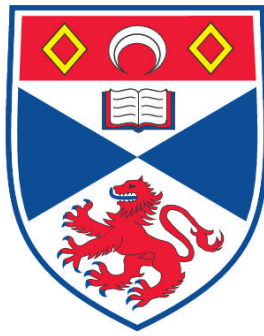


**THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION OF *JAMAICA SAFAR* IN
SHASHAMANE, ETHIOPIA**

Shelene Gomes

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
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The social reproduction of *Jamaica Safar* in Shashamane, Ethiopia



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PhD Thesis Submission 2011
Social Anthropology
University of St Andrews

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Abstract

Since the 1950s, men and women, mainly Rastafari from the West Indies, have moved as *repatriates* to Shashamane, Ethiopia. This is a spiritually and ideologically oriented journey to the promised land of Ethiopia (Africa) and to the land granted by His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I. Although migration across regions of the global south is less common than migration from the global south to north, this move is even more distinct because it is not primarily motivated by economic concerns.

This thesis - the first in-depth ethnographic study of the *repatriate* population - focuses on the conceptual and pragmatic ways in which *repatriates* and their Ethiopian-born children “rehome” this area of Shashamane that is now called *Jamaica Safar* (or village in the Amharic language). There is a simultaneous Rasta identification of themselves as Ethiopians and as His Majesty’s people, which is often contested in legal and civic spheres, with a West Indian social and cultural inscription of Shashamane. These dynamics have emerged from a Rastafari re-invention of personhood that was fostered in West Indian Creole society.

These ideas converge in a central concern with the inalienability of *the land grant* that is shared by *repatriates*, their children, and Rastafari outside Ethiopia as well. Accordingly, the *repatriate* population of Shashamane becomes the centre of international social and economic networks. The children born on this land thus demonstrate the success of their parents’ repatriation. They are the ones who will ensure the Rastafari presence there in perpetuity.

To Charmaine and PI

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This thesis could not have been completed without the willingness of *IandI* in Shashamane with whom I interacted regularly and who, despite a chequered history with researchers, still gave of themselves. Their courage, tenacity, and pragmatism I respect immensely. I must especially thank my adopted family in Shashamane who took me in as one of their own for an entire year (I await your critiques of the dissertation)!

The University of St. Andrews Centre for Amerindian Studies in the Department of Social Anthropology partly funded this research and a Russell Trust grant from the University assisted with fieldwork. My gratitude goes to my supervisor, Huon Wardle, who gave generously of his time and expertise, and to the academic and administrative staff of the department and beyond.

I must also acknowledge my parents whose unfailing intellectual, economic, and day to day support I value immensely. Their analysis of and involvement in the struggles for independence and autonomy of our Caribbean region has long fostered my awareness of the crucial yet ambivalent role of the region to modern industrialisation and capitalism, the legacies of which we, as Caribbean peoples, have grappled with and continue to, sometimes with fortitude, of which Rastafari is one example, and at other times misguided by petty factionalisms.

