eazi)

Rude King inna di town.
[The Rude King has arrived.]

Its yuh boy Eazi (Eazi)

Outtah London.
[Coming from London.]

Bamby... (Bamby)

A kill dem, wi kill dem, wi kill dem.
[We are killing them, killing them, killing them.]

Fi fun.
[For Fun.]

Jahyanai explicitly acknowledges the Guyane-Europe-Africa connection and allows each member of the collaboration to enter the introduction of the song. He tells Dj Battle to play the riddim, Mr. Eazi joins in with his signature addresses, "Hear me now" and "Its yuh boy Eazi," and Bamby joins the collaboration with her signature address, "Bamby." From this opening, Jahyanai draws on ideologies related to material wealth and his "rude bwoy" persona as the "Rude King." Furthermore, he underscores the importance of lyrical confrontation as he draws

on the metaphorical gun when he says, "a kill dem, wi kill dem... fi fun." Bamby then continues his postulation as she sings the chorus:

Da one ya name "Take control."
[This one is called "Take control."]

An wi mek di wol a dem, tun cold like frozen.
[And we make them all freeze like frozen.]

She says that this collaboration and song will leave everyone in shock. In saying "Take Control," meaning "taking over now," Bamby asserts Rude Empire's and Mr. Eazi's dominance in the Black diasporic musicscape. Jahyanai claims a similar stance as he says:

Di song hot.
[This song is fire.]

Gyal a whine pan di track
[Girl whine to the riddim.]

Money pull up yuh haffi pull up di track.
[If we money for you to start the track again.]

Check out da song ya.
[Check out this song.]

Yuh fi get knock.
[You should get knocked out/should be impressed.]

Rude Empire, no wi neva mek flop.
[Rude Empire never makes a lame song.]

He is confident that "Take Control" will be a success and that it will impress its audience. He even states that "Take Control" will make listeners want to pay the deejay to restart the song as he says, "Money pull up yuh haffi pull up di track." Indexing his boastfulness regarding his Rude Empire group, he states that "Rude Empire, no wi neva mek flop," hence everyone should always expect good music from his team.

Mr. Eazi then shifts the topic of the song. He talks about his love for women and his dislike for any outsiders who are envious of him and his collaboration. He says that people are vexed because he, Jahyanäi, and Bamby are blessed and are the best. He says:

Dem vex Dem vex. Sehh cya wi bless... Wi be di best.

[They are vexed... Because we are blessed.... Because we are the best.]

In response to Mr. Eazi, Jahyanäi adds to this stance as he sings:

Caa wi work pan it everytime from dem time.
[Because we have been working diligently for so long.]

Neva beg nuhboddy a lime.
[We never begged anyone anything.]

Swear a nuh rhymes.
[I swear this not just for rhymes.]

Everybody dun kno sehh mi bun badmind.
[Everyone knows I hate jealous people.]

See di Rude Empire, you fi draw di line.
[When you see the Rude Empire Crew, please do not approach us.]

In these lyrics, Jahyanäi talks about his journey to fame. He says that he has been working diligently and has never asked for any handouts. Consequently, his boastfulness comes from the fact that he has worked hard for his current position in the music industry. Like Mr. Eazi, he too dislikes envious people, as he says in "Everybody dun kno sehh mi bun badmind." "Take Control" creates an "Us" versus "Them" discourse that places Bamby, Jahyanäi, and Mr. Eazi as an Us that is above and is more successful than the rest (or them). Jahyanäi even says to a "them," "See di Rude Empire, you fi draw di line," meaning that when outside groups see the Rude Empire crew, they should keep their distance. He draws on ideologies associated with frontiers and maintaining one's turf and crew respectability politics.

The next song, "TT" was written by Driks and Jahyanai. Driks is a singer and composer from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who started his career as an afrobeat dancer. The "TT" music video has two settings, at a bar and in a mansion as Jahyanai and Driks dance and drink alcohol. In addition to the settings, they have various women doing a variety of activities, sitting, drinking, dancing, and admiring them. Indexing his loyalty to his Rude Empire group, Jahyanai wears his signature gold chain with his round Rude Empire pendant and multiple gold accessories indexing wealth. In the song, both Jahyanai and Driks draw on themes related to "gyalis" ideologies. For instance, in the first verse, Jahyanai says:

All a di gyal dem love me every time.
[All the girls love me all the time.]

Tell yuh friend, tell yuh friend, come in anytime...
[Tell your friend, tell your friend, come here anytime...]

Baby, ride it backway, cuz mi sick innah mi mind...
[Baby, reverse cowgirl because I'm crazy...]

Dem seh dem want a rude ting...
[They said they wanted a "rude thing..."]

He claims that all women love him, and they all try to court him. He even encourages the women he has met and had sexual experiences with to tell their friends about him (a word-of-mouth reference). He states they are always welcomed as he says, "come in anytime." Additionally, he says, "Dem seh dem want a rude ting...", where "rude ting" refers to both him, the "Rude King," and his genitals the "ting." Throughout the rest of the song, Jahyanai brags about his status amongst women. He says:

Baby gyal dem a mi darlin...
[These lovely girls are my darlings...]

Dem dem seh mi bad, dem jus' waan me.
[They say that I am a bad boy, they just want me.]

Dem say dem love me like honey.
[They say they love me like honey.]

Oh no my baby, pas de panique
[Oh no my baby, don't freak out.]

My gyal dash it out pan di dick...
[My girl come sit on this dick...]

Mi nuh follow dem gyal gimme whole a dem.
[I don't chase women, just give me all of them.]

Black, blonde, white, waan whol dem.
[Black, blonde, white, I want all of them.]

These lyrics underscore many ideologies related to Jahyanai's "rude bwoy" persona and his "gyalis" ideologies. For instance, he states that women associate him with "badness" and his sexual prowess. He claims they love him like "honey" and freak out when they see him. Additionally, he does not care to choose a single partner or be in a monogamous relationship. Instead, he entertains the attention that he gets from all women. He also states that he does not have to chase or court women, since they are the ones who court him. Furthermore, he states that he has no preference when choosing a partner. This is evident in the lines that say "gimme whole a dem" and "Black, blonde, white, waan whol dem." Similarly, to his first song, "Fanm Guyanise," Jahyanai has always asserted no racial or ethnic preference when choosing a partner, since he is used to the racial and ethnic diversity of Guyane. Throughout "TT," however, his interest in these women seems superficial and only sexual. For instance, he encourages them to "dash it out pan di dick..." indicating that he only wants to engage in sexual intercourse with them.

Similarly, to Jahyanai, Driks draws on the "gyalis" and "rude bwoy" discourse. In the chorus, he boasts about the material wealth he uses to impress a lady. He says:

Tu l'as vu monter dans l'Audi TT.
[I saw you get into the Audi TT.]

Elle m'a snapé dans sa story, fini en TT...
[She snapped me in her story, in the Audi TT...]

Sept loyers, sur l'bras gauche, Versace dans le Range-Ro...
[Seven rentals, on the left hand, Versace, in the Range rover...]

In his first verse, I locate ideologies associated with sexual prowess and his admiration for the lady he desires. He says :

Quand elle bouge en legging, elle nous met cor-da.
[When she moves in leggings, she puts us at ease.]

Suite, hôtel room, baby gyal dead ça.
[Suite, hotel room, Baby kill that.]

Elle donne chaud, j'ai du cardio.
[She gives it hot, I'm working out.]

Même quand t'es dans la foule, on regarde que toi.
[Even when you're in a crowd, we only watch you.]

Elle est belle, c'est un spécimen...
She is beautiful, a specimen...]

Donc j'la doggy pas trop vite.
[So, I gave her Doggystyle real quick.]

Je n'suis pas son mari, j'me renouvelle.
[I am not her husband, I am going to do it again.]

Here, Driks presents himself as a "gyalis" similarly to Jahyanäi. He talks about his love interest's physique and beauty while explicitly describing their sexual encounter. The only difference between Jahyanäi's verse and Driks' verse is that Jahyanäi refers to multiple female partners rather than one.

The next song I look at is Dj Leska's "Buddy," featuring Chily, Jahyanäi, and Bamby. Dj Leska is a Parisian producer and deejay, while Chily is a French rapper of Congolese descent.

The music video is set in three different scenes: in a broken-down construction site, a club with booth seating, and a room with a white backdrop with large speakers and a vending machine. Throughout the music video, Bamby and other women dance choreographed routines and freestyle.

The song's title, "Buddy" is the Jamaican Creole word for male genitalia. Overall, the artists all engage in conversation about sexual intercourse and male genitalia. Jahyanai begins the song by acknowledging the international collaboration. He calls out everyone's stage name and acknowledges the Rude Empire music group's presence. He deejays:

Chily, Bamby, Jahyanai, Leska le combo.
[It's Chily, Bamby, Jahyanai, Leska, we make up the combo.]

Chaud ké platine c'est le combo.
[Hotter than platinum, it's the combo.]

Rude Empire run straight.
[Rude Empire killing it.]

Once again, Jahyanai highlights how necessary addresses and titles are to conceptualize his Rude Empire music group and, in a sense, his identity as a dancehall artist. He considers the collaboration as better than a platinum record, as he says in "Chaud ké platine c'est le combo."

After Jahyanai's introduction, Bamby then sings the song's main theme in the chorus. She says:

Mo ka whine pon di buddy.
[I am whining on the dick.]

Bad gyal whine pon di buddy.
[Bad gyal whining on the dick.]

Woi, my ting pon di buddy.
[(Discourse marker for excitement), my thing on the dick.]

Real bad gyal pon di buddy.
[Real bad gyal on the dick.]

Bamby explicitly states her sexual desires. For instance, when she says, "Mo ka whine pon di buddy." With every verse by Chily and Jahyanai that underscores a conversation on their male genitalia and courting of women, Bamby reserves the script with her chorus. Even though the discussion in "Buddy" is dominated by the male genitalia and centered around masculinity and male pleasure, Bamby is able to recenter female pleasure and desire. Here, she is not being conquered, but she is the one doing the conquering.

In conjunction with Bamby, Jahyanai sings the second half of the chorus. He gives Bamby instructions and explicitly refers to and describes his male genitalia. He says:

To gain pou whine pon di buddy.
[You have to whine on the dick.]

Big long john a di buddy.
[It's a big, long john, it's the dick.]

He responds to Bamby's statement with "Mo ka whine pon di buddy," encouraging her to do so. He indicates that Bamby is in charge of their sexual and dancing encounter. Like Jahyanai, Chily, in French, talks about pleasing a woman. He says:

J'arrive dans dix minutes, mamacita.
[I'll be there in 10 minutes, Mamacita.]

Ça bringue tous les jours on n'a pas d'horaires.
[It's a party every day, we don't have schedules.]

Je te dis des secrets, baby, dans l'oreille.
[I am going to tell you secrets in your ear.]

Elle veut le faire, elle veut la vie de rêve.
[She wants to do it; she wants the dream life.]

Using phrases like "Je te dis des secrets" and "Elle veut le faire," Chily avoids using explicit language to talk about sexual intercourse. In contrast, Jahyanai and Bamby draw on Jamaican Creole to describe sexual acts explicitly. In general, Jahyanai draws on "gyalis" ideologies to

showcase his sexual dominance and "love" for women. Additionally, he draws on his "rude bwoy" persona by representing his music label group and its new collaboration. For instance, towards the song's end, he talks about rivalry, violence, and defending himself and his crew. He says:

Dem cya test we, no dem fool.
[They are unable to fight us, they are all idiots.]

If a man a violate me, kno dem straight.
[If a guy tries to fight me, just know I'll deal with them.]

Dem tun frozen, yow dem sick.
[They will freeze up, they'll be sick.]

We nuh fear none a dem...
[We aren't afraid of competition ...]

He considers the rival group to be a group of idiots and believes that he could take them on in a lyrical or physical fight by himself. Interestingly, in a song on the male genitalia and sexual intercourse, Jahyanai chooses to incorporate discourse surrounding violence, rivalry, and the turf. He demonstrates the importance of ideologies pertaining to frontiers and violence to the figure of the "rude bwoy," even as he talks primarily about his sexual experiences and male genitalia.

Overall, Jahyanai has used his "rude bwoy" persona and ideologies associated with frontier, lyrical and physical violence, male promiscuity to market himself as a "rude bwoy" on the international stage. "Take Control," "TT," and "Buddy" all demonstrate the global connections and collaborations that Jahyanai has been able to make, not only for himself but for his Rude Empire music group. In an interview by France-Guyane entitled "Avec Tsunami,

Jahyanai vise le sommet" about the release of Jahyanai's 2021 mixtape, they asked Jahyanai about the goal of his mixtape.¹¹⁴ He said:

Mon rôle est de péter des portes et de mettre la Guyane sur la carte. J'ai déjà fait un petit peu de chemin, mais ce n'est pas encore fini. Je veux que le monde entier parle de la Guyane. Je ne m'arrêterai pas. Je ne ferai pas un son par an, ce n'est pas l'idée, mais je prendrai le temps de faire des projets de qualité. (2021)

My role is to break down doors and put Guyane on the map. I've come a long way, but it's not over yet. I want the whole world to talk about Guyane. I won't stop. I won't make one sound per year; that's not the idea, but I will take the time to do quality projects.

Additionally, the interviewers asked: How do you see the future of your music? He responded by saying:

Je veux d'abord mener une carrière internationale. Et peut-être plus tard devenir directeur artistique dans une maison de disque, faire monter mon label, détecter de nouveaux talents, faire ce que l'on a fait pour moi. Continuer le taff même en coulisses. (2021)

I want to pursue an international career first. And maybe later become an artistic director in a record company, build my label, find new talents, do what they did for me [people like Gifita who gave him a chance]. Continue the work even behind the scenes.

Jahyanai's goal as he draws on the historical lineage and significance of the "rude bwoy" rooted in marronage is to become an international "rude bwoy." Traversing the borders of the local, lokal, and regional, he hopes to be internationally recognized as the Rude King. In addition to this, he also aims to "mettre la Guyane sur la carte," which has always been a key part of the stylization of his persona. Since his name "Jahyanai" also has "yana," signifying "la Guyane," he aims to place himself, Rude Empire, and his country in the spotlight.

¹¹⁴ See the interview here: <https://www.franceguyane.fr/actualite/culture-et-patrimoine/video-avec-tsunami-jahyanai-vise-le-sommet-480932.php>

5.7.4 Linguistic Stylization of the Rude Bwoy

Jahyanai's multilingual repertoire includes Jamaican Creole, Guyanais Creole, English, Spanish and Portuguese. In the songs that I analyze, he mainly employs Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole with only one instance of codeswitching to another language. Throughout all categories, Rude Bwoy, Gyalis, and International Rude, Jahyanai employs code-switching to Jamaican Creole and code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole the most. Code-switching accounts for 65.57% of all the lyrics in all categories, while code-mixing accounts for 22.01%.¹¹⁵ He consistently code-switches to Jamaican Creole, with that being the highest type of switch in each category. For instance, there are 48 instances in the Rude Bwoy category, 78 instances in the Gyalis category, and 49 instances in the International Rude Bwoy category of code switches to Jamaican Creole. Regarding code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais, both the Rude Bwoy and Gyalis categories had 26 instances. Interestingly, the International Rude Bwoy category only has 5 instances of code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole, which underscores Jahyanai's intentional use of Jamaican Creole to both market himself as a dancehall artist, but also to reach a larger audience. Regarding code-switches solely to Guyanais Creole, the Gyalis category has the highest instances with 16, followed by the Rude Bwoy category with 7 instances and the International Rude Bwoy category with 3 instances. Jahyanai uses Guyanais Creole to assert his gyanité to show that Guyanais dancehall is distinct from Jamaican dancehall and bring something new to the genre. The Gyalis category has the highest use of code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais and code-switching to Guyanais combined. I infer that this is the case because his addressees may be predominantly Guyanais women, as he says in "Vitamine," "Chak coup de bass daggering."

¹¹⁵ In Appendix 3 see Table 1.

Jahyanai employs a variety of morphosyntactic and phonological features from Jamaican Creole.¹¹⁶ There are instances of all the features in each of the categories. Concerning morphosyntactic features, he draws on TMA and pronouns the most with no real significant difference within each of the three categories. I coded for the pronouns "Me," "Him," and "Dem" in Jamaican Creole. However, for the Gyalis category, I observed 17 instances of the pronoun "yuh." I consider this to be a high usage of pronouns, given that the general pronouns I coded for only accounted for 36 instances. Hence, Jahyanai draws extensively on the pronoun "yuh" to address females to express his romantic and sexual interests in them.

Concerning his phonological features, he employs all features in all three categories. However, the neutralization of dentals and the merger of the TRAP and BATH (British pronunciation) into [a] are the most frequent. There are 145 instances of the neutralization of dentals and 102 instances of the merger in all categories. The Rude Bwoy category has the highest instance of neutralization at 53 instances, followed by the Gyalis category at 51 and the International Rude Bwoy category at 41. This high number is due to the "We" versus "Them" (Nou versus Yo or Wi versus Dem) discourse that Jahyanai employs as a "rude bwoy." To distance himself from rival groups or others, he constantly refers to a "Dem" or "Yo." Regarding the merger of the TRAP and BATH (British pronunciation) into [a], the Gyalis category has the highest at 45 instances, followed by the Rude Bwoy category at 31 instances and the International Rude Bwoy category at 26 instances. For instance, he draws on Jamaican Creole pronunciations of words such as "gyal" as [gjal] instead of [gæɪ], "badman" as [bad.man] instead [bæd.mæn] and "follow" as [fa.la] instead of ['fɒləʊ]. Jahyanai uses these two features to stylize his linguistic repertoire as authentically dancehall and representative of the "rude bwoy."

¹¹⁶ In Appendix 3 see Tables 2 and 3.

In comparing Jahyanai's use of Jamaican Creole in songs in each category, the use of code-switching and morphosyntactic and phonological features have remained consistent in the Rude Bwoy and Gyalis categories. On the international stage in the category entitled International Rude Bwoy, Jahyanai uses less Guyanais Creole in songs, both regarding code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole and code-switching solely to Guyanais Creole. His international persona presents a "rude bwoy" that can be intelligible to an outside audience far beyond the borders of Guyane. There are still instances of the Guyanais Creole, indicating that he still wishes to index his lokal origins and authenticity. Unlike Bamby's persona, as I illustrate in the next chapter, I do not trace Jahyanai's linguistic evolution here. Instead, I look at how he markets himself through language to reach a broader audience. He even writes his own lyrics, indicating his multilingual ability to speak Jamaican Creole. This is evident in the rhymes that he is able to make as he code-switches and code-mixes. For instance, in "Bag a Gyal," he says:

We nuh play, magazeen full mi nuh care.
 [I don't mess around, my gun is loaded, I don't care.]

Bay bèt a kon lépok Bardot, we nuh fear.
 [Do it like during Bardot times, we aren't afraid.]

Any weh mi deh make badmind disappear.
 [It doesn't matter where I am, I'll kill all the envious people.]

Mussy we di whole a dem fear.
 [They have to fear us.]

In this example, he draws on another phonological feature of Jamaican Creole, the merger of diphthongs in words like "fair" and "fear." It is pronounced as [feə] and [fɪə] in British English. While, in Jamaican Creole, they both become [fe:r]. As he rhymes, he is able to draw on this phonological feature, indicating the versatility of his repertoire.