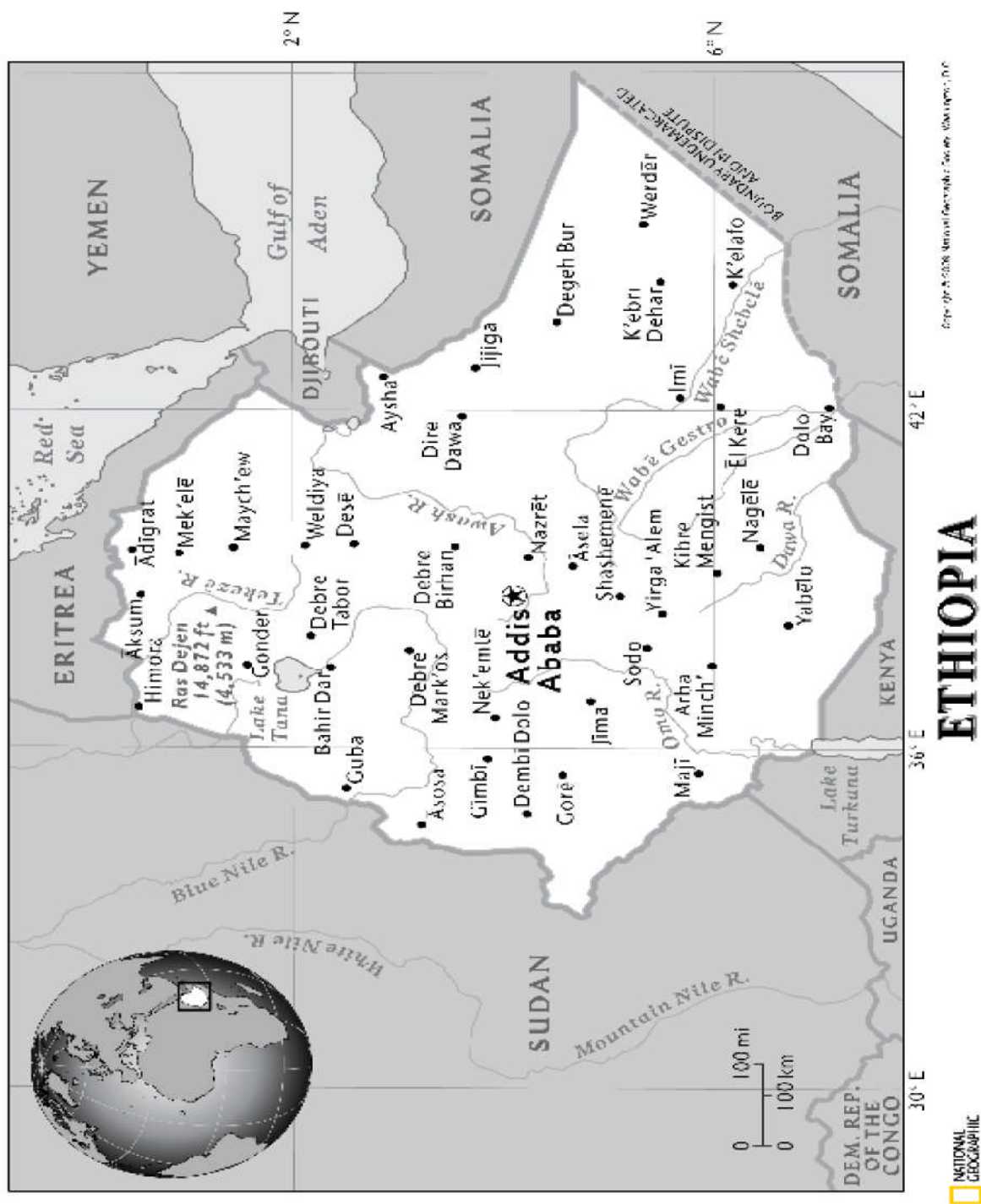


Figure 1. Map of Ethiopia

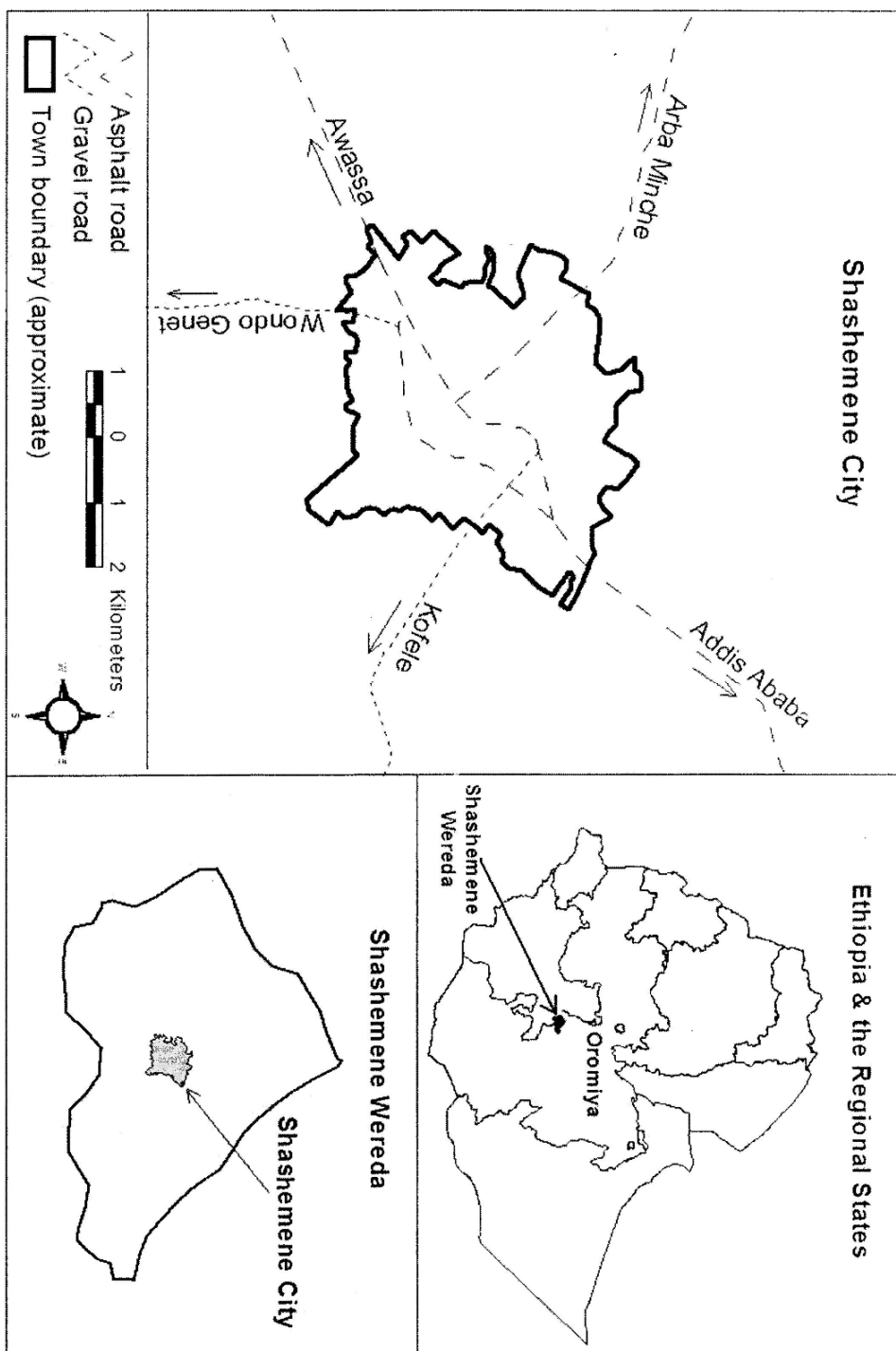


Figure 2. Map depicting the location of Shashamane in relation to major rivers and in Oromiyya Region

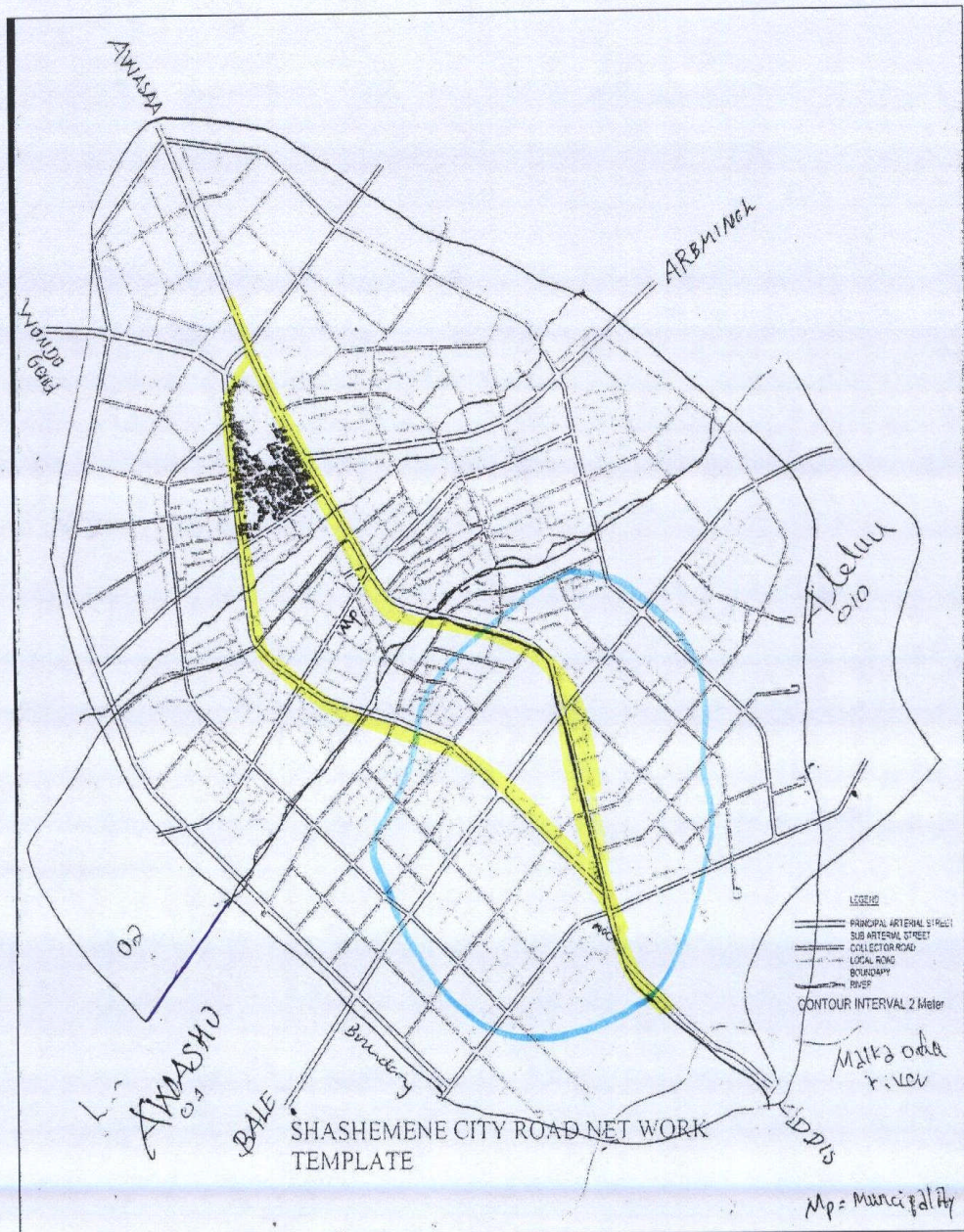


Figure 3. Map showing the area of *Jamaica Safar* in blue, 01 (*Awasho*) *Kebele*, 10 (*Alelu*) *Kebele* and 02 *Kebele* where the town's administrative offices (the Municipality) are located in ink and the front page in yellow
Introduction Part I: the research question

This thesis is an ethnography of the *repatriate* population of the area known as *Jamaica Safar* or *Rasta Safar* (village or neighbourhood) in Shashamane, Ethiopia. It focuses on how these *repatriates*, who are mainly from the West Indies, create and sustain this locality thereby carving out a literal and conceptual place for themselves and their families in Ethiopia. The themes of economy, society, kinship and politics are examined in order to frame the social and subjective ideas about individuals and about communities held by *repatriates* and their locally-born children.

Since Shashamane is neither a typical migration destination for West Indians, nor is their motivation primarily an economic one, this movement must be considered in terms of Rastafari worldview. Most *repatriates* in Shashamane are Rastafari (Rastafarian) men and women from Jamaica who settled there in the 1970s. They call themselves “repatriates” since they have returned to what is considered the “home,” “homeland,” and for some Rastafari the “promised land” of Ethiopia (Africa). In Rastafari worldview, Ethiopia has a central symbolic importance as the home of God, of black peoples and of all humanity, which I will expand on in chapter one. Since I privilege this way of positioning their individuality in the world, I use the word “repatriate” rather than “migrant.”¹ *Repatriate* indicates a search for spiritual salvation and psychological *betterment* which also entails improving one's material condition. This move to Ethiopia came about partly in response to a gift of about 500 acres of land that His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia, donated to the

¹ *Repatriates* also call the earliest men and women who moved to Shashamane “settlers.”