Additionally, through his use of code-switching and code-mixing in Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole, Jahyanai underscores key ideologies concerning hypermasculinity, toughness, and violence, as he illustrates in the metaphorical and physical creation of the Rude Empire's turf and the importance of lyrical and physical confrontation or fights in maintaining his turf. Additionally, his lyrics highlight discourse on masculinity and sexuality. Particularly in the Gyalis section, Jahyanai uses his lyrics and videos to embody ideologies on male promiscuity, sexual prowess, and braggadocio. Even though his "rude bwoy" persona performs "badness" through lyrical and physical violence, Jahyanai's approach to sexual pleasure varies from other dancehall artists. Instead of centering on the male experience and focusing on violence and pain as key components of sexual intercourse with women, Jahyanai centers on female pleasure, mutual partnership and constantly praises the women he sings to.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I trace the history and the significance of the "rude bwoy" in the Jamaican imaginary. I illustrated how the "rude bwoy" figure is a product of the cross-fertilization of American Hollywood and Caribbean-specific understandings of resistance. I looked at how the figures of the "cowboy," "outlaw" in American westerns, and the "gangster" in spaghetti westerns contributed to the ideological configuration of the "rude bwoy." Additionally, I underscored the importance of considering the "rude bwoy" as a key part of the lineage of marronage in Jamaica's history of resistance. The "rude bwoy" provides an alternative view of Caribbean masculinity, one rooted in a discourse on violence, rivalry, sexual prowess, and male promiscuity. Jahyanai's dancehall persona, the Rude King, represents another cross-fertilization

of the ideologies, where the figure of the "rude bwoy" has been merged with specific Guyanais ideologies.

Throughout the rest of the chapter, I described Jahyanai's Rude King persona and separated his performances into three main categories: the Rude Bwoy, the Gyalis, and the International Rude Bwoy. Through careful analysis, I located the ideologies present in each song to illustrate how they refer to the larger discourse on the "rude bwoy" and his worldview as a "gyalis." Lastly, I examined Jahyanai's multilingual repertoire and linguistic stylization of Jamaican Creole. In addition, I illustrated how Jahyanai uses his repertoire to traverse boundaries as he aims to become a well-known international artist.

String

Donc du coup on fait référence à la photo de Bamby qui a fait surface au fond de ses choqués où elle était habillée... euh elle n'était pas forcément trop habillée. Du coup, beaucoup de gens dit "mais non c'est choquant" "pourquoi elle fait ça" pour alors moi ce que j'ai dit sur internet c'est que je trouve qu'on critique elle alors que Cardi B, Nicki Minaj, Beyoncé, et Spice par exemple en Jamaïque ne sont pas forcément plus habillées que ça. Donc pourquoi il y a deux poids deux mesures quand on est aux Antilles et quand on est en Jamaïque ou ailleurs. Ce qu'on m'a répondu et peut-être c'est un argument vous me direz. C'est que comme elle est Guyanaise donc Antilles-guyane, elle nous représente, nous... (Bamby controversy, Specta Say so, 2018)

So, we are referring to the picture of Bamby... where she was dressed...well; she wasn't necessarily well covered. So, a lot of people are saying, "but no, it's shocking," "why did she do that." For me, what I said on the internet is that I think that we are criticizing her when Cardi B, Nicki Minaj, Beyoncé, and Spice, for example, from Jamaica, aren't necessarily more dressed than that. So why do we see double standards playing out in the Antilles and when we are talking about Jamaica and elsewhere. People have responded, and maybe it's an argument, you can tell me. It's that she is French Guianese, so she's a part of Antilles-French Guiana, she represents us.?

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on an analysis of Bamby's "bad gyal" persona by drawing on the lyrics and visuals from her most popular music videos to look at her persona's evolution.

Additionally, I draw on the YouTube video entitled "La Polémique BAMBY et l'image de la Femme," in which Specta Say So asks questions related to Bamby's aesthetics and performance of slackness. Specta is originally a dancehall and rap artist from Martinique. In 2017, he started his YouTube channel, where he records videos about current news and drama in the French Caribbean music scene, particularly on dancehall, rap, and reggae. His YouTube consists of a variety of specific series such *Pawol Inital*, *Question for a Soundboy*, and *Lyrics and Chill*. "La Polémique BAMBY et l'image de la Femme" is a part of his *Lyrics and Chill* series where he discusses lyrics, topics, and debates. For this episode he invited music enthusiasts Dorine and Louana to discuss "La Polémique BAMBY...." To begin my discussion on Bamby's dancehall

persona, I draw on Specta's conversation in this video and the responses made by his audience under his comment section. Then, I describe Bamby's linguistic and aesthetic stylization of the "bad gyal" persona by analyzing her music videos and lyrics.

Specta's YouTube video on "La polémique Bamby et Les images des femmes"/ "The Bamby controversy and the image of women" is an interesting way to begin the conversation on Bamby and her aesthetic and linguistic choices. On June 16, 2018, Bamby performed in Lattes, on the outskirts of Montpellier, at the One Shot Discothèque for her "Bamby Showcase." The One Shot Discothèque is a popular nightclub in Lattes that also hosts a variety of different events. In this particular instance, the nightclub held a dancehall showcase featuring Bamby performing all her latest hits. The names of the different liquors available for the night were even changed to match Bamby's repertoire. For instance, Whisky JB was called "Ba Mo Lè," Absolut Vodka was called "Run di place," and Hennessy was called "Who mad Again." In addition, Bamby's sets were accompanied by numerous French Caribbean deejays, three of whom were some of Guyane's very own and well-known dancehall deejays: Creeks MX, DJ PHK, and DJ Lalann. The setting for that night at One Shot was in homage to Bamby and her successful year and career as a dancehall artist. Hence, it was undoubtedly a dancehall stage-show, and every dancehall participant at One Shot Discothèque was expected to understand the context of dancehall shows and performances.

Specta's YouTube video, in particular, frames Bamby's performance at this nightclub and her aesthetic choices. He asks his co-hosts and the audience questions related to the quote that starts this chapter in order to spark a debate. His questions, commentary, and his online audience's opinions reveal insights on French Caribbean ideologies surrounding what is considered appropriate ways of dressing and appropriate performances of femininity within the

context of dancehall and as a Black woman performing in France. Emphasizing Bamby's choice of dressing in "un body string,"¹¹⁷ Specta talks about the criticism and double standards women face in the French Caribbean. He highlights that French Caribbean people often support and enjoy artists like Nicki Minaj, Beyoncé, and Spice, who dress similarly. However, in this one instance, some audiences are against Bamby's choice of embracing her body and sexuality.

6.2 S'habiller Sexy en body string

Continuing his discussion, Specta poses a complicated yet insightful question to his audience. He asks them if they would allow their children, specifically their daughters, to attend one of Bamby's performances if she were to dress in a "body string." He says:

par exemple qu'on a pris c'est si Bamby fait un concert à L'Atrium est-ce que tu as envie d'y aller avec ta fille.... Est-ce que j'emmène ma fille voir Bamby si je l'ai vue dans un 'body string"... Donc, répond à la question. Est-ce que vous, vous avez une fille voit une photo de Bamby comme ça, est-ce que vous emmenez Bamby, votre fille à L'Atrium voir Bamby? (Bamby controversy, Specta Say so, 2018)

For example, if Bamby is performing at a concert at L'Atrium, would you go there to see her with your daughter?... Would I bring my daughter to see Bamby if I saw her in a body string? ...So, respond to the question. You have a daughter who sees a photo of Bamby like that. Would you bring your daughter to L'Atrium to see Bamby?

Specta's question highlights the invisible responsibilities and expectations placed on women to perform and adhere to French Caribbean gender norms. As someone in power and influence, Bamby has been positioned as a role model for women and young girls. Hence, her choice of dress was judged as inappropriate concerning the ideal image of French Caribbean women that some of her audience expected her to embody. Additionally, at that moment in Bamby's career, her "body string" was the most provocative piece of clothing that she had ever worn at a

¹¹⁷ Black mesh jumpsuit. See Appendix 4 Image 1 for a picture of her costume.

showcase. Her audience was not used to this extent of slackness, particularly in France and on a world stage, so her performance had immense shock value. Even though Bamby's songs have always included sexually explicit lyrics, lyrics on violence, and her music videos have showcased her sexuality and body positivity, some of her fans were not ready for the real-life embodiment of her persona on a stage in France.

Specta's choice to situate Bamby's hypothetical performance at L'Atrium underscores critical cultural differences between Les Antilles-Guyane and how respectability politics are deployed, depending on context and location. Given that L'Atrium is a "scene nationale," a title given by the French ministry of culture to public theatres to promote a national culture in an effort to reconcile tradition with modernity (Tropiques-Atrium). It acts primarily as a safeguard of cultural memory in particular for young Martinicans. Typically, L'Atrium showcases Martinique's Jazz and Zouk Festivals, Martinican cinema, and theatre, traditional and contemporary dancing, storytelling, and all things Creole. It is a venue that upholds ideologies surrounding Frenchness and true Creoleness.

Given the location, be it in Martinique, Guyane, or France, different expectations and respectability politics govern a woman's performance of femininity. The Bamby controversy urges me to think about the types of performances that Guyanais people consider acceptable and unacceptable while performing in these locations. It also compels me to consider the constraints, hidden meanings, and expectations behind representing one's Overseas Department and region in France. Furthermore, it urges me to conceive of Bamby's self-presentation and performance of slackness as a radical politics, rather than stripping away her agency and positioning her as a passive participant in the hypersexualization of Black women's bodies.

Specta's choice to situate his hypothetical question at L'Atrium decontextualizes Bamby's actual performance. Her performance took place precisely in the southern part of France, over 4,200 miles away from Martinique. In the context of this famous nightclub called One Shot, Bamby's audience was aware that she would be performing a dancehall stage show showcasing her popular hits. Bamby's performance in her jumpsuit was deemed too much or too vulgar by an audience that did not attend the event. Like Specta's decontextualization of the event, they too decontextualized Bamby's performance. Instead of situating her aesthetic choices and performance at a dancehall event, they both, meaning Specta and other spectators, situated her performance outside of a dancehall stage show. Specta's question could have remained faithful to the original context and setting of the event. However, he chose to position Bamby's performance at L'Atrium, a place that signifies "traditional" family values and respectability politics, according to one of his co-presenters. Placing Bamby's body and dancehall music and culture at a venue like L'Atrium does not follow the choices of dancehall artists and the typical setting of dancehall performances. In addition, the overall concern of her performance being too vulgar for France or Martinique is also problematic, because she was performing for a majority French Caribbean crowd, far away from spectators who do not understand dancehall culture.

As I think about Bamby's hypothetical performance at L'Atrium, as well as Bamby's actual performance in Lattes, I think about what it means for a Black French woman to perform dancehall and to represent her Overseas Department on French soil. Cooper's (2004) understanding of slackness is useful here. She highlights that the slackness that accompanies dancehall music and culture is and will always be the anthesis of "Culture." The slackness within dancehall disrupts the rigid norms and rules of Eurocentric cultures and any respectability politics that seek to govern femininity and sexuality. Hence, in performing dancehall, Bamby

performs slackness and troubles Frenchness and gender heteronormativity. In situating Bamby's performance at L'Atrium, Specta misses one of the key commentaries that Bamby makes by performing at Lattes: circumventing popular flows of uppercase "Culture" such as Frenchness and dominant ideologies on womanhood. Given the socio-historic context and significance of a place like L'Atrium or France, I ask can Frenchness or French Caribbeanness make room for Bamby's unbound performance of her Blackness and sexuality? Or does Guyanais dancehall represent a more transgressive form of expression in the francophone Caribbean?

6.3 Mainland France as Eldorado

The French Caribbean vision of France and Frenchness has had a complicated history due to French colonialism and French assimilationist policies. Sameness based on French nationality is a complex phenomenon in the French Caribbean. Bloom says that "[n]ational identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols –have internalized the symbols of the nation" (1990, 52). Nationality and the ideologies that are attached to Frenchness is based on an imaginary collective history that most people from Guyane, Martinique, and Guadeloupe do not necessarily share with mainland France. Additionally, most French Antilleans and Guyanais people have not been to hexagonal France, which means that their vision of France rests on imaginary symbols of the republic tied to Frenchness, liberty, and equality. Their association to Frenchness is also attached to notions of respectability which "is oriented toward bourgeois valuations of the centripetal, toward standard [French], home, family, hierarchy, decorum, stability, honesty, economy, delayed returns, and transcendence" (Puri 2003).

Fanon (2008) talks about Antillean perceptions of France in *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Discussing how much Antilleans change when they go to France, he says:

The Negro who knows the mother country is a demigod. In this connection, I offer a fact that must have struck my compatriots. Many of them, after stays of varying length in metropolitan France, go home to be deified. The most eloquent form of ambivalence is adopted toward them by the native, the one-who-never-crawled-out-of-his-hole, the *bitaco*. The black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed. (10)

As a tourist who has visited France, those back at home expect that you will have changed when you return. Upon your return, you become a "demigod" because you have had the opportunity to step foot on French soil. Additionally, you have had the opportunity to experience and adopt a true French way of life and learn and practice "proper" French. Continuing his description, Fanon says:

For the Negro knows that over there in France, there *is* a stereotype of him that will fasten on to him at the pier in Le Havre or Marseille: "Ah come fom Mahtinique, it's the fuhst time Ah've eveh come to Fance." (2008, 9-10)

In this excerpt, it is important to highlight that Antilleans are aware of the stereotypes that French people have historically associated with them. If they happen to speak Creole or pronounce a French word in a way that indicates that their French has been colored by "creolisms," then they know that they will be perceived differently. Similarly, Bamby's performance of slackness is frowned upon by some, since French people already have a hypersexualized view of French Caribbean women. As someone who has had the opportunity to visit La France, it is expected that one would want to escape the negative stereotypes that are typically associated with Black women and Creole languages. Hence, when visiting France, Antilleans hope to represent themselves and their department well by performing Frenchness and confirming to respectability politics.

Additionally, Fanon states that French Caribbean people aggrandize France, since the Antillean who arrives there sees it as:

represent[ing] the Tabernacle; he changes not only because it is from France that he received his knowledge of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire, but also because France gave him his physicians, his department heads, his innumerable little functionaries—from the sergeant-major "fifteen years in the service" to the policeman who was born in Panissières. There is a kind of magic vault of distance... creat[ing] round himself a magic circle in which the words *Paris, Marseille, Sorbonne, Pigalle* become the keys to the vault. He leaves for the pier, and the amputation of his being diminishes as the silhouette of his ship grows clearer. In the eyes of those who have come to see him off he can read the evidence of his own mutation, his power. "Good-by bandanna, good-by straw hat..." (Fanon 2008, 13)

France is seen as a "gospel truth" for some French Caribbean people (Wynter 2001). Their sense of national identity relies on the symbols of Frenchness and purportedly French values. Drawing on key enlightenment figures such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire, Fanon shows how France has been positioned in the eyes of French Caribbean people. Not only is the notion of the West and the rest present here, but we see that French Caribbean people are willing to say goodbye to their bandannas and straw-hats, and hence their French Caribbeanness, in hopes of getting a piece of the modernity that mainland France offers, social mobility. In the chapter on Guyane, I talk mainly about the ways in which Guyane is seen as Eldorado for refugees, Maroon communities, and neighboring countries such as Guyana, Suriname, and Brazil. However, through Fanon's description, we see that France becomes this myth of Eldorado for those who dream of a better life with their hopes of making it to France. To get to Eldorado, one must embrace respectability politics by stripping oneself of one's creolized culture and language and choose to adopt the ways of knowing: language, history, literature, and culture of France/the colonizer.

On one hand, France seems attractive, seeing that its republic was founded on beliefs of liberty, equality, and fraternity. These ideals, coupled with discussions on French citizenship

solidified, for certain French Caribbean people, that they too were a part of Frenchness and would easily be accepted and accommodated once they were in the mainland. On the other hand, France has a long history of excluding those who are perceived as Other, such as Black people, from its definition a "French Citizen." The French revolution of 1789 led to serious discussion on citizenship and nationhood. Take Article 1 of the 1789 Declaration, for instance, which reads: "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can have no other basis than common utility."¹¹⁸ This Article claim that all *men* are considered equal. The key term here is *men*, seeing that at the time, not all people were considered or afforded the same status as being human in respect to how Blackness and Black bodies were perceived as inferior. Hence, the freedom and rights that the Declaration promised were not afforded to slaves or free people of color in France's colonies. Buck-Morss (2009) argues that even as Enlightenment thinkers such as the ones Fanon mentions thought about notions of freedom and inalienable rights for men, they maintained "moral neutrality" on the inhumane practice of slavery. The injustice and hypocrisy behind this debate sparked conversations and slave riots in France's most valuable colony, St. Domingue resulting in the Haitian Revolution. As the world's only successful slave rebellion that achieved independence, it forced Europeans, not only Frenchmen, to reconsider what it meant to be human/man and who could be considered a French citizen.

I include this discussion on St. Domingue and the French Revolution to show how Frenchness has continually excluded Blackness. Even with France's Fifth Republic and constitution of 1958, Blackness and Black people are seen as Other and are excluded from notions of Frenchness. Hence, to be Black and French, Mudimbe-Boyi (2012) argues, is "a

¹¹⁸ "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen," approved by the National Assembly of France 1789.

relationship of similitude and difference, inclusion and mutual exclusion, and thus, at the same time, of belonging and non-belonging" (24). Quoting Fanon's words once again: "In the eyes of those who have come to see him off, he can read the evidence of his own mutation, his power, Good-bye, bandanna, good-bye straw hat... " (Fanon 2008, 13); within this complex relationship between being French and being Black, there are still individuals who associate France with the myth of Eldorado and believe in the possibility of true assimilation and integration. The French Caribbean person tries at all costs to escape his Blackness, Creoleness, or any other marker of Otherness. They do not want to be seen as different or exotic. They want to escape all negative stereotypes associated with French Caribbeanness. For some, a French Caribbean claim to Frenchness then looks to France as Eldorado, while undoubtedly excluding explicit displays and performances of Otherness. Hence, in her performance, Bamby should have said good-bye to slackness (dressing sexy, speaking Creole, dancing erotically) and conformed to the dominant French and French Caribbean culture.

All things considered, Specta's choice to situate Bamby's hypothetical performance at L'Atrium is not surprising given its position in the national imaginary as an extension of Frenchness. Additionally, the preoccupation with respectability politics and performing "correct" Frenchness while in hexagonal France is also important. The complicated French Caribbean identity is split between identifying, on the one hand, with Creoleness, Blackness, and their own individual identities, such as with *guyanité* and, on the other, with Frenchness. Fanon uses language to talk about how Antilleans choose to speak French and adapt French culture at the expense of their own Creole language and culture. While in this example, I look closely at how Bamby's dancehall performance in French disrupts that matrix. At L'Atrium or in France, the French Caribbean and French imaginary would not make room for non-normative performances,

such as Bamby in a mesh bodysuit performing dancehall. Even though Bamby and other enthusiasts created a space for themselves in Lattes outside of French European respectability politics and the regulation of female bodies, unfortunately, however, the French Caribbean's complex relationship and vision of France, Frenchness, and Blackness are still persistent in maintaining rigid boundaries and norms in order to police what constitutes Frenchness and which parts of Caribbeanness can and cannot be showcased in France.