Ethiopian World Federation (EWF) in the 1950s. This land in Shashamane, popularly called *the land grant*, was meant to be distributed among “African” peoples outside Ethiopia who wished to settle there. Rastafari from other Caribbean countries, North America, Britain and Europe also make up the *repatriate* population of this locally and globally constituted “village;” a *safar* which includes local Ethiopian residents of various tribal affiliations.

This Rasta project of repatriation to Ethiopia is examined here both in terms of worldview and in terms of pragmatic day to day experiences. I explore the multiple social and subjective attachments that emerge in everyday situations in what can broadly be considered a migration locale between persons in Shashamane and in *foreign*² and with institutions in Ethiopia. As lives are being built on *the land grant*, in a changing Ethiopian milieu, ideas about attachment and belonging are continuously and simultaneously reiterated and reconfigured. The actions and beliefs of *repatriates* and their local and foreign-born children problematise, on various levels, fundamental demarcations of place. In particular, the issues of who can claim to belong to this place and whose values can and do define territory are not abstract but are instead very real concerns for *repatriates*. The answers to these questions will determine access and rights to land, citizenship, and opportunities for advancement (see Malkki 1995; 1997). In a wider anthropological context these are questions about “origins,” “roots” and “identity” (Geertz 1973; Clifford 1997; Gupta and Ferguson 1997). As I show, Rastafari worldview thus questions the parameters of ideological and social

² In popular West Indian use, *foreign* usually refers to the global north. It connotes opportunities for making money that are supposedly unavailable in the West Indies and thus of “bettering” oneself and the family, of a general superiority to the West Indies, and of the American myth of limitless possibilities, although this is applied outside the USA. In Shashamane, though, any location outside Ethiopia is referred to as *foreign*. Jamaica, Britain and Tanzania are all “foreign” although Britain, and at times Jamaica are part of *babylon*, as I will explain.

inclusion and exclusion reiterated by the nation and within the distinct territories of Ethiopia: the *safar*, the town of Shashamane (particularly the *kebele* or sub-district), the state and the nation of Ethiopia.

The type of cosmopolitan, “outernational” worldview exemplified in Rastafari must be contextualised with regard to the role of movement and the formation of a Creole social personhood in the modern West Indies. The position of the West Indies as historically the first bastion of capitalist economics – developments that preceeded industrialisation - has influenced not only the material conditions of its peoples, but their ways of viewing the world and how they situate themselves in it. As such, Rastafari worldview and linguistic expression is one challenging and visionary, yet nonetheless indigenous, expression of a personhood that is centrally shaped by movement both as an idea and a practice. There are broader commonalities between Rastafari concepts and other West Indian stories of travel and extraterritoriality (see Wardle 2001). However, Rastafari have their particular (though contested) answers to wider historical predicaments (previously noted), that I will discuss in this dissertation. Rastafari narratives and ideals are only one aspect of how Shashamane is “rehomed,” though, and this thesis alternates chapter by chapter between the ideological and the quotidian while incorporating aspects of each.

The dynamics of forging Creole ideas of personhood over centuries, out of remnants of practices and beliefs, began with the modern history of movements to the Caribbean, resulting from global relations of capital and industry that created what Mintz calls the first modern societies. In this context, as Mintz reminds us, creolisation in the West Indies refers not only to the “loss of culture, but also [to]

some sort of indigenization” (1996: 302). This aspect of claiming place or “rehomeing” is essential to creolisation (Crichlow 2009; Sheller 2003). It involved cultivating attachments, building relations and creating cultural habits and forms in each plantation, each island society, and across islands between plantation societies. These processes have left a mark on all peoples of the Caribbean region, which is most evident in the attitude of contemporary peoples toward movement.

This view of migration as a normative practice is one basis for continued migrations, mainly for economic reasons, from the post-emancipation period to the present. From this period, Jamaicans migrated to Central and South America, (to Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia etc) largely for wage labour (mainly on the banana plantations) since peasant agriculture was then an insufficient means of earning a living. West Indians have also moved within the Caribbean, to North America and more recently to Britain for similar economic reasons (Gonzalez 1969; Philpott 1973; Sutton and Chaney 1987). These migrants did not typically conceive of their movement, though largely in search of labour opportunities for individual and familial “betterment” (Fog Olwig 2005) as a disastrous break from kin and home. As researchers have noted in terms of the present, not only movement to *foreign* (the global north) but also within the Caribbean region continues to be commonplace (Figueroa 2008; Fernandez-Alfaro and Pascua 2006).

Moving within the regions of the global south, however, did not diminish the emotional and psychological dissonance that migrants experienced in other societies, particularly those of the global north, as Marcus Garvey highlighted (James 1933; Sivanandan 1982; Selvon 1979; Garvey 1923). This tendency to view movement as

normative yet simultaneously enriching and challenging, continues and practically every West Indian person of any class, colour or religion has a relative, friend or neighbour in *foreign*. Although these features have now become a common feature of 21st century life in many regions (in light of the impact of globalising policies of capital and technology that raises new questions of attachment and belonging), West Indians have long engaged conceptually, socially and politically with the complexity of their diverse origins, shared as well as distinct practices, and hence creolised worldview. Mobility has, to varying extents, been institutionalised in West Indian society.

West Indian migration has also presented the sometimes exaggerated potential for personal re-invention that is recognised both by those who move and those who do not. Robert Hill argues that the West Indian proclivity for re-envisioning oneself also appears in a specialised form in the historical figure of the migrant-as-impostor. Hill notes that through imposture, some black West Indian migrants succeeded in re-inventing their attachments to people and places. From the 19th century such “impostors,” claiming to be Ethiopian royalty, appeared ubiquitously in the West Indies, the United States, Britain and in Ethiopia itself. The catalyst appears to have been the 1896 Battle of Adwa which is defined as a watershed of the Ethiopian nation, when the Abyssinian Emperor Menelik defeated invading Italian forces. One such example was Prince Makarooroo aka Issac Brown aka Prince Hendrix Hull Polawharoo. Prince Makarooroo was a black Jamaican migrant who asserted his family ties to Abyssinian royalty as variably a “brother” or as a “Prince” himself. While in Jamaica,

the statements that he was reported to have made touched on several explosive issues—Jamaica’s slave past, the oppressive social order,

racial discrimination, the iniquitous system of taxation that fell most heavily on the peasantry, the absence of workers' rights, low wages, and the highly unjust legal system. Significantly, the prince invested his critique by introducing the question of Africa. He spoke not simply as a Jamaican; rather, he was speaking with the authority of Africa (Hill 2008: 21).

It was this "authority of Africa" that the Prince maintained in his international travels, and in his varied personae while his narratives also reflected an astute grasp of the systemic inequalities in (at that time) colonial Jamaica. He was evidently well-informed about international political events, and as Prince Ludwig Menelik he advertised "a kingdom for sale" as well as its "minerals" and "rubber for exploitation" in Germany and in America during industrial expansion.

Rastafari worldview has not only inherited aspects of the redefined Ethiopianism of this period, (which I will further discuss in another section) it also concurs in the insistence on viewing the individual and humanity outside of hegemonic notions of place, territory and citizenship, as Hill shows for these West Indian impostors. Echoes of Ethiopianism emerge in Rastafari worldview generally and in *repatriates'* assertion of their belonging to Ethiopia, as in Brother David's remark in chapter one that "an Ethiopian cannot change his skin just as a leopard cannot change his spots" (referring to Jeremiah 13:23 of the Bible). As I will explain, Ethiopia (Africa) in Rastafari worldview is a unique creation or amalgam. This is one reason that this repatriation to Ethiopia must be analytically distinguished from other historical repatriations to Africa from the West Indies and the Americas.³ Autonomous and forced repatriation efforts among non-Rastafari were ongoing since the 18th century (Boadi-Siaw 1993; Campbell 2007; Harris 1993; Skinner 1993). These included the British policies of

³ Studies of past and recent organised return movements have drawn attention to the "disillusionment" that "migrants" who "return home" experience (see Harris 1982; Beriss 2004).

forcible return to Sierra Leone, the later 19th century American state policy of “encouraged” return to Liberia and the Portuguese policies that forced slaves and former slaves from Brazil to West Africa. However, when *repatriates* speak of “returning” to Africa they are not only invoking a linear, historical Ethiopian Empire over which His Majesty ruled, but simultaneously a Rastafari vision of Ethiopia.