6.4 Nous Les Antilles Guyane vs Eux Les Jamaïcains

In this section, I examine the different opinions on Bamby's performance in Lattes. Bamby's choice of wearing a black see-through jumpsuit accessorized with leather that covered her groin and nipples sparked numerous debates, particularly amongst Guyanais people. Interestingly, in Bamby and Jahyanai's 2017 hit single "Who Mad Again," she wore a similar black mesh jumpsuit.¹¹⁹ This video is still one of their most viewed music videos of all time, just second to "Run di Place." Unlike the public's response to her 2017 music video, her 2018 showcase outfit fostered numerous online conversations around questions, such as, 1. Does her on-stage persona, Bad Gyal Bamby, represent who she is as a person?; 2. How does her persona reflect or not reflect Guyanais or French Caribbean cultural values?; 3. Should people, especially young girls, look up to her as a role model?

As YouTube commenters shared their opinions about Bamby's way of dressing, they also attempted to situate Guyane and the French Caribbean ideologically, politically, and geographically. Drawing on a nous vs. eux (us vs. them) discourse of affiliation and disaffiliation, they formulate different versions of a "nous/us" in relation to Frenchness, French

¹¹⁹ See Appendix 4 Image 2.

Caribbeanness, Guyanité, and Caribbeanness through stance-taking. Taking YouTube comments under Specta's video into consideration, I illustrate the nous vs. eux stance-taking. YouTube commenter ST says:

On a pas la même culture arrêtez de comparer Bamby avec Rihanna Beyoncé Spice etc... on est les Antilles française et en France c'est mal vu et puis y'a être sexy et vulgaire là en ce moment Bamby est grave vulgaire c'est dommage.

We don't have the same culture stop comparing Bamby with Rihanna, Beyoncé, Spice etc... we are from the French West Indies and in France it is frowned upon and then there is being sexy and vulgar there at the moment Bamby is seriously vulgar it is shame.

YouTube commenter Julien Sagnet responds to this comment by saying:

Sauf que Bamby ne vient pas des Antilles Française c'est 1 Guyanaise et je doute qu'elle ai reçu une quelconque influence dans son style musical de la France. Elle chante principalement en Créole Guyanais, en Patois Jamaïcain voir Guyanien (comme beaucoup d'artistes Guyanais). Ca en dit long sur ses influences ! Son style n'est que la conséquence de ses influences musicales et vestimentaires (Afro-caribéenne, Afro-américaine, Guyanienne et surinamaïse).

Except Bamby is not from the French West Indies, she is a Guyanais woman, and I doubt that she received any influence in her musical style from France. She sings mainly in Guyanais Creole, in Jamaican or Guyanese Patois (like many Guyanese artists). That says a lot about her influences! Her current style is influenced by her musical and clothing influences (Afro-Caribbean, African-American, Guyanese and Surinamese).

The initial commenter ST responds by saying:

... elle n'est pas antillaise certes mais elle est guyanaise française vous dépendez de la France FR.

She is certainly not West Indian, but she is French Guyanese you depend on France FR.

Julien Sagnet concludes by saying:

Ce n'est pas 1 problème de nationalité mais d'influence. Les guyanais sont administrativement des Français mais leurs influences musicales et artistiques ne sont pas celles du continent européen. La preuve encore les artistes de dancehall guyanais chantent en créole mélangé aux divers patois anglais.

It is not a problem of nationality but of influence. Guyanais people are administratively French, but their musical and artistic influences are not European. The proof is in the fact

that Guyanais dancehall artists sing in [Guyanais] Creole mixed with various English-based Creoles

And finally, a new commenter Marlène, adds to this discourse:

Désolé ! Mais c'est bien dans notre culture ! Tu es peut être métropolitaine mais ce n'est pas notre cas.

Sorry ! But it's good in our culture! You may be metropolitan, but we are not.

In this YouTube comment conversation, there are two interesting stance-taking positions at play. The first has to do with ST's, where they position Bamby as simultaneously a part of the French Caribbean and a part of France. The second concerns Marlène and Julien Sagnet's assertion that Bamby is Guyanais and looks to the greater Caribbean for cultural, linguistic, aesthetic, and musical influences instead of France. I consider these two stance-taking positions to be two different nous vs eux postulations.

ST's asserts a "nous" that includes Guyane in both the French Caribbean and as a part of France. Given that Bamby is performing outside of Les Antilles-Guyane (Lattes), any performance that she engages in is read as a reflection of Les Antilles-Guyane, since they are considered a microcosm of France. The "eux" that opposes the "nous" refers to outside cultural and linguistic influences from North America and the larger Caribbean, particularly Jamaica. ST asserts that Bamby, hence Guyane, does not have a similar culture to places like Jamaica, so the vulgarity should not be welcomed.

It is important to note that those from Les Antilles-Guyane, view Guyane, Martinique, and Guadeloupe as separate entities geographically and culturally, seeing that they are familiar with their classifications and history. Those outside of the region often associate Les Antilles-Guyane generically as Les DOM-TOMs and consider them as one or similar entities rather than distinct regions of France. Additionally, given the ways in which Guyane is often positioned or

left out, it continues to have a liminal status. It is often misrepresented and overshadowed in discussions on Les Antilles. For instance, Télévision française 1 (TF1), France's oldest television broadcasting and communication channel and services, are known to inaccurately represent Guyane on maps. For instance, on digital news cut-outs that show Guyane, instead of having a cut-out of Guyane, sometimes they have the cut-out of Guyana or, while showing a map of South America, digital images will highlight the map of Guyana as Guyane. It is important to note that Suriname borders Guyane and separates both Guyane and Guyana. However, individuals or, in this instance, well-known news channels, find it hard to geographically place Guyane.

Furthermore, Guyane is often referred to as "une île/an island." As specific examples, we have both Prime Minister Jean Castex and the then presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron referring to Guyane as "l'île." Prime Minister Castex refers to it as such in 2020 during his visit to Guyane,¹²⁰ and President Emmanuel Macron did so in 2017,¹²¹ while addressing the general strike and protests happening in Guyane in the same year. As mentioned in the chapter on Guyane, I spoke about *l'île du diable* or devil's island. Guyane, or Cayenne in particular, was once one of France's largest and most notorious penal colonies. Given this historic use, Guyane is often only remembered or associated with *l'île du diable* or in the 21st century, with France's and Europe's Space station. Hence, given the ways in which Guyane has been perceived by the media, politicians, and French people in general, it is not surprising then that associations with (outside of Les Antilles-Guyane) Guyane would readily position it as a part of Les Antilles or just as Les DOM-TOMS, or mistake it geographically. At the same time, to those who identify as

¹²⁰ He says: "Minister Lecornu will remain with you tomorrow and with local and economic players on the island in particular"" ("Le ministre Lecornu restera, demain, avec vous et auprès des acteurs locaux et économiques de l'île en particulier" (July13, 2020).

¹²¹ https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/l-ile-de-guyane-n-est-pas-la-premiere-bourde-geographique-de-macron_AN-201703270070.html

Guyanais, this positioning of their country, history, and culture is ahistorical and problematic. So, ST's "nous," which positions Bamby as a part of France where her performance of slackness is frowned upon, is misplaced.

On the other hand, Marlène and Julien Sagnet assert a "nous" that incorporates the lived realities of Guyane and its cultural influences. Julian posits that "[i]t is not a problem of nationality but of influence," and that "[t]he proof is in the fact that [she sings] in [Guyanais] Creole mixed with various English based Creoles." I agree that Bamby's choice of dress and performance has to do with the cultural, aesthetic, and linguistic influences located in and around Guyane. In addition, I do think that the issue of nationality plays a significant role in how individuals self-identify in Guyane. Even though it is politically French and is considered a French Overseas Department and Region, Guyanais people's national identity is not based solely on Frenchness. Guyane problematizes Frenchness in numerous ways. Instead of an identity based on Frenchness, Guyane's diverse population struggles to even define guyanité due to its cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and racial diversity. As previously mentioned, Guyane hosts a diverse population that includes people who identify as Creole, Hmong, Haitian, Brazilian, French Caribbean, West Indian, Surinamese, Maroon, and French Metropolitans. At its core, its polyethnic society surpasses discussions on Frenchness and concerns the quest for a true guyanité. As Guyane troubles French national identity, it seeks out other forms of identification by drawing on forms of culture, language, or identities that are closer geographically and ideologically to their own experiences.

Referring to Bamby and her presentation of herself, Marlène says, "it's good in our culture! You may be metropolitan, but we are not." She affirms that there is a difference between being metropolitan French and being Guyanais. Additionally, she contends that "slackness" or

what ST calls the difference between being sexy and vulgar, is a part of Guyanais culture since Bamby's performance is perceived as "good." These two commenters, Marlène and Julien Sagnet, embody a "nous" that incorporates guyanité and the cultural, linguistic, and aesthetic influences from the larger Caribbean that have shaped and continue to shape Guyane. Hence, while their "nous" undoubtedly represents Guyane, it also encompasses Caribbeanness. This "nous" also stands in opposition to and challenges an "eux" that embodies Frenchness and republican ideals that cannot make space for Bamby.

Taking the postulations of "nous," we can understand why Bamby's performance of slackness was seen as provocative. When Bamby performs outside the borders of Guyane and Les Antilles, her performances are assumed to be representative of ideologies associated with a collective Les Antilles-Guyane rather than being associated with the performer herself or with Guyanais culture. Given this assumption, Bamby's choice of dress and performing dancehall becomes un-French, since dancehall may be considered too crude and vulgar for some. Hence, it repels them rather than becoming a site of identification and attraction. In Les Antilles- Guyane, and particularly in Guyane, it is expected that most people know and understand the genre conventions of dancehall. In this context, her performance and a choice of dress become signifiers of dancehall culture and slackness, whereas, in France, they become signifiers for otherness, particularly for those trying to assimilate into Frenchness without being viewed as different.

6.5 Slackness and Vénus Noire

The issue of sexual freedom, artistic choice, and the role of women in society were also some of the questions that were raised by YouTube commenters. Some commenters conflated

Bamby's persona with who she is and assigned her various responsibilities as a representative of Guyane and a woman. One of Specta's YouTube participants (audience/commenter) says:

Il y a une difficulté aujourd'hui à différencier le chanteur/la chanteuse et la personne en elle-même car depuis longtemps (et sûrement implicitement), la société associe ce type d'artiste à la vie quotidienne qu'il mène. En gros, s'il/si elle chante ça, c'est qu'il/elle représente ça. C'est comme ça qu'il/elle est dans sa vie. Le chanteur/la chanteuse reflète qu'est la personne dans la vie quotidienne. On ne pense pas d'entrée à un rôle, à une facette comme on pourrait le faire pour un acteur/une actrice. Pour eux (acteur/actrice), le public sait normalement faire la distinction entre les deux (acteur/personne), puisque le principe même d'un acteur est de jouer un rôle alors que celui d'un chanteur est de chanter (et implicitement de chanter sa vie)... Bamby peut jouer le rôle de la femme fatale, aguicheuse, vulgaire, quasiment nue (c'est son droit)... ce n'est peut-être qu'un rôle pour elle mais pour les deux points de vue que j'ai émis, si elle joue vraiment un rôle, ben malheureusement pour elle, il ne sera pas perçu comme ça. Implicitement, l'opinion générale peut être celle de dire que c'est une chanteuse donc c'est comme ça qu'elle est et pas une actrice qui joue un rôle. (Mad'Aurel)

Today, there is a difficulty in differentiating between the singer and the person because, for a long time (and surely implicitly), society associates this type of artist with the daily life that they live. Basically, if he / if she sings that, it's because he / she represents that. This is how he / she is in his / her life. The singer reflects the person in everyday life. We do not think of a role, like how we do for an actor / actress. For them (actor / actress), the audience normally knows how to distinguish between the two (actor / person), since the very principle of an actor is to play a role, while that of a singer is to sing (and implicitly to sing about her life) ... Bamby can play the role of the femme fatale, seductive, vulgar, almost naked (it's her right) ... it may only be a role for her, but for both points of view that I just explained, if she really is playing a role, well unfortunately for her, it will not be perceived like that. Implicitly, the general opinion may be that she is a singer, so that is how she is and not an actress playing a role.

Similar to this audience member's response, Bamby reminds her audience that they should distinguish between performances and real-life actions and scenarios. In her comment to the public, she says:

Ne mettez pas sur mon dos l'éducation de vos enfants ! Je suis un exemple pour qui veut me prendre en exemple. Soit une bonne mère et tu verras que ton enfant pourrait faire la distinction entre l'art et la puterie ! Faites tourner ça aussi 🙄 #love. (Bamby's Instagram Story)

Do not put the education of your children on my back! I am an example for whoever wants to take me as an example. Be a good mother and you will see that your child could distinguish between art and sluttiness! And vice versa 🙄 #love.

She tells her audience that she expects them to differentiate between types of performances and understand her aesthetic choices. She expects her audience to distinguish between "art and sluttiness" and her performance (at the dancehall showcase) was an example of "art." Considering Goffman's work on the back and front stage and impression management, I acknowledge that Bamby is self-aware of her performance and her embodiment of dancehall and what it means to be and perform a "bad gyal" persona. The front here, refers to Bamby's "bad gyal" performance, since it involves the conscious performance of a persona who engages in non-normative sexuality, gender and fashion practices. Backstage refers to her being off stage and revealing her true self without the worry of being perceived by a public audience. Bamby's "bad gyal" persona should not necessarily be conflated to her "real persona" or her "real self." As a performer of dancehall, she expects that her audience will be able to respect her artistic choice and celebrate her confidence and sexual freedom.

Specta's question (if anyone would allow their daughters to see Bamby dressed in "a body string" at L'Atrium) specifically urged commenters to discuss slackness and how it positions Black women in French society. At the core of their conversations were similar discussions that all dancehall scholars have engaged with regarding slackness, respectability politics, and the woman's role as a role model for young girls even though her persona is strictly based on performing slackness. Commenting on slackness and female performers, commenter 971T-Kréyol974 says:

Après le Slackness n'est qu'une partie de ce qui compose le Dancehall... c'est un style de ragga purement pour divertir, faut même pas prendre ça au sérieux, c'est juste pour kiffer. Je ne pense pas que ça dégrade l'image de la femme, dans ces cas là les chanteur de slackness serait perçu aussi comme des pervers, des détraqués sexuelle. Et puis ok Dancehall slackness: Spice, Ishawna, Gaza slim, Shenseea, Bamby... Mais c'est pas forcément les premières à avoir fait des clips aussi chaud. Aux USA il y a eu madona à l'époque, maintenant Nicky, Miley...Je pense que c'est notre "culture commune

francophone" qui peut-être fait qu'on est "froissé" claire que sur panam une trapeuse ou rapeuse fr, ferait des clips comme ça, ... 😊 Quand c'est ailleurs on dit que c'est juste osé, alors pourquoi pas chez nous ? 😊 Faut désserer les fesses à un moment... 😊

Slackness is only part of what makes up Dancehall ... it's a style of ragga purely for entertainment, don't even take it seriously, it's just for fun. I do not think that it degrades the image of women, in these cases there the singer of slackness would be perceived also as a pervert, a sexual lunatic. And then ok Dancehall slackness: Spice, Ishawna, Gaza slim, Shenseea, Bamby... But they aren't necessarily the first to have made such sexy videos. In the USA there was Madonna at the time, now Nicky, Miley... I think it's our "common French-speaking culture that perhaps made us "feel uncomfortable." I'm sure that in Panam, there are female trap artists or female rappers who make clips like that... 😊 When it's somewhere else we say it's just daring, so why not with us? 😊 You have to loosen up sometime ... 😊

971T-Kréyol974 highlights that slackness is an essential part of dancehall and it does not degrade the image of women. He draws on contemporary Jamaican dancehall artists such as Spice, Ishawna, Gaza slim, and Shenseea who have, over the years, solidified their place in dancehall as "bad gyal," sex-positive artists, and as pro-female sexual liberation. The commenter also draws connections between slackness from Jamaica and slackness in the US context, drawing on artists like Madonna, Miley, and Nicki Minaj,¹²² who have all used their sexuality in similar ways. Additionally, the commenter concludes that perhaps it is their "common French-speaking culture" that makes them "feel uncomfortable" or uneasy with Bamby's performance of slackness. He reassures his French readers that there are also female trap artists in "Panam"¹²³ who dress and perform in an equivalent way. Even though, he did not mention any names, some notable examples are Shay, Le Juice, Vikcy R, and Davinhor. The commenter acknowledges global connections between female performers and how they choose to display their agency.

¹²² "Nicki is of Trinidadian heritage and draws specifically from dancehall and soca and the "bad gyal" trope.

¹²³ Slang name for Paris.

Slackness has to do with more than female representations of sexuality or engagement with sexual liberation. Slackness is an embodied phenomenon that underscores the importance of challenging all normative discourses. As previous scholars on dancehall have shown, these include normative discourses on language, race, color, class, gender, and sexuality. 971T-Kréyol974 mainly focuses on the aspect of slackness relating to sexuality and the performance of femininity. However, slackness offers Bamby an expansive politics of resistance that traverses multiple normative discourses.

Differing from 971T-Kréyol974's stance, Hotep Music argues that dancehall music denigrates black women. He says:

La musique actuelle ne fait que dénigrer la femme et particulièrement la femme noir, le peuple est toujours plongé dans l'aliénation Culturelle...

The current music only denigrates women and particularly black women, the people are still immersed in cultural and intellectual alienation.

Hotep's comment prompts me to consider the question: Can dancehall as a status-granting institution offers a true space of liberation for Black women? Any participant in dancehall music and culture knows that Bamby's provocative dress aligns with the genre conventions for women in dancehall, especially in terms of the centrality of the body and female sexuality. Her choice to *s'habiller sexy* follows other women artists in dancehall, such as Lady Saw, Spice, and Shenseea, hence her way of dressing is on par with what is expected in a dancehall performance. The key difference between Bamby's other performances and this specific one is the location of her performance. Performing her "bad gyal" persona in France meant that her setting had completely changed. She was no longer in La Guyane, where everyone knows and tolerates the genre conventions of dancehall. Hence, her French Caribbean audiences assumed that she would have altered her persona by dressing less sexy to conform to respectability politics. In general, the

"stage" or the context of performance typically informs the type of personal front one performs in a given context. Consequently, as a dancehall performer who stylizes the "bad gyal" persona, similarly to other performers in hip-hop or pop, the setting (Lattes) should not require her to alter her persona.

Bamby's audience expected her to represent them "well" rather than staying true to the persona that she created. The critiques of her style of *s'habiller sexy* highlight the double standards relating to gender, sexuality, and nationality that exist for both women and men in the French Caribbean and when they reside in mainland France. To *s'habiller sexy* to the extent that she did in France, to some, seems like an act of disrespecting French republican values and as a misrepresentation of Les Antilles-Guyane. Even though France has long been opened-minded when it comes to sex and nudity, the same cannot be said about its Overseas Departments and regions. Additionally, given that the French Caribbean and Black bodies have been historically positioned as Other, individuals are rightful, to an extent, in their questioning of Bamby's way of dressing.