By taking the complexity of Hill’s historical analysis into consideration, this thesis examines how the symbolic claiming of Africa and a cosmopolitan-oriented consciousness of kinship and equality are enacted, contested, and shaped through everyday actions and speech in the ethnically and nationally diverse *safar*. This is especially evident in chapter four “*Jamaican yards*: family, household and ‘ethnicity’” where I discuss household formation and composition, gendered roles, sexuality and cultural identifications. I emphasise that one main factor that residents of various ages and ethnicities (including *repatriates* and their children) use in deploying the key social category of *Jamaican* is the location of a family’s house. I discuss the intersection of gender, sexuality, and age with the two polar yet fluid categories of *Jamaican* and Ethiopian, and focus on how young *Jamaican* men and women define and understand these interconnected categories.

In certain ways *repatriates* and their locally-born Rastafari children claim belonging by asserting difference. I delineate the conceptual foundation of this in chapter one, “His Majesty’s people: narratives of community and personhood,” by exploring the intersections of Ethiopian national mythology and Rastafari charter myths which assert Rastafari lineage with its foundation in the House of David and the centrality of Ethiopia within this reorganisation of worldview. I introduce core Rastafari beliefs

and local socio-economic-political dynamics through a well-known historical event that is crucial to the collective oral history-making concerning *the land grant*. Alongside this, I highlight the roles of different groups and the statuses that different peoples achieve and occupy in *the community* (meaning the *repatriate* population) which position them differently in terms of this history. The continuous narration of this historical event shows how these different groups continuously shape their roles and hence re-make this history.

Blackness, for instance, comes to have an entirely different meaning for Rastafari *repatriates* in Shashamane than it had either under the plantation system or in certain more recent contexts in the West Indies or in current Ethiopian popular sentiment. Its meaning for Rastafari *repatriates* has emerged out of the dynamic interplay between the collective history of West Indians, their new reconceptualisations, and other current factors that they encounter such as ethnocentric ideologies (including Ethiopian nationalism). Accordingly, I examine the ideological intersections between Rastafari reinterpretation and the hegemonic rendition of Ethiopian national history, which is a distinct contribution of this study.

In the altered socio-economic and legal-political context of Shashamane and of Ethiopia, as well, new modes of living and imaginative expressions are created, flourish and are confronted. These are especially evident in the use of the local category, *Jamaican*, which I will later discuss. Another manifestation of this kind of (cultural) re-invention is the narrative of the courageous migrant who is contrasted to his or her counterpart in the West Indies. This distinction is frequently reiterated in Shashamane and is vocalised by *repatriates*, as I will discuss in chapter one, as one

quality of a *pioneer*. *Repatriates*' physical arrival in Shashamane is an achievement in itself, and unlike migrants who must show some measure of success in the migration destination by sending goods and money to relatives in home locales, it is *IandI* (Rastafari) outside of Shashamane, collectively as Mansions (or Houses; a semi-formal group of Rastafari) and separately as individuals, who largely support *repatriates*. Additionally, unlike migration to the global north or within the Caribbean, repatriation is meant to be a permanent move undertaken to improve the lives of *repatriates* in Ethiopia, not their kin in the Caribbean.

Migration from the Caribbean to the west or to more affluent states in the Caribbean is usually a "family strategy" (Chamberlain 2005). The goal of such migration is usually *bettering* (improving) the material condition of a family or household, and not only one person. As such, migration usually involves "dual obligations" to the immediate family unit and to extended family members in multiple locations (Fog Olwig 2005). For *repatriates* in Shashamane, on the other hand, repatriation can involve similar yet varied obligations to the House that "sent" the *repatriate*, if he or she was sent. This means that the House chose the Rastaman or Rastawoman and paid for travel expenses and initial living expenses in Shashamane (other *repatriates* are self-funded). In a broader sense the act of repatriating entails reciprocating to His Majesty's gift of land by occupying the land, and maintaining the presence of *IandI* in and on the land.