Hotep's comment allows us to interrogate Black women's positionality in regard to being Black and a woman in France. As Mudimbe-Boyi (2012) says, to be Black and French signals binaries of similitude and difference, inclusion, and exclusion, belonging and non-belonging. What does it mean then to consider the significance of a Black female body such as Bamby's' scantily dressed in France? As Specta uproots Bamby's physical performance from Lattes and places it at L'Atrium, it opens a larger discussion on the possible anxieties of French Caribbean people regarding Bamby's embodied display of slackness. On one hand, we can note that Black people from the Antilles undergo an embodied, linguistic, and mental alienation associated with their view of France and Frenchness as Eldorado. Instead of valuing their ways of knowing and

being products of creolization, they sometimes see aspects of their culture as inferior to that of the dominant French culture. On the other hand, there is also apprehension about Frenchness and genuine concerns about how Black women's bodies may be perceived and the negative stereotypes associated with performers such as Bamby and others from her region.

France, through colonization and slavery, has a history of viewing Black bodies as excess and as products for its own wellbeing. Black bodies, particularly those of women, have been historically and systematically exoticized and hypersexualized. I use Robin Mitchell's *Vénus Noire* (2020) to conceptualize how Frenchmen and women have viewed Black women from the ancien regime through nineteenth-century France. In essence, Mitchell looks at "the eroticization of the black female body and the simultaneous need to disavow that body" through the retelling of stories about Sarah Bartmaann, Charlotte Catherine Benezet Ourika, and Jeanne Duval (25). Through science and popular culture, these women were Othered, exoticized, hypersexualized, and commodified in the French imaginary to assert a French identity grounded on exclusion and the inferiority of Black people.

Firstly, Mitchell talks about Sarah Bartmaann, otherwise known as Hottentot Venus. She was taken from South Africa, and her body was put on display in London. Her body shape, size, and inferred hypersexuality became a commodity for British spectators (Mitchell 2020). After her death in 1815, French surgeon Georges Léopold Cuvier examined her body, made a plaster cast of her body and pickled her genitalia and organs (Mitchell 2020).¹²⁴ Mitchell argues that Sarah "was a living, breathing embodiment of difference, both "scientifically" and in popular culture. Plays, periodicals, and artistic renderings... overtly sexualized and highlighted her racial

¹²⁴ It was available in the Musée de l'Homme until 1974. Her remains were eventually returned to South Africa in 2002

and gender differences... [She was] [h]ypervisible and hypersexualized...: the upper classes had the option of paying to view her privately, while the middle and working classes could view her only in more public settings" (84). Sarah Bartmann represents the first popularized, commodified, and scientific *Othering* of Black women's bodies in France.

Secondly, Mitchell draws on the popularized image of Charlotte Catherine Benezet Ourika, an enslaved little Senegalese girl who was given as a gift to a French family. Ourika, unfortunately, died young. However, her image survived in the French literary imaginary, particularly through Claire de Duras' (1823) novel *Ourika* (Mitchell 2020). With the varied plays and poems written about Ourika that surpass her actual age and the fabrication of an imaginary well-off life, Mitchell posits that "black bodies exist on French soil to enable French fantasies" (137). I would add that these fantasies suited the storytellers and their audience by enabling them to be exposed to a mediated kind of Blackness. This mediated exposure to Blackness meant that a Black woman like Ourika, even in fictional stories, could not marry outside of their race or achieve true happiness or success.

In contrast to how the two previous women were hypervisible in the eyes of the French, the third person that Mitchell examines is Jeanne Duval, Charles Baudelaire's mistress who experienced erasure. Even though descriptions and memories of her are present in Baudelaire's representation of her, his biographers tried to downplay her importance (Mitchell 2020). Mitchell argues that "[b]ecause Baudelaire's defenders could not find a way to incorporate Duval and other Black women into the definition of Frenchness, they demonized and expunged her from the record as much as possible" (133). Duval's erasure, Mitchell argues, should be seen as France's way of dealing with the aftermath of the abolition of slavery and their hypersexualized view of mulatto women.

In Mitchell's conclusion, she refers to Josephine Baker's famous performance of *La Danse de sauvage* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées where she wore her famous banana skirt. Mitchell draws on the actual words of the writer and director Jacques Charles of *La Danse de sauvage*. He says: "We need tits. These French people, with their fantasies of black girls, we must give them des nichons" (174). For Mitchell, this quote demonstrates:

the longstanding cultural exploitation of and fascination with black women's sexuality. *La Danse de sauvage* presented a curious and mesmerizing sight: an American dancer from St. Louis in a performance choreographed by a Frenchman in an attempt to represent darkest Africa. For the mere price of a ticket, the masses could see this interpretation of black female sexuality complete with animalistic qualities believed common in African women. (174)

Baker represents a modern representation of France's commodification of Black women's bodies. Additionally, throughout the years, as Mitchell shows, France's attitudes towards Black women have changed in that Black women have been afforded more freedom; however, certain racist and sexist discourses about them persist.

These four women and their representations in the French imaginary are all a part of what Sharpley-Whiting (1999) and Mitchell (2020) call the Black Venus trope or Narrative.

Commenting on the lineage of *Vénus Noire*, Brenda Gottschild (2016) says:

If Sara Baartman is at one end of the primitive spectrum, then Baker is at the opposite end. Both were objects of the white male gaze, ensnared in the primitive trope, but one symbolized abjection and the other agency. Baartman represented the (overtly) desexualized, gross Other: oversized, static, de-energized. Baker was marketed as a moving target of a sexual object: lithe limbs, fast-footed steps, animated face, and most of all, a brilliantly active ass. (157)

In essence, all the women previously mentioned were positioned as Other in the eyes of the white male gaze. Even with Baker, who had some amount of agency in her performances and presentation of herself, her Blackness and femininity were still positioned as hypersexualized and as a commodity. The direct connection between Josephine Baker and Bad Gyal Bamby is

striking. Positioning Bamby and her performance of slackness amongst this lineage of Black female bodies as commodities in France, I can locate the anxieties of some French Caribbean folks and commenters. What does it mean to be a Black French woman who is already exoticized and hypersexualized by the white French gaze because of persuasive negative stereotypes surrounding Black French Caribbean women? and what does it mean to be aware of this positionality and then choose to embody slackness and, more specifically, dress as Bamby did in a "body string"? The key difference, I argue, is the location and the audience for whom she performs. Bamby's performance was in Lattes at a dancehall stage show to celebrate all the successes that she had in music at that point in time. Furthermore, her performance was not for a white French audience but specifically for a French Caribbean audience. Additionally, by embracing her sexuality, Bamby decides to use slackness and her physical body as commodities that would benefit her financially. There is a difference between how the Black women who are a part of *Vénus Noire* narrative have been commodified and consumed by and in French media and French society and the way in which Bamby chooses to commodify herself. At any particular given time in history, the *Vénus Noire* existed for the benefit and the pleasure of others, specifically the white gaze. In dancehall, female pleasure, financial gains, and one's self-image are in the hands of "bad gyals" such as Bamby, who are performers of their persona. There is agency in choosing and deciding to be a "bad gyal" who embraces a radical politics of slackness that includes notions such as *s'habiller sexy*, embracing Creole language use, playing with gender roles, and asserting a racial identity rooted in Caribbean Blackness rather than conforming to respectability politics. Dancehall repels most outsiders who may want to consume it because it is too "raw." Hence its politics of agency will also be seen as "too much" to outsiders and to those who believe in maintaining the status quo.

6.6 The Evolution of the Bad Gyal

Bamby's discography includes songs with her and Jahyanai,¹²⁵ solo songs,¹²⁶ and international collaborations.¹²⁷ For the purpose of this section, I only discuss 11 of Bamby's songs: "Real Wifey," (2015) "Fa ba mo lè," (2016) "This Bwoy," (2016) "Fix Up," (2015) "Run di place," (2016) "Who mad again," (2017) "Bad from mi born," (2018) "Bag a Gyal," (2019) "Fuck it," (2019) "Sugar Daddy," (2019) and "Haffi Buss" (2021). I classify the evolution of her "bad gyal" persona into three categories: the Real Wifey phase, Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart phase, and Embodying the Bad Gyal phase. Additionally, I divide the Embodying the Bad Gyal phase in two, towards violence and in-group affiliation and towards sexual politics.

6.6.1 The Real Wifey Phase

The audience's uneasiness about Bamby's dress stems from how she marketed herself in the beginning stages of her career, particularly in her 2016 hit single, "Real Wifey," with Jahyanai King. The "wifey" vs. "matey" is a common trope in Jamaican dancehall music. In this dynamic, the "wifey" refers to a man's primary partner or perhaps even his wife, while the "matey" refers to the other woman with whom he chooses to cheat. This rivalry is similar to the side chick vs. main chick dynamic in hip-hop. However, there are key differences, particularly concerning the role of race and socioeconomic status. The matey/wifey dynamic pits two women against each other, as they quarrel and fight physically and lyrically. The battle between the two

¹²⁵ "Real Wifey" (2015), "Fix up" (2015), "Run di place" (2016), "Who mad again" (2017), and "Bag a Gyal" (2019).

¹²⁶ "Fa ba mo lè" (2016), "This Bwoy" (2016), "Bad from mi born" (2018), "Fuck it" (2019), "Sugar Daddy" (2019), "Downtown" (2020), and "Haffi Buss" (2021).

¹²⁷ Équilibré (2018), "Take control" (2018), and "French Guiana" (2020).

women highlights the women's positions in society, often alluding to their class, race/color, and their position in their partner's life. Lighter-skinned women are seen as more desirable and often are given the title or position of the wifey. In addition, the wifey is associated with a more consumable form of femininity, since she is assumed to be a part of a higher socioeconomic class than the matey. Given her background, she tends not to engage in activities that would get her "out of character;" however, to demand respect and show her privilege, she engages in dialogue with the matey in Bamby's version. The matey, on the other hand, is associated with low socioeconomic status, typically residing in the inner-city. She is usually of dark complexion and is often hypersexualized and seen as violent. In dancehall, the matey is typically associated with positive connotations in contrast with mainstream Jamaican opinions. Drawing on the work of Cooper (2004), Baston-Savage says that dancehall, for the matey, provides "a sexually liberating space... often freeing them of the moral shackles to which the middle-class attempts to bind them" (2007, 248). Since being a matey signifies that you have stolen another woman's man, she is often praised for her abilities.

In "Real Wifey," Bamby plays the role of the wifey. She presents herself as a respectable middle-class wifey who claims that

Real Wifey pa ka fight ova man.
[Real Wifeys never fight over men.]

As the music video begins, we discern her socio-economic class, since she and her partner (Jahyanai King) are owners of a two-story modern house with a pool in a posh neighborhood in Guyane. Additionally, unlike the outfit she wore in Lattes, she is dressed in a pencil skirt and a long sleeve crop top with heels. This can still be seen as *s'habiller sexy*; however, she is fully clothed. I understand *s'habiller sexy* to be on a spectrum as well as subjective. For some, one

person's choice of clothing may be "too much," and for others, it may be appropriate. In "Real Wifey," her clothing is seen as sexy but appropriate for the middle-class role she plays.

As the video continues, Bamby starts to hint at another identity that could challenge (lyrically and physically) her matey; her "bad gyal" persona. She does not explicitly say that she is a "bad gyal"; on the contrary, she still performs the wifey persona. In the first verse, Bamby exits the wifey persona and enters the world of the "bad gyal" when she says:

I ka pale, pale a yenk' sa yo prop.
[They can talk, they can talk, that's all they know how to do.]

Mé si yo vin tro porch momen m pa ké pale tròp.
[But if they approach me, I'm not going to do much talking.]

Given the expectation that a wifey is generally nonconfrontational, Bamby asserts her dominance by saying that she is ready to defend her place in her partner's life, if it comes down to it.

Using the concept of "Real Wifey" as Bamby's first commercialized persona, I focus here on how the wifey positions herself in society. The wifey associated with wealth, high fashion, and a higher social class positions herself as the "respectable" counterpart to the matey. The wifey is a signifier of all the positive values that her male counter values in a potential wife. She does not engage in lyrical or physical confrontation. Additionally, she does not explicitly engage in conversations on sex or her sexuality.

After releasing "Real Wifey" with Jahyanai, Bamby released "This Bwoy," her first solo song where she talks about being in love with someone she meets in Paris. Following the trope of the "wifey," she presents herself as a middle-class woman traveling through Paris who ends up meeting the love of her life and they explore Paris together. As an ode to her love, she tells him that she cannot live without him and that she is ready to fight for their love. She says:

This bwoy him a mek me feel right.
[This guy he makes me feel right.]

Me cyaan live without this bwoy.
[I can't live without this guy.]

Fi di real love me seh, me ready fi fight.
[For this real love, I say I'm ready to fight.]

Most of her lyrics are sung in Jamaican Creole except for the hook of the song. In Guyanais Creole, she says:

Si to bay mo love bay mo trust, bay mo respect.
[If you give me love, give me trust, give me respect.]

Nou tou lé dé pa ké gain pièss problème.
[We just need each other; we will have no problem.]

Si pa non Bwoy a pa meme la pèn.
[If no Bwoy, then it's not worth it.]

She explains to her partner that if he gives her the love and trust that she deserves, then he will have her utmost respect. Similar to "Real Wifey," the main object of desire of the wifey in "This Bwoy" is the love and respect of her partner. There is no explicit conversation on sex, sexuality, lyrical or physical confrontations. Additionally, Bamby's style of dress is similar to that of her "Real Wifey" persona. Throughout the "This Bwoy" music video Bamby wears three different outfits: 1. Black skinny jeans, a white V neck blouse, a brown fringe trim with fur lapel crop coat (brown and cream winter coat) with matching brown boots; 2. white skinny jeans, a white inside blouse, a black and white hoodie with black high heel boots and a Michael Kors bag, and 3. A blue pencil skirt with a matching blue off-the-shoulder crop top accompanied with a black leather jacket, and black heels. She continues to represent the "respectable" middle-class woman who is concerned about her status and potential love interest.

"Fa ba mo lè," her second solo single differs from both "This Bwoy" and "Real Wifey" in that the object of the song is no longer the need for male desire. The title translates to "Give me

way." In this song, Bamby talks about going out to the club and having a fun time with her girlfriends, specifically Caribbean gyal/girls. In the chorus, she says

Fo ba mo lè lè mo ka flas ké mo girl.
[Give me way when I'm flasking with my girlfriends.]

To ja savé ki a nou ka run di world...
[You already know it's us who runs the world.]

Caribbean gyal a nou ka run the world
[Caribbean girls we run the world.]

These lines complement the club setting of the video. Bamby and all the participants are dancing and whining. Essentially having a fun time in a dancehall space. Material wealth, high fashion, her appearance, and her fashion style are key themes throughout the song. Her choice of dress is also similar to the style of *s'habiller sexy* in the "Real Wifey" music video. She wears two outfits for this video: a pink close-fitted jumpsuit with spaghetti straps and black heels and then a brown crisscross ruched thigh-length dress showing her cleavage with black boots. Even though Bamby focuses on material wealth and Caribbean Gyals, which hint at the beginnings of her "bad gyal" persona, her aesthetics and lyrics still resemble the "respectable Real Wifey" trope. As she continues to push boundaries through other songs, we eventually see the emergence of her "bad gyal" persona.

In "Fa ba mo lè," Bamby refers to herself as a "bad gyal" as a specific deejay address for the first time. She says that she's the "bad gyal" who's making everyone go crazy. Even though she declares this, her aesthetic here is more comparable to that of the wifey. As she dances in a club and deejays, her music video and lyrics imply a tamed entry into the dancehall world. She says:

"Fresh koté diamond an pearl.
[Looking fresh with diamonds and pearls.]

Bad gyal ka bay yo mal tête.
[Bad gyal making them go crazy.]

Yo jis ka palé mal mè nou piès pa enlè yé.
[They just talk bad about us ; we don't have any place for them.]

É si yo disrespect mo ka represent girl
[And if they disrespect, I am representing girl.]

In Jamaican Creole, to be "Fresh" has multiple connotations. On one hand, it is similar to the African American Vernacular English, referring to one's appearance, wearing new clothes or a well-put-together outfit.¹²⁸ On the other hand, in Jamaican Creole, it also connotes someone who is unruly or rude.¹²⁹ Bamby highlights that her club aesthetic looks "fresh," as well as that she has material wealth with the evocation of her diamonds and pearls. Calling herself a "bad gyal," it is clear that her wealthy aesthetic is what makes people go crazy. When she says,

And if they disrespect, I'm representing girl.

I take it as a show of her confidence and willingness to show off her material wealth through her clothing and not a lyrical or physical confrontation. In essence, the "bad gyal" for her here reflects the non-confrontational style of a wifey. In this song, she specifically calls on Caribbean girls who "run di world" to have fun in the dancehall space. I consider this song as an open invitation to Caribbean women to identify with the lifestyle that she sings about.

6.6.2 Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's Counterpart Phase

The next phase in the evolution of Bamby's "bad gyal" persona is the Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart phase. In this phase, she begins to embody the "bad gyal" persona in

¹²⁸ Like the Fresh Prince of Bel-air (Will Smith).

¹²⁹ See website here:

[https://jamaicans.com/fresh/#:~:text=fresh%20\(Verb\),who%20is%20rude%20or%20unruly.](https://jamaicans.com/fresh/#:~:text=fresh%20(Verb),who%20is%20rude%20or%20unruly.)

her songs "Fix up," "Run di place," and "Who Mad Again" with Jahyanai King. In the chapter on theoretical considerations, I gave two definitions of a bad gyal." The first definition is important in this section: the "bad gyal" as the metaphorical and literal counterpart of the rude bwoy. As Jahyanai King presents himself as the "rude bwoy" or "rude king," Bamby represents his partner in crime throughout all of these and future songs that they make together. They draw on the notion of the dancehall camp/crew and draw on discourses pertaining to turf, rivalry, lyrical and physical violence.

In the Rude Empire Music group, Jahyanai King is the leader, a role from which he supports and guides younger Guyanais artists. Bamby simultaneously represents (at this stage of her "bad gyal" persona's evolution) someone who is under his tutelage while at the same time being his counterpart, the "bad gyal." "Fix up" was the second song that Jahyanai and Bamby released together, and it took on a different image than their first song, "Real Wifey." "Fix up," in general, refers to a problem being sorted out or solved. Both Bamby and Jahyanai assert their reluctance to engage with rival groups on turf and crew conflicts. Bamby says:

Fix up.
[Let's sort this out/Make yourself small/ make way.]

Toute problème gain pou fix up.
[All issues have to be sorted out.]

Allé déryè nou pa ka mix up.
[Get behind, let's not start any problems.]

Ahha, yow Kenny, Pass mi di Henny.
[Hey Kenny, pass me some Hennessy.]

Declaring that this song is indeed about allegiances, Jahyanai says:

To ékip a to ékip.
[Your crew is your crew.]

Nou équipe a nou pa.

[Our crew is our crew.]

Pa Vini confund to équipe ké nou pa.

[Don't confuse your crew with our crew (We aren't the same).]

He asserts that his "ékip," Rude Empire, is not your squad, talking to an imaginary "you." This "you" could refer to other Music label groups or individuals who he has had conflicts within the past. He reminds this "you" that they should not confuse their squad, hinting at a stance that asserts that his group is undoubtedly better than the other group. Bamby follows by expanding on his assertion. She says:

To savé an nou ékip nou gain real murderas.

[You know that our squad has real murderas.]

Nou gain real bad gyals ki font di Rude Empire...

[We have real bad gyals who make up the rude empire.]

Nou gain di real bad man nou font Rude Empire

[We have real bad man; we make rude empire.]

She affirms that in their squad, they have "real muderas." The phrase in Jamaican Creole could mean that they are actual murderers or simply individuals who could challenge anyone in a sound clash and win. Thus, destroying their reputation; murdering them. In essence, a "murdera" can refer to someone who has either a physical or a lyrical gun and is ready to kill or defend themselves lyrically. Additionally, she states that their squad has real "bad gyals," referring to herself, and real "bad man," referring to Jahyanai. In sum, both she and Jahyanai make up this crew with "real murderas" called Rude Empire. In dancehall, the physical and lyrical gun or violence is thought of as a symbol of masculinity and power. The glamorization of violence compliments the "rude bwoy" aesthetics since they are often seen as "Robin Hood" figures or "Gangstas" (Hope 2006). Bamby draws on this aesthetics of violence and masculinity, to stylize herself as a "bad gyal" and Jahyanai's partner in crime.

The next song in this phase is "Run di Place." It is Bamby and Jahyanai's most viewed song on YouTube, with over thirty-four million views. Bamby and Jahyanai say that they both "Run di Place," which means they control their geographical location or crew. Additionally, they both explicitly talk about their sexual attraction and sexual experience with each other. For example, Bamby says:

A Bad gyal Bmby ki ka run di place.
[It's Bad gyal who control this place.]

Mo lé tout les form an whine up yuh waist.
[I want everybody in form, whine up yuh waist.]

Ya patché ki palé mé yo sa di actress
[There are a lot of ppl who talk but they are all fakes.]

After asserting that she is the one who "run di place," she urges people, more than likely women, to get up and dance/whine. Given that both Bamby and Jahyanai talk explicitly about sex in this song, I understand "run di place," as both of them being in charge of their turf as well as an example of them talking about their sexual prowess. As the song continues, Jahyanai compliments Bamby's body and asks her where she gets her good genes. She responds by saying that she inherited it from her mother, as she says:

Mi get it from mi mummy and mi know yuh like dat.
[I got it from my mum.]

while she gestures to her vagina. A common response by women in dancehall to when someone refers to one's sexual prowess is to gesture to one's vagina. Sometimes, deejays will give a command like "pat up yuh front" or "pat up yuh pumpum." Both commands translate to "point to your vagina" and urge women to gesture to their sex organs as they dance as a signal of agreement. Hence, Bamby tells Jahyanai that her body/genes come from her mother, and she

knows that he enjoys having sexual intercourse with her. Bamby continues the song by praising Jahyanai's sexual prowess in bed in addition to advocating for her sexual desires. She says:

To cocky good,
[Your dick is good.]

Bwoy mi love dat enuh.
[Bwoy I love that enuh.]

Mo obligé pa to s'arrete kou domino enuh.
[I don't want you to stop, like playing dominoes.]

Lyrically, "Run di Place" represents Bamby's first explicit showcase of her sexuality and sexual desires in song.

Coupled with her lyrics, Bamby wears numerous revealing outfits throughout this music video. She wears a red lace lingerie dress that shows her breasts with black heels, a strapless bodysuit covered in diamond studs with transparent plastic heels, a black body suit with a mustard long jacket with a black hood with high heel boots, and black booty shorts with a yellow bralette. Booty shorts are known as "pumpum" shorts in Jamaican Creole, where "pumpum" is the word for vagina. "Pumpum" shorts is a common clothing choice for women in Jamaican dancehall spaces. In this music video, Bamby's *s'habiller sexy* signifies her first attempt at dressing like a "bad gyal" rather than a real wifey.

The last song in this phase is "Who Mad Again," Bamby and Jahyanai's second most successful song with over twenty-nine million views. Following the theme of "Fix Up," Bamby and Jahyanai both talk about their Rude Empire Music group. The song's title is a question: "Who mad again?" meaning "Who's upset now?" Hence throughout the song, the duo pledges their allegiance to their Rude Empire Music group and states why they are the best as they drive and deejay in the desert (see the previous chapter for a more in-depth description). Directly answering the question, Bamby says,

Dem betta kno a we a run bou ya.
[They should know who controls this zone.]

Empire run bou ya.
[Empire controls this zone.]

"Dem" here refers to the persons who are upset at Rude Empire's success and jealous that they control their turf. To reassure this "dem" of Rude Empire's position, Bamby says:

Bonnie and Clyde inna di business.
[We are just like Bonnie and Clyde.]

Pa ka pédi nou temps ké foolishness.
[We can't waste our time with foolishness.]

But wi nuh business.
[But we don't care.]

Mo savé yo piès pa pli bad ki mo shoes lace.
[I know they aren't even as bad as my shoelace.]

She refers to both herself and Jahyanai as Bonnie and Clyde, alluding to the famous American criminal duo during the 1930s. They were known for their various robberies of banks, the murders that they committed throughout their escapades, their use of rifles, and fleeing crime scenes in a fast 1934 Ford V8. The "Who Mad Again" music video alludes to this history, seeing that it begins with Bamby and Jahyanai in a runaway vehicle being chased by a different crew.

Additionally, Bamby says:

To savé ki a empire ki ka run di street.
[You know Empire controls these streets.]

Yé toute ka vine fou.
[Making them all go mad.]

Ké ka mandé pou feat.
[They will be asking for a feature.]

Paske chaque son nou ka soti nou ka pété full teeth.
[Because every song we release is a hit.]

Not only does Bamby refer to the fact that Rude Empire controls the zone through which they are driving, but they also produce the best songs. Hence, other music groups or artists want to collaborate to make new music.

Bamby's clothing choice in this video also resembles the bad gyal *s'habiller sexy* style. She wears three outfits: a black mesh jumpsuit with floral patterns with black heels accompanied with one black and one heart-shaped gold nipple covering, black pumpum shorts with a black V-neck leather halter top and light green high-heel boots and black leather pants, gold chain in the shape of a bra covering her breasts with a black feather as a shoulder pad and black boots accompanied with two heart-shaped nipple coverings. Bamby's first outfit in the mesh jumpsuit is quite similar to what she wore in Lattes, France. The only difference was that the floral patterns in this jumpsuit covered parts of her body a bit more. In sum, Bamby's lyrical content in "Who Mad Again" echoes the premise of "Fix Up," and her aesthetic choices reflect that of "Run di Place."

6.6.3 Embodying the Bad Gyal Phase: Towards Lyrical and Physical Confrontation

Throughout the previously mentioned songs, Bamby has primarily played the role of the Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart. In this phase, which I call Embodying the Bad Gyal,¹³⁰ Bamby truly embraces slackness drawing on both the sexual and confrontational politics of being a "bad gyal." Even though Bamby hints at a combative persona in "Real Wifey" when she is arguing with her matey, it was not until her later solo singles and other singles with Jahyanai that she began to stylize her "bad gyal" persona. The version of herself as a wifey that

¹³⁰ Includes the songs "Bad From Mi Born," "Bag A Gyal," "Sugar Daddy," "Fuck It" and "Haffi Buss."

she exhibited in the 2016 "Real Wifey" had completely changed by 2018, the year that she performed in Lattes France in a "body string." By that time, she had already produced songs such as "Fix Up," "Run di place," and "Who Mad Again" that illustrated aspects of her "bad gyal" persona. The complete shift and moment that I argue solidified her "bad gyal" persona aesthetically and lyrically has to do with the release of her solo song "Bad from mi born." It solidified her position as Guyane's very own Bad gyal.

The song's title pays tribute to another dancehall song of the same name by Munga Honourable. Similar to Munga's first lines that reads:

Mi bad from mi born.
[I've been a "bad man" since birth.]

And that's why mi gwaan so.
[That's why I act the way I do.]

in Bamby's first lines of "Bad From mi born," she says:

Everybody kno mi bad from mi bawn.
[Everyone knows that I've been a "bad gyal" since birth.]

Mo pa pè pèson, bad gyal a so mi tan.
[I am not afraid of anyone, I'm a bad gyal that's just how I am.]

The main idea that the song conveys is that Bamby is undoubtedly a "bad gyal" and that she is always prepared for a sound clash or a physical fight, lyrical or physical confrontation. Talking to a hypothetical "to" the Guyanais Creole word for "you," she says:

To ka chez les bad, lò to ka bougé ké to gang.
[You are always with bad gyals when you are hanging with your girls.]

Lò nou ké wè tèt, to pa kaché.
[When we see each other, you can't hide .]

Sur snapchat facebook, ni dèyè to fucking iPhone.
[Behind Snapchat, Facebook, or your fucking iPhone.]

Bad gyal mi name, a action pou action.

[I'm a bad gyal, I only respond to action (one-on-one fights).]

Mo ké fèt to gang, fèt pou subtraction,
[I'm going to make your crew get rid of you.]

A mo ké chap up to face all day kou fraction.
[when I cut up your face in multiple fractions.]

Toute mounne ké rélé: Haffi fi dead.
[Everyone is gonna scream because you have to die.]

To this hypothetical "to," Bamby gives a warning and tells her what will happen when they see each other and fight one-on-one. Drawing on violence, she states that she will make the woman's crew get rid of her and cut her face up into fractions. Hence, "action pou action" will lead to someone's death. Highlighting another instance of her readiness for physical violence, Bamby states:

Bad gyal buss a blank.
[As a bad gyal, I'm shooting shots.]

One fi di powa.
[The first in homage to power.]

Two fi di family.
[The second in homage to family.]

An Three fi di dolla.
[And third in homage to money.]

Dem a talk a bagga talk.
[They talk a big game.]

Yuh kno seh dem a coward...
[You know they are only cowards.]

Mek mi bus one inna yuh belly.
[Let me fire a shot in your belly.]

Four, Five inna yuh farid...
[The fourth and fifth shot in your forehead...]

Rifle attack, no mi nuh nyam sorry.

[My rifle will attack; I don't want any apologies.]

Here, she draws on the expression "buss a blank," meaning to point one's finger in the air in the shape of a gun while mimicking the sound that a gun makes when it is fired. This gesture typically signals agreement. In this case, the shots may be symbolic or real. The first three metaphorical or real gunshots pay homage to power, family, and money. While the other two are violent actions towards someone.

In contrast to the possible real gun, Bamby then specifically refers to the lyrical confrontation, using the lyrical gun. She says:

Dem tink seh dem bad dem a talk bout badness.
[They think that they are bad, so they are talking about badness.]

Di wol a dem a fake dem. Dem a dem a actress...
[They are all fake. They are all actresses...]

A seh to God, dem nuh badda dan mi shoelace.
[I swear to God, they aren't even as bad as my shoelace.]

Cya see no waste gyal pan mi tracklist...
[You can't find any stupid/unworthy girl on my tracklist...]

An mi rise up di cannon. Di wol a dem gwan unda dirt.
[When I hold up my cannon, all of them are dead.]

Her cannon represents her lyrical gun as she uses her rhymes and lyrics to humble those who may challenge her. Additionally, she states that "no waste gyal," which means stupid or unworthy girl, is visible on any of her music collaborations or is a part of her Rude Empire team. Interestingly, Bamby has not collaborated with other female artists even though she has collaborated with numerous male artists both at home and internationally.

In addition to Bamby's lyrical content, aesthetically, she draws on a style of *s'habiller sexy* that incorporates both the real wifey form of *s'habiller sexy* and the bad gyal form. In the initial part of the music video, she wears a long white one-shoulder bodycon dress with black

high heels, which resembles the more elegant and upper-class "Real Wifey" aesthetic. In her other outfits, she wears leather in a variety of colors as well as her clothing is more revealing and close-fitted. Her four other outfits include a red leather sleeveless turtleneck bodysuit with red leather high heel boots and red leather gloves, a black leather romper with black heels, a black and red leather jumpsuit, and red leather boots, and a white body suit with a laser-cut top and white socks. In sum, the "Bad From Mi Born" music video and song crystallized Bamby's claim as a Bad Gyal, lyrically and aesthetically.

The next song in this section, "Bag A Gyal," draws on themes similar to those discussed in "Bad From Mi Born" and highlights Bamby's sexual desires. Sung as a deejay duet with Jahyanai, both he and Bamby talk about being in a dancehall party, having fun, and representing their Rude Empire Music group. The title of the song translates to "So many women." On one hand, Jahyanai is singing about having plenty of women in the dancehall party and Bamby is singing about being the best of them all, and on the other hand, they are singing about not fearing anyone in the party and/or anyone who is not a part of their crew. Jahyanai sings:

Bad Gyal Bamby, we a do crime.
[Bad Gyal Bamby, we are committing the crimes.]

We a dweet, a dweet from morning till di night.
[We commit crimes from morning until night.]

Every every time, anytime.
[Every day and anytime.]

Dem lost from longtime.
[They have been clueless forever.]

Whine yuh body.
[So, whine/dance.]

Referring to Bamby as Bad Gyal Bamby, he reminds her that they are always committing crimes similar to the Bonnie and Clyde reference in "Who Mad Again," but tonight she should enjoy herself and dance. In Bamby's response, she says:

Gal a whine innah di bloodclaat town.
[Girls whining in the fucking town.]

We nah fear nuh body innah di bloodclaat town.
[We aren't afraid of anyone in this fucking town.]

Bag a gal innah di bloodclaat town.
[So many women in this fucking town.]

We nah fear nah body innah di bloodclaat.
[We aren't afraid of anyone in this fucking place.]

Essentially, she states that even though there are quite a few women in the party, possibly from other crews, she is not afraid of them. She knows that she came to the party with her partner and crew to have fun. More specifically, she states that she only came to the party to "whine" and have a fun time. She continues by saying that she is ready to dance with someone, most likely Jahyanai. Giving him instructions, she says:

Si to gen to stay mo bligé vini pren backshot.
[If you have to stay, I'm obliged to take backshots.]

Dutty mouth ki ka tal, ye gen pou stop dat.
[Filthy mouths always talking, they have to stop that.]

Non, mo pa gain time sa mo bison a bon backshot.
[No, I don't have time, give me a good backshot.]

To bien savé bad gal pa o fond long talk
[You already know Bad gyals don't like talking (just action).]

Aesthetically, I consider the "Bag A Gyal" music video to be both Jahyanai's and Bamby's most daring video yet. The video is set in a hall with an imperial staircase.¹³¹ The video

¹³¹ A smaller version of the *Escalier des Ambassadeurs* at the Palace of Versailles.

starts with everyone on the ground floor dancing while both Bamby and Jahyanai are walking down the staircase. Bamby is dressed in a long back ballroom gown with gold sequins and an elaborate hairstyle. In the back, she wears a long-crimped weave along with a headpiece made from smaller circular black braids with a sunflower in the center of each small circle. It is topped off with a large circular shape made from black braids with a golden circular spiral in the inner layer of the circular braid. The next scene is in a bathroom where Bamby is sitting in a bathtub presumably naked. She is topless and uses her hands to cover her breast as she sings. In this scene, she wears her hair in an afro made from straight hair with a flower of assorted colors. In the scenes where she dances, she wears a black long-sleeve leather body suit with Fendi tights and black heels, and a curly wig. Her clothing, here, resembles the previously discussed examples of Bad Gyal style. The last outfit she wears is a blue-grey mesh bodysuit with a chapel train and the same wig she wore in the third outfit change. Her first outfit in the ballroom gown and her last outfit in the mesh bodysuit with a chapel train show how she is trying to merge her two previous forms of *s'habiller sexy*, in regard to *s'habiller sexy* like a Real Wifey and *s'habiller sexy* like a Bad Gyal. Her middle outfits are more revealing and lean more on the bad gyal aesthetic. Her second clothing (or no clothing) choice is bold as she confidently shows her almost nude body on camera and says:

Mo body tun up every time, every every time.
[My body is desirable all the time.]

Bad Gyal a wicked cause me sick innah me mind.
[As a Bad Gyal, I am wild because I'm crazy.]

Man testify.
[Men have testified.]

Bamby design.
[Me, Bamby, I designed it.]

Body good.
[My body looks beautiful.]

Body right, haffi fine.
[My body looks good, it has to be perfect.]

This music video shows how Bamby uses her clothing and hairstyle choice to embody her "bad gyal" persona, while also illustrating how she tries to mix and cross boundaries in regard to *s'habiller sexy* and respectability politics.

Unlike in her other music videos, Bamby's hairstyles vary significantly throughout this music video. Typically, she either straightens her hair or wears her natural curls as she did in "Real Wifey." However, in this case, she draws on three distinct hairstyles to stylize her persona. Maynard and Jules (2021) argue that for Black people, "hair is deeply symbolic, having spiritual and religious meanings, playing an essential sociocultural role, and, at other times, serving as a mode of personal self-expression" (7). Additionally, as an open signifier "all black hairstyles are political in that they each articulate responses to the panoply of historical forces which have invested this element of the ethnic signifier with both symbolic meaning and significance" (Tate 2007, 303). Bamby's first hair choice was in the shape of a crown made of braids. In addition to Bamby's black and gold ballroom gown outfit, in this first outfit, she stylizes herself as a Queen, particularly a dancehall queen or the queen counterpart to a King, the Rude King. In her second outfit choice, she wears an afro with flowers. Along with this hairstyle and her nudity, she stylizes herself as a natural beauty. In addition, every time we see this image, she sings about her body being perfect as she says, "Mo body tun up every time." Her third and fourth outfit choices were accompanied by a curly black wig, which both reflect her previous aesthetic styles for the "bad gyal" persona.

In sum, this first part of the Bad Gyal phase highlights the Bad Gyal's concern with lyrical and physical violence as well as her aesthetic evolution. Bamby asserts herself as a Bad Gyal who is more than just the Rude Bwoy's counterpart, she asserts herself as a standalone persona. She stylizes herself as someone who is capable of protecting and defending herself. Additionally, this persona displays Bamby's sexuality and her positive stance on female pleasure.

6.6.4 Embodying the Bad Gyal Phase: Towards a Sexual Politics

The second half of the Bad Gyal phase consists of Bamby approach to sexual liberation for herself and possibly for French Caribbean women. The songs that I discuss in this section are "Sugar Daddy," "Fuck It," and "Haffi Buss." This evolution of her Bad Gyal persona represents explicit conversations on sex, sexuality, and sexual desires. In comparison to her original debut as a Real Wifey, in these songs, Bamby moves further away from that the postulation that Real Wifey does not engage in a lyrical or physical confrontation or explicit conversations on sex. Differing from most of the songs that I have previously discussed, except for aspects of "Bag A Gyal," in these songs Bamby draws heavily on a politics of sexual slackness.

In the song "Sugar Daddy," Bamby talks about calling her sugar daddy and fulfilling his sexual desires. The relationship between a sugar daddy and a sugar baby is often thought of as an example of transactional sex through sugaring. Rakić (2020) defines "sugaring" as "a type of transactional relationship in which one person in the transaction may receive material benefits (e.g., money, gifts) in exchange for being in the relationship" (1208). At the same time, a sugar daddy is defined as "a man who provides material benefits to the sugar baby" and a sugar baby as the person "who receives material benefits by sugaring" (1209). These romantic arrangements typically involve older men in some partnership with younger women. Whether formally or

informally, all the expectations for the sugar baby and the sugar daddy are disclosed. For instance, a sugar daddy may require the sugar baby's "availability for dinners, travel, and, in some cases a sexual relationship," while the sugar baby might require "housing (e.g., a condo rental), transportation (e.g., a car), clothing/food allowances, a stipend, and even funding for college tuition" (Mixon 2019, 959).

Regarding my earlier conversation on the narrative of the *Vénus Noire*, on the one hand, the trope of the sugar baby can be problematized as an example of how (in this example) Bamby's body is commodified and seen as consumable by a male audience. On the other hand, through Bamby's lyrics, she demonstrates that she consents to this romantic arrangement and is in fact endowed with agency. Hence, she is not a voiceless or powerless woman throughout the process. She starts "Sugar Daddy" with the lines:

Taxi phone fi call Sugar Daddy.
[Taxi phone to call my Sugar Daddy.]

Gi u One phone call me want see u body.
[Give you a single phone call, I want to see your body.]

Mo lé whine n kotch pou to Sugar daddy.
[I want to whine and kotch (a version of whining) for you Sugar daddy.]

Bay to straight Back shot yeah my sugar daddy
[Give you rounds of backshots, yes my sugar daddy.]

She decides to call her sugar daddy and tell him how she would like to please him sexually and dance for him. In her first verse, she says:

Dancehall ka joué.
[When dancehall music is playing]

Dem know who me a whine pon.
[They know who I'll choose to dance with.]

Savé I kantan lo mo k up down up down up down.
[I know he likes when I go up and down, up, and down, up, and down.]

Empire settingz from up town down town.
[This is the Rude Empire crew from uptown downtown.]

Bad gal from French Guyana ka run town.
[Bad Gyal Bamby controls this town.]

Here, she states that when she parties, everyone knows who her partner is, her sugar daddy.

Therefore, when she dances, she can only dance with him. She then shifts the song's focus from her dance moves to remind us that she is a part of the Rude Empire crew and that she is Guyane's very own Bad Gyal. She does this to remind us that, similarly to how as a Bad Gyal, she "run di town," she is still in control of any situation she consents to be in. Interestingly, however, that line is followed by:

Oh yeah u a control me.
[Oh yeah, you are controlling me.]

To konèt bay bet- a cause u know me.
[You know I give you the pussy because you know me.]

Here, she assures her sugar daddy that he is in control. This is then followed by her giving him commands on how best to please her sexually, indicating that she is the one who is actually in control as she gives orders. Talking to other possible love interests as well as her sugar daddy, in the second verse, she says:

Yeah me know dem vex me know dem vex.
[Yeah, I know they are upset, know they are upset.]

Guyanese Gyal a ka bay yo complexe.
[Guyanese Gyal making them confused....]

Bad Gal Bamby ka bay yo mal tête.
[Bad Gyal Bamby making their heads hurt.]

She reiterates that she is a Bad Gyal from Guyane, which means that her position as a bad gyal and her beauty make people talk about her enviously. In addition, it also reminds us that she controls her turf and the people located there (could be a city in particular or Guyane).

As Bamby continues her conversation on sexual intercourse with her sugar daddy, she makes an interesting confession. She says:

Me seh one man pon mi pumpum.
[I say only one man can have sex with me.]

Stay far me put u innah di friend zone.
[Stay far from me, I've placed you in the friend zone.]

Patché boug pensé ki à mo yo ka falla.
[A lot of guys think that I am the one following them.]

Mais fi yo saver pou mo yo sa dè Gyal clown.
[But they should know for me, they are only gyal clowns.]

Firstly, she states that she only engages in sexual intercourse with one partner at a time and that she is very selective in her choice. Secondly, to all the other guys who have shown interest in her, she verbally places them in the "friend zone." Lastly, she says,

Patché boug pensé ki à mo yo ka falla.
[A lot of guys think that I am the one following them.]

Mais fi yo saver pou mo yo sa dè Gyal clown.
[But they should know for me, they are only gyal clowns.]

Bamby reiterates the fact that she gives her sugar daddy a false sense of control in their sexual relationship, and she does so strategically. She knows that men often think of women as submissive, in this case, followers. However, she seems to be smarter than them. She considers all the men interested in her including her sugar daddy to be "gyal clowns." In Jamaican Creole, a "gyal clown" is a guy who, by choice, allows himself to be led by a woman. He will do whatever it takes to please her. He reprioritizes all aspects of his life to suit her, even if it means

that he will look "weak" to other men, undergo monetary loss, or look foolish. As Bamby sings to her sugar daddy and reassures him that he is the dominant one and she is submissive to him, we see that it is actually the other way around. As "gyal clowns," she considers these men to be individuals who she can easily manipulate because they fall for her beauty and sexual prowess.

The music video for "Sugar Daddy" is set in a recording studio. As Bamby deejays her song on the micro-phone, there are also scenes with her talking, drinking, and dancing with her girlfriends. In this video, her *s'habiller sexy* style resembles her style in videos like "Who Mad Again" and "Bad From mi born." More specifically, she only wears one outfit: a long-sleeved black jumpsuit with a Fendi belt along with a black and white sneaker throughout the video.

The song "Fuck It" follows similar themes to "Sugar Daddy." Bamby tells her partner that she is the one who decides where and when they can have sexual intercourse. Throughout the song, she talks about ownership of her body and through her lyrics, she demonstrates her agency as she informs her partner that no one controls her but herself. She says:

Fo pa to vèx si mo pa bay bèt-a.
Don't be upset if I don't let you have my pussy.]

Pumpum a mine, a mo ka run bèt-a.
[This pussy is mine, it's me who controls my pussy.]

Seulement si to saj to ké gain bèt-a.
[Only if you are wise, you will have my pussy.]

Si mo pa di yes savé to pé pa.
[If I don't say yes, then you can't have it.]

She affirms that her "pumpum" belongs to her only and that one should not get upset if she says no. Additionally, she says that she will only choose to partake in sexual intercourse with someone who is wise and patient. She draws on both the Jamaican Creole "pumpum" and the Guyanais Creole "bèt-a" to describe her genitalia interchangeably. Typically, Bamby chooses the

Jamaican Creole word "pumpum" to refer to her genitalia. Consistently throughout this song (and one instance in "Sugar Daddy"), Bamby uses the Guyanais Creole word "bèt-a," indicating that she has evolved from using Jamaican Creole solely when referring to sexually explicit words or content.

In the next verse, Bamby engages with discourse on consent. She declares that she has full bodily autonomy and decides who her sexual partner will be and when they will ask. She says:

Bwoy turn mad cuz him wan fuck it.
[This guy is driving himself crazy because he wants to fuck me.]

A mo ka désidé si to ké fuck it...
[It's me who decides who will fuck me.]

To tro komik, you fi stop it.
[You're too funny. You should stop it.]

The most important statement from these lyrics is Bamby's declaration that she is the only one who can decide if her love interest will get a chance to have sex with her. Continuing, she says:

My pumpum a mine, fo to byen mété sa an to tèt a no lie.
[My pussy belongs to me; you should really put that into your head, I am telling the truth.]

Byen savé to pa pé desidé cuz a mine.
[Really understand that you can't decide because it belongs to me.]

To pa gain pyès control...
[You have no control...]

A mo ka control to brain ké mo nani.
[I control your brain with my pussy.]

She reiterates the fact that her "pumpum" belongs to her and the decision to engage in any form of intimacy is up to her. Additionally, she talks about the power she has over her love interest because she seems to control his mind with her vagina. More specifically, she says:

A mo ka control to brain ké mo nani.
[I control your brain with my pussy.]

Interestingly, in this example, Bamby draws on another word that means "vagina" in Jamaican Creole, "nani." This indicates that she is familiar with the varied ways of talking about a woman's sex organ in dancehall and that her Jamaican Creole vocabulary has grown.¹³²

Bamby's clothing style in this music video reflects a *mélange* between *s'habiller sexy* as a Real Wifey and as a "bad gyal." In the initial part of the video, she is in a bedroom as her partner wakes up and demands sex. In this scene, she wears a white crop tank top, black and white tights with furry heels as she pets a white cat. She teases her love interest but decides not to have sex. As the music video continues, she wears a dark teal pants suit, gold chain bralette as an inside shirt, and golden jewelry around her waist with gold high heels as she leaves to go to work. At her office, she commences a dance routine. For her last outfit, she is in the kitchen with her love interest after coming from work. Here, she wears a black mesh jumpsuit with jewelry stitched leaves that cover her breasts and genitalia similar to the other jumpsuits that she has worn before. Each outfit that she wore was revealing in some way and leaned more on the *s'habiller sexy* like a Bad Gyal style, even though she did incorporate a pants-suit. The music video ends with Bamby telling her love interest "Yes" and then an end credit comes across the screen that says:

C'est quand on a appris à dire non, que le oui prend toute sa valeur
It is when we have learned to say no, that our yes gains true value.

The next song in this phase is called "Haffi Buss." The title is a double entendre.

Typically, when dancehall artists use the phrase "haffi buss," they are saying that they have to make it big in the music industry. Here, "haffi" means "have to" and to "buss" means to have a

¹³² There are around 53 ways of describing a woman's sexual organ in Jamaican Creole. See YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pquS6QLpYE8>.

"big break." Contrastingly, "buss" can also refer to the English definition of the word "burst." In this example, the other meaning is most likely referring to male ejaculation. In essence, the main theme of this song is about sexual intercourse with the aim being both Bamby and her love interest attaining sexual climax. At the same time, "Haffi Buss" was the first song that Bamby released on her own YouTube channel. Prior to "Haffi Buss," all her other singles were released on Jahyanai's YouTube account. Hence, this single was also representative of her attempt to branch out on her own as an artist. So, using the words "Haffi Buss" for her first solo released song was also her declaration that she has to be successful.

Bamby starts "Haffi Buss" with a conversation with her love interest telling him that whenever she is around, he should get off his phone. She says:

When di bad gyal come, to gain pou éteint di phone.
[When the bad gyal arrives, you need to shut off your phone.]

She reassures her love interest that when he is with her, he is guaranteed to be pleased as she says:

You haffi buss yeah
[You have to climax.]

In addition to reassuring him, she continues the song by giving him instructions on how he should please her. She says:

Bwoy get ready mi a come.
Bwoy, you should get ready; I'm about to climax.]

Tek yuh time, to bien savé mo pa gen run
[Take your time; you already know, I don't have to run.]

Mi tell yuh seh "mi got it from mi born."
[I told you. I've just always been this good.]

Mo body sick tjenbé red si to palé come.
[My body is perfect, stand firm if you say you're coming.]

As the song continues, Bamby lists all the things she would like to do for her love interest. For instance, she says:

Mo lé ride to big bike every day (every day) ...
[I will ride your big bike every day.]

Mo lé nou fey Monday to Sunday.
[I want us to do it from Monday to Sunday.]

Essentially, Bamby engages in conversation about her partner's sexual needs and explicitly states how she will engage in sexual intercourse. Although this indexes her preoccupation with sexual prowess, Bamby highlights the need for reciprocation. More specifically, even though the song talks about her partner reaching climax, Bamby refuses to do so at the expense of her own pleasure. For instance, in the second half of the chorus, she says:

Bwoy get ready mi a come.
Bwoy, you should get ready; I'm about to climax.]

Baby bwoy, to bien savé mo pa gen run.
[Baby boy; you already know, I don't have to run.]

Mo sa to bad gyal, no mo pa gen run.
[I am your bad gyal, I don't have to run.]

Dem fi know mi a di queen, mi haffi come
[They should know that I am the Queen, and I have to climax as well.]

Even as she concerns herself with her partner's pleasure, she still prioritizes her own. She reminds him that she is the "Queen," hence her sexual needs should be met. Additionally, instead of being passive and submissive, Bamby asserts herself as the dominant sexual partner in this song. Not only does she set the stage for her and her partner's experience as she does at the beginning of the song, but she guides both of them through the experience by giving him instructions. Bamby's positionality as a woman who embraces her sexuality and sexual desires aligns with slackness discourse in songs done by other female dancehall artists.

Bamby's *s'habiller sexy* style in this music video resembles a bricolage of her fashion interests that have been previously mentioned. In the initial scenes, she wears a sleeveless turtleneck gold bodysuit with a golden fringe hem and gold anklets. For her second outfit, she wears a black leather bralette and underwear with black mesh tights with gold chains around her waist. For her fourth outfit, she only changed the bralette wearing a silver one with diamond studs. For her fifth outfit, she wore her black leather bralette along with pumpum jeans shorts and white sneakers.

6.6.5 Linguistic Stylization of the Bad Gyal

In this section, I trace the linguistic evolution of Bad Gyal Bamby as she stylizes Jamaican Creole. In the "Real Wifey" phase,¹³³ Bamby draws on a multilingual repertoire incorporating Guyanais Creole and the stylization of Jamaican Creole. Throughout Bamby's Real Wifey phase, uses both English and Jamaican Creole as a part of her multilingual repertoire.¹³⁴ This phase has the highest instances of switches to English accounting for 6.83% of all lyrics (the percentage is in comparison to all 205 song lyrics). Her code-switching to Jamaican Creole is at its lowest value in this phase and accounts for only 2.96% of the overall lyrics. Additionally, all instances of code-switching to Jamaican Creole were found in the song "This Bwoy." Additionally, code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole is also low and accounts for 7.32% of the song lyrics. This figure is quite similar in number to phase 3A. Code-switches to Guyanais Creole in this phase are the highest in this phase.

¹³³ Includes the songs "Real Wifey," "This Bwoy," and "Fa bo ma lè."

¹³⁴ See Appendix 3 Table 4. for all data on multilingual repertoire.

Bamby primarily engages in code-mixing by attaching a singular Jamaican Creole word or common Jamaican dancehall phrases to the end or the beginning of her lyrics. For instance, in "Real Wifey," she says:

Real wifey pa ka fight ova man.
[Real Wifeys don't fight over men.]

where "Real wifey" and "fight ova man" are the tags that are common to the matey vs. wifey scenario. The only difference is that Jamaican dancehall songs use "wifey" and not "Real wifey." Additionally, there are examples like,

Mé dèpi to pa touch mo bad gyal.
[As long as you don't touch me, the bad gya.]

where single words such as "touch" or common terms such as "bad gyal" are used. Bamby uses the Jamaican Creole insertions to signify the cultural trope and context of the wifey vs. matey scenario. Her language use in "Fo ba mo lè" is similar to her repertoire in "Real Wifey," where she relies on code-mixing. She draws on Jamaican Creole through common Jamaican Creole phrases such as "Caribbean gyal," "run di town," and "Bad gyal" as word insertions. For example, in these lyrics:

Caribbean gyal a nou ka run the world.
[Caribbean girls, it's us who run the world.]

Bad gyal ka bay yo mal tête.
[Bad gyals make them go crazy.]

Additionally, in "Fo ba mo lè" she equally draws on English to code-mix. In contrast to both "Real Wifey" and "Fo ba mo lè," Bamby uses more Jamaican Creole in "This Bwoy." The first verse and the chorus are sung entirely in Jamaican Creole and the hook in Guyanais Creole.

There are only two instances of code-mixing. Some examples of her code-switches are:

This bwoy him a mek me feel right.
[This guy, he makes me feel right.]

Me cyaan live without this bwoy.
[I can't live without this guy.]

Bamby's use of Jamaican Creole morphosyntactic and phonological (accent) features vary.¹³⁵ All the morphosyntactic features are from the song, "This Bwoy." Regarding phonological features of Jamaican Creole, there were instances of all the categories except for devoiced final consonance clusters (t-d deletion) in "Real Wifey." In general, Bamby's use of Jamaican Creole and its features is quite limited in her initial songs. She relies primarily on word insertions and common phrases in dancehall culture.

In the second phase of her evolution, the Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart phase, Bamby's multilingual repertoire and versatility expand. Code-switching to Jamaican Creole accounts for 6.34% of the data and Code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole accounts for 12.2%. This is more than in the Real Wifey phase. Additionally, there are only 2 instances of completed code-switches to Guyanais Creole and no instances of Code-switching to any other language. Throughout this phase, Bamby's multilingual repertoire incorporates mainly Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole, strongly favoring code-mixing between the two.

In regard to her use of Jamaican Creole morphosyntactic features, it does not differ significantly from the first phase. Concerning phonological features, I found instances of all features in all songs except labialization and palatalization in "Who Mad Again" and instances of derhoticization in "Run di place." Primarily, she uses neutralization of dentals and devoiced Final consonance clusters in this phase. Unlike in the first phase, Bamby employs more phonological Jamaican Creole features throughout her dancehall repertoire. I infer that she embodies the "bad gyal." As a member of the Rude Empire group and Jahyanai's counterpart,

¹³⁵ See Appendix 3 Tables 5 and 6. For all data on morphosyntactic and phonological features.

particularly in "Fix Up" and "Who Mad Again," she draws on "toughness," "violence," and turf politics. Additionally, she draws on Jamaican Creole to discuss her sexual desires and her sexuality. For instance, in "Run di Place," where she talks about her sexual prowess.

In the next phase, Embodying the Bad Gyal,¹³⁶ Bamby expands on these themes by exploring her evolved stylization of the "bad gyal" persona in regard to lyrical and physical violence as well as sexual politics. In the first part of the Bad Gyal phase, code-switching accounts for 20.49% of the overall lyrics while code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole accounts for 6.83%. This phase represents Bamby's complete stylization of her "bad gyal" persona in respect to lyrical and physical confrontation and violence. She predominantly uses Jamaican Creole to deejay her songs. Through her use of Jamaican Creole, she demonstrates her toughness, her affinity to crime and violence, turf politics and her affiliation with Rude Empir. For instance, in regard to her toughness in "Bad from mi born," she says:

Bad gyal buss a blank.
[As a bad gyal, I'm shooting shots.]

One fi di powa.
[The first in homage to power.]

Two fi di family.
[The second in homage to family.]

An Three fi di dolla.
[And third in homage to money.]

Dem a talk a bagga talk.
[They talk a big game.]

Yuh kno seh dem a coward...
[You know they are only cowards.]

¹³⁶ Includes the songs "Bad From Mi Born," "Bag A Gyal," "Sugar Daddy," "Fuck It" and "Haffi Buss."

Mek mi bus one inna yuh belly.
[Let me fire a shot in your belly.]

Four, Five inna yuh farid...
[The fourth and fifth shot in your forehead...]

Rifle attack, no mi nuh nyam sorry.
[My rifle will attack; I don't want any apologies.]

She also uses Jamaican Creole to talk about sex and her sexuality. For instance, in the song "Bag a Gyal," she says:

Non, mo pa gain time sa mo bison a bon backshot.
[No, I don't have time, give me a good backshot.]

This section of the Embodying the Bad Gyal phase has the highest instance of each morphosyntactic category, drawing on all forms of the copula, TMA, personal pronouns, and uses of "seh." Additionally, in this phase, Bamby primarily uses the neutralization of dentals and the merging of the TRAP-BATH vowels into [a] to display her toughness. In this phase, Bamby stylizes the "bad gyal" persona completely through her uses of all morphosyntactic and phonological features of Jamaican Creole as well as through the content of her lyrics.

In the second half of the Embodying, the Bad Gyal phase Bamby uses her "bad gyal" persona to offer radical politics along gender and sexual lines. Code-switching to Jamaican Creole accounts for 11.71% of Bamby's song lyrics, while code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole accounts for 17.56%, only four instances of code-switching solely to Guyanais Creole and two instances of code-switching to English. The content of Bamby's code-mixing and code switches in Jamaican Creole refer mostly to sex, her sexuality, and dancing. For instance, in "Sugar daddy," she says:

Me seh one man pon mi pumpum.
[I say only one man can have sex with me.]

In "Fuck it," she says:

Pumpum a mine, a mo ka run bèt-a.
[This pussy is mine, it's me who controls my pussy.]

In "Haffi Buss," she says:

Mo lé ride to big bike every day (every day) ...
[I will ride your big bike every day...]

From these examples, we see that Bamby Jamaican Creole and at times Guyanais Creole to talk explicitly about her body, sexual needs, and desires.

In this phase, Bamby's use of morphosyntactic features in Jamaican Creole is similar to the first part of phase 3 where she draws on each morphosyntactic category and all forms of the copula, TMA, personal pronouns, and uses of "seh." Additionally, concerning her use of phonological features, TRAP-BATH vowels into [a] and labialization were the highest in this category, owing to Bamby's continuous reference to herself as "Bad Gyal."

Throughout this section, I have shown that Bamby's linguistic repertoire has evolved. Categorizing her career into an initial and current stage where I combine the Real Wifey and the Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart phase into an initial phase and compare it to the Embodying the Bad Gyal phase as a current stage, I illustrate clear distinctions and the evolution of her linguistic stylization. By thinking in terms of an initial and current stage, Bamby's code-switching to Jamaican Creole accounts for 9.3% of data in the initial stage while in the current (Embodying the Bad Gyal) stage it accounts for 32.2%. In regard to code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole, the initial stages account for 19.52% while the current stage accounts for 24.39%. Code-switching to Guyanais Creole only accounts for 4.59% in the initial phase and only 1.95% in the current stage. This comparison shows us that Bamby employs more Jamaican Creole features as she beings to stylize her Bad Gyal persona and incorporate

ideologies pertaining to badmanism, frontiers, violence, sexuality, and sexual desires. Her use of code-switching to Guyanais Creole only in song has decreased, however code-mixing both in the initial phase of her career and the current stage, remains important to the stylization of her Guyanais specific "bad gyal" who indexes her guyanité. Additionally, in the beginning, she incorporated a lot more English in her repertoire, however as her persona evolved, she has relied less on it and employs Jamaican Creole. This underscores the global and regional markets that she is trying to appeal to similarly to Jahyanäi.

6.7 Conclusion

Aesthetically, Bamby originally stylized herself as a Real Wifey drawing on a *s'habiller sexy* style that was more covered and appealed to respectability politics. She adhered to the boundaries of being a middle-class woman throughout all her songs in the Real Wifey phase. During the second phase, in "Run di Place" and "Who Mad Again," she began to transgress boundaries in regard to what *s'habiller sexy* could mean for her Bad Gyal persona. For instance, she wore revealing lingerie, a mesh transparent jumpsuit, and pumpum shorts. For embodying the Bad Gyal phase, Bamby merged her two *s'habiller sexy* styles in all her videos by wearing multiple outfits that incorporated the various aesthetics of the *s'habiller sexy* spectrum.

Lyrically, Bamby's songs evolved thematically over time. Her Real Wifey phase represented a soft entry into the dancehall sphere. She shied away from instances of slackness for the most part. In the second phase, as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart, she began to talk about the lyrical and physical gun, as well as being a part of and defending her Rude Empire crew. Regarding the Embodying the Bad Gyal phase, I separated Bamby's evolution into two categories. The first category dealt with her interest in lyrical and physical confrontation that

developed from her songs and themes from the Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart phase. In the section, unlike in phase 2, Bamby stylizes herself as a Bad Gyal in her own right, someone who is not necessarily only the counterpart of the Rude King. Here, my second definition of a Bad Gyal is useful. The Bad Gyal can also be defined as a deviant, gendered, and racialized way of expressing Caribbean femininity. As Thomas (2004) states, to be a Bad Gyal means to take a "ghetto feminist" approach to life and to society. They do not seek "the pursuit of respectability and the acceptance of paternalistic patriarchy" but seek to have their own agency by drawing on slackness (Thomas 2004, 152). In the first half of my phase 3 analysis, I showed how Bamby embodies slackness in the means of lyrically and physical violence. In the second half of my analysis, I illustrated the sexual politics that Bamby offers. She advocates for female sexual freedom through being pro-consent and pro-female pleasure.

In regard to Bamby's multilingual repertoire, her use of Jamaican Creole and its morphosyntactic and phonological features have evolved since her first famous song with Jahyanai King; "Real Wifey." In general, Bamby uses code-switching to Jamaican Creole and code-mixing in Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole to stylize her "bad gyal" persona. Initially, Bamby did not employ a lot of code-switching to Jamaican Creole. During the Real Wifey and Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart phases, she mostly code-mixed between Guyanais Creole and Jamaican Creole. In the Embodying the Bad Gyal phase, she draws almost equally on code-switching to Jamaican Creole and code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole. I contend that she uses Jamaican Creole to display toughness as well as to talk about slackness; be it sexual or violent. She does this by employing Jamaican Creole morphosyntactic and phonological features.

Bamby's use of Jamaican Creole morphosyntactic features evolved throughout the years. Initially, she employed a few Jamaican Creole features, however, by the Embodying the Bad Gyal phase, she uses all features with the personal pronouns: Me, Him, and Dem being the highest. Similarly, to Jahyanai's features of Jamaican Creole, this is due to the use of "Us vs Them" where they both use "dem" frequently to distance themselves from rival groups. The evolution of Bamby's Jamaican Creole phonological repertoire is comparable to the evolution of her use of morphosyntactic features. Bamby gradually employed more phonological features in her repertoire throughout the years. The use of derhoticization, the merging of TRAP-BATH vowels into [a] and the neutralization of dentals respectively were the highest employed features. Overall, both Bamby's morphosyntactic and phonological use of Jamaican Creole increased.

The use of Jamaican Creole in song and its evolution throughout Bamby's repertoire indicates her in-group affiliation with dancehall music and culture. This is similar to what scholars like Alim et al (2008), Mitchell (2001), Pennycook (2003; 2010; 2007) Sarkar & Winer (2006), and Sarkar, Winer, and Sarkar (2005) have discussed concerning how hip hop has become a means of reinterpreting local identity and in-group affiliations worldwide. Localized interpretations of popular music, in this case, Jamaican dancehall, become more than just appropriations. They become instruments of navigating and reworking global youth affiliations and local identities. To extend this postulation, I contend that Bamby's (and Jahyaani's) multilingual repertoire moves through various levels of imaginary communities. Her use of Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole demonstrates these moves commercially and how they transcend various borders; from the local, to the lokal to the regional and the global. In the Real Wifey phase, she draws mostly on Guyanais Creole and English to enter the local Guyanais music industry and ultimately the lokal industry and global industry. I use lokal her to refer to the

French Creole spelling of the word "local" to talk about countries that may also have a French Creole variety and see Guyanais Creole as mutually intelligible. Not only does her Real Wifey phase highlight her entry into the lokal dancehall scene, but by singing in Guyanais Creole, she also asserts her authentic local guyanais identity. Even though Guyanais Creole may be understood by other French Creole speaking societies, there are still many aspects that foreground it as a language belonging to Guyane and that index guyanité¹³⁷.

Additionally, in the Real Wifey phase, her repertoire included English. This is interesting given that English is not a privileged variety in dancehall. In both the Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart and the Bad Gyal phases, she draws heavily on Jamaican Creole. Its continued incorporation into her repertoire opened the possibility for a broader audience. Particularly, it allowed for a more regional and global audience, where the larger Caribbean and other African diasporic communities could have access to her music. In their most famous songs to date, "Run di Place" and "Who Mad Again," both Bamby and Jahyanai employ a variety of Jamaican Creole features. Given the popularity and success that they gained from these songs, it is not surprising then, that they would choose to stylize or employ more Jamaican Creole features and themes to speak to their audience as they made new music. To give a bit more detail on their audience, under both of their most popular music videos, individuals commented or used flag emojis to represent the countries they were from. In regard to lokal representation, individuals commented from Haiti and countries that have a status as a department, territory, or collectivity in France, such as Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, Mauritius, Mayotte, and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. Most of these lokal comments were individuals who were from Guyane, Haiti, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. In regard to the larger Caribbean on a regional level, individuals

¹³⁷ For instance, "mo" for me/I instead of "Mwen."

represented countries such as Jamaica, Costa Rica, Columbia, St. Lucia, Dominican Republic, and Brazil. Concerning the global sphere, individuals represented countries in Europe such as France, Portugal, Belgium, and Spain. Additionally, at the global level, individuals commented from a wide range of African countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Senegal, Madagascar, Comoros, Congo, Tanzania, Mali, Algeria, and Morocco.

In sum, throughout this section, I have illustrated how Bamby's Bad Gyal persona has evolved from 2015 to 2021. To target a wider audience, Bamby strategically commodifies herself by employing the use of more Jamaican Creole, the use of a wider range of themes in song and aesthetically stylizing herself through fashion. She privileges Creole language varieties instead of standard language, uses such as Jamaican Standard English or French, to demonstrate the cultural prestige that Creoles have in dancehall. Additionally, she highlights the interconnectedness of Jamaican Creole and slackness, which she uses to showcase herself as an authentic dancehall artist. Through language use and her other various means of embodiment, she also stylizes herself as a sex icon and pro-female pleasure. In addition to all this, Bamby is able to use dancehall to traverse multiple boundaries as a marker of not only Caribbeanness and Blackness but also guyanité in order to demonstrate a racialized and deviant form of Caribbean femininity.

7. Conclusion

In this dissertation, I offered an analysis of the cultural phenomenon of dancehall in Guyane to situate Guyane as a part of France Noire. I have highlighted, particularly in the second chapter on Guyane, the double liminal position that situates Black people in Guyane as "French *but* Black, or Black *but* part of France" (Mudimbe-Boyi 2012 21). As the only French overseas region in South America, Guyane is often marginalized, overshadowed, or forgotten in discussions on France or the Black Francophone diaspora. As a scholar of Black France, it is important to recenter the voice of marginalized and, at times, invisibilized members of France Noire. Hence, in this dissertation, I underscore how Guyanais people are navigating their various identities, particularly Blackness, Creoleness, and Caribbeanness, and how this negotiation complicates our understanding of the evolution of Francophone Caribbean identity.

In addition, I have illustrated how Guyane's diverse population and constant migratory flow have complicated notions and identification within Frenchness and the France Noire binary. Instead of looking to France as a critical source of identification and cultural inspiration, Guyanais people choose to look to the Caribbean. Popular culture, in the form of Black diasporic music, has helped to foster this identification in the Francophone Caribbean. More specifically, by interrogating how dancehall music and culture have transcended the borders of Jamaica, I showed how it has been localized in the Guyanais context. As an iteration of the many creolization processes that exist in the Caribbean, dancehall in Guyane represents just one of the many continuations of these processes.

The tension between notions of the local and global and their relationship to negotiating the dominant have also been present in this dissertation. Guyanais artists bypass dominant flows of culture by being a part of the status-granting institution of dancehall. As was mentioned in

chapter four, "[i]f the language is 'raw' enough (e.g., 'deep' on the 'Creole continuum', vulgar, rough, crude, sexual, violent, harsh on the ear) it will repel any who might potentially 'eat' it" (Sheller 2003, 10). Hence, in this dissertation, I illustrated the valorization of a Black lower-class genre of music that celebrates non-normative language use, explicit discussion of sex, sexuality, and violence, and non-normative views on masculinity and femininity. Drawing on the status-granting institution of dancehall, Guyanais artists tap into a variety of imaginary communities that identify with the embedded messages in dancehall. Consequently, the two artists that I examined, Jahyanai and Bamby, make premeditated moves as artists who are trying to reach a more global audience. They engage in global Blackness from a variety of levels: the local as Guyanais artists to lokal artists in reference to all countries that have a French Creole speaking population, to regional, which includes the larger Caribbean, and global in respect to the larger Black diaspora. Their most popular music videos, "Run di Place" and "Who Mad Again," illustrate how they have employed dancehall, Guyanais Creole, and Jamaican Creole to market themselves to a global Black audience. Additionally, they both engage in genre-crossing by performing dancehall within other Black diasporic music genres such as afrobeats, hip hop, zouk, and pop, as well as border crossing by performing dancehall with other French Caribbean dancehall artists.

Research on Creolistics has focused on traditional linguistic ways of obtaining data and structural analyses of the data. Additionally, the most dominant conversation in Creolistics concerns the genesis of Creole and pidgin languages. In this dissertation, I show that popular culture, particularly music, offers creolists the opportunity to obtain linguistic data and findings on current-day Creole-speaking communities. For instance, in looking at the linguistic stylization of Jahyanai in chapter five and the linguistic evolution of Bamby in chapter six, I illustrated

trans-Caribbean Creole multilingualism in song. This not only reflects the everyday reality of life in Guyane, due to the diversity of the nation, but it also underscores the fact that that Guyanais youths identify more with Caribbean ways of being, knowledge, and cultural production rather than with Frenchness.

Research on race, gender, class, and sexuality in the French Caribbean is "a new prism" of study, according to Lefaucheur and Kabile (2017). Additionally, most scholarly research has tended to focus on Martinique and Guadeloupe (Marie-Magdeleine 2013; 2016; Zobda-Zebina 2006; 2008; 2010). Using Guyanais dancehall as a locus, in this dissertation, I insert Guyane into the ongoing dialogue that is being had in French Cultural Studies on intersectionality. Specifically, in chapters five and six, I located ideologies surrounding masculinity, femininity, and sexuality in the performances of the dancehall artists Jahyanai and Bamby. I show that they draw on *petit marronage* and *slackness*, respectively, to perform non-normative gender roles and talk about their sexuality and sexual desires.

Bamby and Jahyanai's performances draw on dancehall tropes, while also highlighting key differences. Consistent male and female duos are not common in dancehall music. It is more common for various artists to make songs together through the many years of their careers. For example, the current-day Queen and King of the dancehall, Spice and Vybz Kartel, have collaborated on singles, such as "Ramping Shop" (2011), "Conjugal Visit" (2014), and "Back Way" (2019). Over the course of seven years (2015-2022), Bamby and Jahyanai have produced over 10 songs together. This is one of their key contributions to scholarship on dancehall. The success of their partnership underscores the importance and marketability of outlaw discourse, since they embody the ideologies of the "bad gyal" and "rude bwoy" as partners in lyrical and

physical confrontation. Even though they are both stand-alone artists, their international appeal and success are heightened when they are together and when they draw on this discourse.

In addition, Bamby and Jahyanäi challenge ideologies on masculinity, femininity, and gender in the French Caribbean. With respect to respectability and reputation, they both have created their own conceptualization of the terms. Through the valorization of their Rude Empire Music group, they underscore the values that are important to them and their dancehall identity. Both dancehall and Rude Empire reconfigure dominant value systems and uphold other ideologies. For instance, Jahyanäi explicitly engages in heteronormative discourse concerning women, having multiple partners, and the use of violence whether physically or lyrically. His sexual politics, however, differs from other dancehall artists, in that he does not position sexual pleasure and pain to be crucial aspects of masculine dancehall discourse. Additionally, in his songs on sexual intercourse, he not only talks about his desires, but also centers the desires of his partner. This is quite different from other masculine discourses on dancehall. Bamby, on the other hand, does not embrace respectability. She positions herself as Jahyanäi's counterpart and draws on the predominantly masculine discourse of violence related to rivalry associated with dancehall. Additionally, she offers a sexual politics that includes an overt conversation on her sexual desires, preference, and even the importance of consent.

The difference between francophone dancehall and anglophone dancehall is also evident in the aesthetics of some of Bamby and Jahyanäi's music videos. For example, the music video "Bag A Gyal" is a clear example of the bricolage between high and low fashion that constitutes dancehall fashion and the influence of francophone culture. For instance, the use of a staircase like the *Escalier des Ambassadeurs* at the Palace of Versailles, Bamby's formal gowns in conjunction with her revealing outfits and nudeness, and Jahyanäi's matching suits and constant

use of gold. Additionally, the use of a diverse pool of women as dancers in "Bruk it Off" reminds us of the cultural and ethnic diversity in Guyane. In addition, in the "Dweet Suh" music video, Jahyanai underscores the importance of French Caribbean solidarity and the appreciation of French Caribbean women by including Miss Guadeloupe 2016 as his main love interest. Furthermore, throughout all the songs, both Bamby and Jahyanai make constant references to Guyane and the Rude Empire Group, highlighting the importance of their local crew and loyalty to Guyane.

Moreover, Bamby and Jahyanai's use of their multilingual repertoire to engage in Creole multilingualism is also another unique aspect of their performance of Guyanais dancehall. They stylize Jamaican Creole to assert themselves as authentic dancehall artists who are well versed in dancehall music and culture. In addition, they use Guyanais Creole to remind us that their local identity is important to them. Creole multilingualism in song is also reflective of the multilingualism in everyday life in Guyane, not necessarily between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole, but amongst the plethora of language communities that exist there.

Overall, in this dissertation, I have tried to situate Guyanais dancehall as an important site for rethinking francophone identity. I have underscored that Guyane's multilayered liminal positions as geographically South American, politically French, and culturally Caribbean. The sociopolitical and cultural similarities and differences between Guyane and Jamaica have allowed us to look at both dancehall and the Black Diaspora from a new perspective. Jahyanai and Bamby have drawn on dancehall to assert Guyane's presence and importance in the Black Diaspora. Through creolization, both the figure of the "rude bwoy" and the "bad gyal" have been diffused and reworked into Guyanais culture. Hence, Jahyanai and Bamby are representations of the cross-fertilization of Guyanais and Jamaican ideas and ideologies. Through this trans-

Caribbean dialogue, they both perform femininity and masculinity in ways that trouble understandings of gender and sexuality in the Francophone Caribbean. Additionally, they underscore the most important aspect of this trans-Caribbean dialogue, the dissemination of ideologies via Creole multilingualism to target a variety of different Black diasporic audiences at once. As Jahyanaï states in "French Guiana":

Nou French Guiana....
[Our French Guiana...]

My French Guiana, Your French Guiana...

All a di world seh Guiana...
[Everyone in the world is repping French Guiana...]

By stylizing dancehall music, both Jahyanaï and Bamby remind us that Guyane is not at all peripheral and should be recentered on conversation on identity formation in the larger Caribbean, the Black Francophone world, and the Black global diaspora.

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Appendix 1. Methodology

1. Research Questions

Q1) Using *slackness* and *petit marronage* as theoretical frameworks, how can we understand dancehall Guyanais as a form of resistance that challenges discourses on national identity, Creoleness, race, gender, and sexuality in Guyane?

Q2) More specifically, what are the ways in which dancehall Guyanais artists, and their audience draw on specific Jamaican codes to *Stylize of the Other*?

Q3) And how can this complicate our understanding of identity formation and negotiation in the Francophone Caribbean, particularly Guyane

1.2 My Positionality

I am not a member of the Guyanais community. However, I do share a similar cultural interest with those who enjoy Caribbean musical forms such as reggae, dancehall, bouyon, zouk, etc. I am originally from Jamaica where dancehall music and its predecessor reggae originated. I moved to the USA when I was almost 18. Hence, I grew up in Jamaica and around our sound system culture and have been an avid fan of dancehall music since I was young.

In general, I have been interested in the connections between Jamaica and the Francophone Caribbean since early on. Specifically, I was introduced to the dancehall Guyanais duo Bamby and Jahyanai through a YouTube recommendation of their first hit single "Real Wifey." I shared the song with my family, and they all thought it was authentically Jamaican. However, they found the lyrics hard to understand. After finding a translation, I realized that the artists were not singing in French. Instead, they were code-switching between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole. This was the moment that fermented my interest in French Creole languages. As I began to learn more about the French Caribbean and French Creoles, I realized

that there was not much research on Guyane, and I decided to make Guyanais dancehall the center of my cultural and linguistic analysis.

1.3 Case Study

In this dissertation, I focus on two dancehall Guyanais artists: Bamby and Jahyanäi because of their popularity in Guyane and in the French Overseas Departments. Additionally, they represent a unique phenomenon, the representation of both the Bad Gyal and the Rude Bwoy performing together. They have won numerous awards from Hit lokal (French Overseas departments Music Association) as well as Lindors (Guyanais National awards). By examining their language use as well as their visual aesthetics, I show how Jahyanäi, and Bamby perform the Rude Bwoy persona and Bad Gyal persona respectively.

1.4 Methodology

I follow a linguistic anthropology approach to the of study language, society, and culture. The overall methodology for this dissertation follows the theory of Linguistic Stylization mentioned in the chapter on theoretical frameworks. To look at linguistic stylization, I collected a variety of data, song lyrics and YouTube music videos, YouTube comments, and news articles. In addition, I conducted phone interviews as well as used previous recorded interviews online on Guyanais artists.

Additionally, I focused on an analysis of Jahyanäi and Bamby's aesthetic and multilingual repertoire through specific songs and music videos. Regarding Jahyanäi, I looked at 13 songs overall, but I conducted an analysis of only 10. I divided these songs into three categories, the Rude Bwoy, the Gyalis and the International Rude Bwoy. In the Rude Bwoy category, I examined the songs "Fix Up," "Run di Place," "Who Mad Again?" and "Run di Place." In the Gyalis category, I examined the songs "Dweet Suh," "Bruk it Off," and "Vitamine."

Additionally, in the International Rude Bwoy category, I examined the songs "Take Control," "TT," and "Buddy." Concerning Bamby, I illustrated her linguistic evolution through three main phases, the Real Wifey phase, the Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart phase, and the Embodying the Bad Gyal Phase. In the Real Wifey phase, I examined the songs "Real Wifey," "This Bwoy" and "Fo ba mo lè." In the Bad Gyal as the Rude Bwoy's counterpart phase, I examine the songs "Fix Up," "Run di Place" and "Who Mad Again." I separated the Embodying the Bad Gyal phase into two, towards lyrical and physical confrontation and towards a sexual politics. In the first section, I look at the songs "Bad from Mi Born" and "Bag A Gyal." In the second section, I looked at the songs "Sugar Daddy," "Fuck It," and "Haffi Buss."

1.4.1 Visual Analysis

Throughout each section of my analysis of Bamby and Jahyanai's personas, I examined the music video that accompanied each song to infer ideologies, themes, identities, and common tropes associated with dancehall. I also elaborated on connections between the music videos, other Jamaican dancehall music videos and other connections such as films or dance moves.

1.4.2 Interviews

Weaved in the dissertation, I have used quotes from the various interviews that I have conducted with individuals residing in Guyane who lovers of dancehall music are and culture.¹³⁸ I also incorporated prerecorded interviews on Bamby and Jahyanai online on sites such as France Actu and France Guyane. The Interviews that I conducted were largely unstructured and recorded on my iPhone. I asked questions about dancehall music and culture, its presence and popularity in Guyane. I asked about Bamby and Jahyanai, their use of Guyanais Creole and

¹³⁸ See Appendix 2. for Interview questions.

Jamaican Creole and in-group vs out-group affiliations. I interviewed individuals who are music producers, Deejays, choreographers, and dancehall fans.

1.4.3 Linguistic Analysis: Code-Switching and Mixing in Song

I transcribed all the songs that were used in this dissertation and translated them into English.¹³⁹ To look at the multilingual repertoire of both Jahyanai and Bamby and how they stylize the other, I examined instances of code-switching, code-mixing, and no switches. According to Hymes (1974), code-switching is "a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles" (91). While according to Muysken (2000), "code-mixing refers to all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence" (1). Additionally in the seminal piece by Poplack (1980), she argues that code-switching can be distinguished into three types: Inter-Sentential (language switches between sentences), Intra-Sentential (language switches within a given sentence), and Tag-Switches (insertions of tags, discourse markers). Code-mixing which occurs in a sentence boundary can also be seen as Intra-Sentential.

Code-switching and code-mixing in a song are not occurring in natural speech, they represent examples of premediated utterances. Firstly, performers such as Bamby and Jahyanai carefully think about their dancehall and Jamaican Creole stylization. They write their own multilingual lyrics to songs; hence they are preplanned. Additionally, their audiences do not have to be bilingual or multilingual to be able to engage with their music. By looking at their code-switching and code-mixing in song, I identify the stylistic choices that they make and how they choose to position themselves in the music industry, lokally, locally, regionally, and globally¹⁴⁰.

¹³⁹ With help from a few of my participants with decoding various lines or phrases.

¹⁴⁰ Other scholars who have done work on code switching and code-mixing in song include Alim et al (2008), Davies and Bentahila (2006; 2008), Sarkar and Whiner (2005; 2006).

Taking Guyanais Creole as the base language of all Jahyanai and Bamby's switches in their multilingual repertoire, I consider code-switching as instances where they completely switch to Jamaican Creole in a sentence¹⁴¹. I consider switches within a single sentence as code-mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole. Furthermore, I consider instances of no switches to mean sentences or lyrics that are sung in the base language; Guyanais Creole. In addition to code-switching and code-mixing, I also looked at Bamby's use of Jamaican Creole morphosyntactic and phonological (accent) features. In Jansen and Westphal (2017), they use Bell and Gibson's (2011) work on accent in performances, Werner's (2012) and Kreyer's (2015) work on morphosyntactic variation in pop songs, Lee's (2011) work on linguistic variation in hip-hop. They argue that while studies on the accent of performers focused on pronunciation are important, there are also benefits to including different structural levels of variation, such as looking at morpho-syntactic variation. Numerous scholars have discussed the morpho-syntactic and phonetic inventory of Jamaican Creole and compared it to Standard Jamaican English, US English, and British English (de Lisser et al. 2017, Durrelman 2005; Harry 2006; Patrick 1991; 2014; Smith 2003; Westphal 2017). I draw from their work and conclusions to choose quintessential features of Jamaican Creole¹⁴². More specifically, for morphosyntactic features, I looked at her use of personal pronouns (Me, Him, Dem), Tense Mood Aspect Markers (TMA) (progressive aspect, modal, null, Equative, and locative copula), Negation, and uses of "seh" (complementizer or quotative). For phonological (accent) features, devoiced final consonance clusters (t-d deletion), derhoticization, the merger of the TRAP-BATH vowels into [a], labialization, and palatalization, and neutralization of dentals respectively.

¹⁴¹ See Appendix 3. for Table 7 for examples of code switching, code mixing, no switches, and code switching and mixing in English throughout the dataset.

¹⁴² See Appendix 3. or Tables 8, and 9.

Appendix 2. Interview Questions

Open-ended interview questions in English.

1. What genres of music do you listen to?
2. What genres of music do you think are the most popular in French Guiana?
3. What are the classic music genres that you would say define French Guianese identity?
4. Which is more popular in French Guiana, dancehall, or hip hop? Why do you think so?
5. What do you think of the criticism about the dancehall?
6. Do you think that dancing/music in dancehall offers you an escape?
7. Do you think there are appropriate dances or songs for women and men?
8. Have you ever heard of Bamby?
9. What are your opinions on her music?
10. Have you ever heard of Jahyanai?
11. What do you think about his music?
12. What languages do people sing in in zouk/reggae/dancehall?
13. What do you think about artists singing in Creole?
14. Are there artists that sing in english or jamaican Creole?
15. Do you understand jamaican Creole?
16. Do you think there are similarities between Jamaican Creole and French Guianese Creole?
17. Do you think there are any connections (difference/similarities) between Jamaica and French Guiana?
18. Do you think that French Guiana is a part of the Caribbean?

Open-ended interview questions in French.

1. Quels genres de musique écoutez-vous?
2. Selon vous, quels genres de musique sont les plus populaires en Guyane?
3. Quels genres musicaux, selon vous, définissent l'identité guyanaise?
4. Lequel est le plus populaire en Guyane, le dancehall ou le hip hop? Pourquoi pensez-vous cela?
5. Que pensez-vous des critiques sur le dancehall?
6. Pensez-vous que la danse / la musique dans le dancehall vous offre une évasion?
7. Pensez-vous qu'il existe des danses ou des chansons appropriées pour les femmes et les hommes?
8. Avez-vous déjà entendu parler de Bamby?
9. Que pensez-vous de sa musique?
10. Avez-vous déjà entendu parler de Jahyanai?
11. Que pensez-vous de sa musique?
12. Les artistes de zouk / reggae / dancehall, dans quelles langues chantent-ils?
13. Que pensez-vous des artistes qui chantent en créole?
14. Y a-t-il des artistes qui chantent en anglais ou en créole jamaïcain?
15. Comprenez-vous le créole jamaïcain?
16. Pensez-vous qu'il existe des similitudes entre le créole jamaïcain et le créole guyanais français?
17. Pensez-vous qu'il existe des liens (différences / similitudes) entre la Jamaïque et la Guyane?
18. Pensez-vous que la Guyane française fait partie des Caraïbes?

Appendix 3. All Tables

Table 1. The Rude Bwoy's multilingual repertoire, types of switches and the frequency of each type through all songs.

Multilingual Repertoire	Rude Bwoy	Gyalis	International	Total per type of switches
Code switches to Jamaican Creole	48 (18.53%)	78 (30.12%)	49 (18.92%)	175 (67.57%)
Code mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole	26 (10.04%)	26 (10.04%)	5 (1.93%)	57 (22.01%)
No Switches/Mixing (Guyanais Creole)	7 (2.70%)	16 (6.18%)	3 (1.16%)	26 (10.04%)
Other language (Spanish)	0 (0%)	1 (.39%)	0 (%)	1 (.39%)
Total lyrics for each song	81	121	57	259

Table 2. The frequency in which the Rude Bwoy's use Jamaican Creole morphosyntactic features.

Morphosyntactic features	TMA (null, Equative, locative and progressive)	Pronouns (Me, Him, Dem)	Negation	Uses of seh
Rude Bwoy	23	27	8	5
Gyalis	41	36 (+17 yuh)	5	2
International	22	25	7	5
Total	86	88	20	12

Table 3. The frequency in which the Rude Bwoy's use Jamaican Creole phonological features.

Phonological Features	Palatalization and Labialization	neutralization of dentals	derhoticization	/æ/ and /ɒ, ɑ/ are merged into /a/	Devoiced Final consonance clusters
Rude Bwoy	10	53	6	31	18
Gyalis	19	51	14	45	14
International	9	41	11	26	18
Total	38	145	31	102	50

Table 4. The Bad Gyal's multilingual repertoire, types of switches and the frequency of each type through all songs.

Multilingual Repertoire	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3A	Phase 3B	Total of each type of switch
Code switches to Jamaican Creole	6 (2.96%)	13 (6.34%)	42 (20.49%)	24 (11.71%)	85 (41.46%)
Code mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole	15 (7.32%)	25 (12.2%)	14 (6.83)	36 (17.56%)	90 (43.9%)
No Switches/Mixing (Guyanais Creole)	8 (3.90%)	2 (.99%)	0 (0%)	4 (1.95%)	14 (6.83%)
English Switches/Mixing	14 (6.83%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.99%)	16 (7.80%)
Total lyrics for each song	43	40	56	66	205

Table 5. The frequency in which the Bad Gyal's use Jamaican Creole morphosyntactic features.

Morphosyntactic features	TMA (null, Equative, locative and progressive)	Pronouns (Me, Him, Dem)	Negation	Uses of seh
Real Wifey	5	9	5	2
Becoming	6	12	1	0
EmbodyingA	25	29	7	6
Embodying B	15	15	0	3
Total	51	65	13	11

Table 6. The frequency in which the Bad Gyal's use Jamaican Creole phonological features.

Phonological Features	Palatalization and Labialization	neutralization of dentals	derhoticization	/æ/ and /ɒ, ɑ/ are merged into /a/	Devoiced Final consonance clusters
Real Wifey	9	10	1	6	9
Becoming	2	14	6	4	13
EmbodyingA	10	32	6	21	13
Embodying B	15	11	1	24	12
Total	36	67	14	55	47

Table 7. Examples of code switching, code mixing, no switches, and code switching and mixing in English throughout the dataset.¹⁴³

Multilingual Repertoire	Example ¹⁴⁴
Code switches to Jamaican Creole	(BAG): Whine pon di thing dem dead (RP): Mi know mi look good, mi know mi look fine (BFMB): Yuh neva lef di town wen Bamby deh a farin
Code mixing between Jamaican Creole and Guyanais Creole	(RW): Real wifey <u>pa ka</u> fight ova man (WMA): Bamby, Gadé str8 di jungle concret (HB): When di bad gyal come, <u>to gain pou étend</u> di phone (Bad Gyal)
No Switches/Mixing (Guyanais Creole)	(RDP): <u>Ba ma tout position, a mo ki pilote x 2</u> (FI): <u>Fo pa to vèx si mo pa bay bèt-a</u>
English/Spanish Mixing	(FBML): <u>Chaque son mo ka soti</u> <i>I buy a different top</i> (BIO): <u>Vamos mi amor whine pon di fucking don</u>

¹⁴³ Bold indicates Jamaican Creole, underscore indicates Guyanais Creole and italics indicates English.

¹⁴⁴ All acronyms are as follows: "Real Wifey" (RW), "This Bwoy" (TB), "Fo ba mo lè" (FMBL), "Fix UP" (FU), "Run di Place" (RP), "Who Mad Again" (WMA), "Bad from mi born" (BFMB), "Bag a Gyal" (BAG), "Sugar Daddy" (SD), "Fuck It" (FI) and "Haffi Buss" (HB), "Bruk It OFF" (BIO).

Table 8. Jamaican Creole morphosyntactic features that were coded along with examples.

Morphosyntactic features	Examples
TMA ¹⁴⁵	
a) Progressive aspect	a) Mi a_go shuo Jia. "I am going to show Jia."
b) Modal	b) Mi afi muuv di baisikl rait yaso. "I have to move the bicycle right here."
c) Copula ¹⁴⁶	c) Disya buk uold. "This book is old."
Null	
Equative	d) im a di dakta. "S/he is the doctor."
Locative	e) Wi de a London, mi want de y a. "We are in London, I want to be here."
Pronouns ¹⁴⁷	
a) Me	a) Mi a nyam (my example) "I am eating"
b) Him	b) Him did go (my example) "He went."
c) Dem	c) Dem too rude (my example) "They are too rude."
Negation ¹⁴⁸	Neva "Never" No/nuh "Don't"
Uses of seh ¹⁴⁹	a) Mieri nuo seh di bwai neva tief di mango-dem

¹⁴⁵ (de Lisser, Durreleman, Rizzi and Shlonsky 2017).

¹⁴⁶ (Smith, 2003, 146).

¹⁴⁷ (Jansen and Westphal 2017).

¹⁴⁸ Jamaican Creole predominantly uses the preverbal negator "no/nuh." "Never" is mostly used in a narrow way in that it is used as a simple past tense marker (Patrick, 1999 200). I coded for "No," "never" and "don't."

¹⁴⁹ (Durreleman 2005).

a) Complementizer	‘Mary knows that the boy never stole the mangoes’
b) Quotative	b) Im seh im dash i’ weh "He said that he threw it away."

Table 9. Jamaican Creole phonological features that were coded along with examples.

Phonological features ¹⁵⁰	Jamaican Creole variants and examples
Devoiced Final consonance clusters (t-d deletion) ¹⁵¹	Ben, bend, bent -> [ben] Bill, build, built -> [bil]
Derhoticization ¹⁵²	[a] Never -> [neva] (my example) Dollar -> [dolla] (my example) [ɪa] Empire -> [ɛmpaɪa] my example)
The TRAP-BATH vowels are merged into [a] ¹⁵³	[a] Back-> [bak] Man -> [man]
Labialization and Palatalization ¹⁵⁴	Cat -> [kjay] Boy -> [bwai]
Neutralization of dentals ¹⁵⁵	[d] This -> [dis] [t] Thing -> [ting]

¹⁵⁰ All Jamaican Creole/Jamaican Standard English pronunciation is being compared to the Standard British or Standard American pronunciation of the words. For example, both the British and American standard pronunciation of "man" is /mæn / while the Jamaican Creole pronunciation is /man/

¹⁵¹ (Patrick 1991)

¹⁵² Jamaican Creole is non-rhotic variety (Rosenfelder 2009). To avoid the rhotic, we see the pronunciation of /æ/, /ɚ/ as the Jamaican variant of TRAP /a/ the low central vowel (Westphal 2017, 71). In regard to FACE, there is the unmerging of [eɪ]/[ɪe] to [ɪa] (Westphal 2017, 71)

¹⁵³ The TRAP-BATH vowels are merged into [a], where the BATH vowel is typically lengthened (Westphal 2017, 71)

¹⁵⁴ The insertion of the glide insertions [j] and [w] between /g/, /k/ and /b/ and low central vowels (Patrick 2014, 129; Harry 2006, 127).

¹⁵⁵ (Westphal 2017, 71)

Appendix 4. Images

Image 1. Bamby's outfit in Lattes in 2018. Image taken from PepseeActus- Actualités- Dancehall's Facebook page

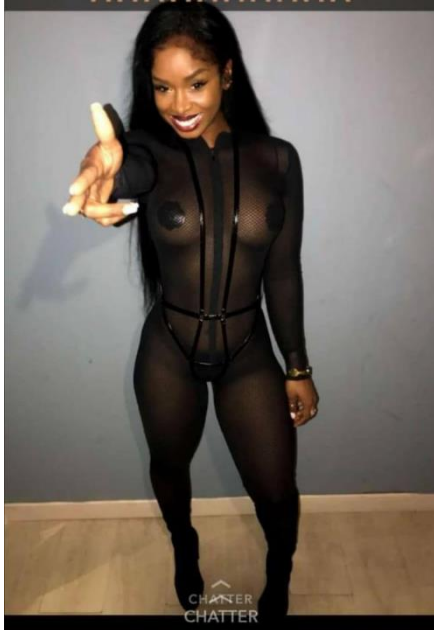


Image 2. Bamby's outfit in her "Who Mad Again" 2017 music video.