Although migration is usually a move oriented toward *bettering* the family, living in Shashamane and maintaining the *repatriate* presence in Ethiopia, is a collective, Rastafari effort on the part of *IandI* who support repatriation. While Rastafari re-

envision personhood distinctively, in repatriating to Ethiopia, Rastafari *repatriates* must confront similar legal and economic hurdles to other West Indian migrants in the global north. These difficulties include acquiring legal residency or citizenship, ownership of property, and earning a living consistently. The issue of citizenship emerges in the fifth and final chapter, “Ethiopian-ness and citizenship,” in which I discuss the varied emic expressions of belonging to Ethiopia by *Jamaicans* in relation to legal citizenship from which they are often excluded in practice, and other social and economic arenas where they are both included and excluded. I provide examples of everyday situations where *Jamaicans* engage with the representatives of local and federal institutions of the Ethiopian state. This adds further ethnographic depth to the conceptual mapping of chapter one, thereby completing this picture.

In terms of earning a living consistently, in the second chapter, “*Making a living* (outer)nationally in Shashamane,” I continue to examine how these impressive claims to belong translate into actions and distinctions between *IandI* in Shashamane, Rastafari abroad, and local Ethiopian neighbours. I address the fundamental and complex question of how *repatriates* survive economically after achieving the sought-after goal of repatriation. I describe the income-generating activities of *repatriate* households and position individuals, households, and the *repatriate* population in the context of international networks between Shashamane and *foreign*, which all ensure the continued *repatriate* presence in Shashamane, as well as how the local economy of Shashamane and the Ethiopian national economy impacts on *repatriate* activities and goals. While the first chapter examines the significance of repatriation, Ethiopia, and His Majesty’s donation of land in Rasta worldview, this chapter focuses on the

actions of *repatriates* to achieve longevity on *the land grant* and not only to survive, but to *better* their families and *the community*.

Outernational ties: *IandI* and repatriation

The specific Rastafari shift from a Eurocentric worldview enforced through the mechanisms of the plantation system, to a conception of the world with Ethiopia-Africa as its axis is emblematic of the reframing of Rasta attachments in cosmopolitan and outernational terms. This deliberate modification of dominant ideas is verbalised through a Rastafari form of speech that Pollard names “dread talk” which I explore in chapter three in terms of the Rasta philosophy of word-sound-power (Pollard 2000; see also Nettleford 1978).

One example of this is the word “outernational” which is an inversion of “international” (Van Dijk 1998). It literally refers to the emergence of Rastafari beliefs and expressions outside of the national context of Jamaica, in accordance with Rasta usage, and more fundamentally reflects this shift to the nucleus of Ethiopia (Africa). Gilroy (1993) uses “outer-national” as well to emphasise that the formation of “national” identities in the Atlantic space has historically been influenced by processes outernationally, i.e outside national territories but within the “black Atlantic.” In this dissertation the term also highlights the combined effort of *IandI* in Shashamane and in Ethiopia and those outside Ethiopia toward maintaining the existence of the *repatriate* population in Shashamane, both in terms of day to day economic sustenance and symbolically as the inalienable *land grant*.

When Rastafari speak of *IandI* the term denotes this key conceptual shift. This concept of “oneness” between the individual-collective situates the speaker as

intrinsically connected to the global brethren and sistren of Rastafari (Pulis 1999; Pollard 2000; Homiak 1999). In the same spirit, Rastafari men and women refer to people in the faith as “Brother” and “Sister.” This discursive tool establishes the mutual connection of the person and the collective Rastafari. In certain situations, *IandI* refers not only to all Rastafari around the world, but it is also a more expansive concept of oneness referring to humanity or to Rastafari and non-Rastafari alike who are *sufferers*. “*Sighting Rastafari: word-sound-power*,” the third chapter, is a socio-linguistically focused one that highlights the oral and aural medium in which Rastafari cosmology is expressed by persons on their own (between themselves), those young in the faith, and in order to test visitors to the *safar* and both Rasta and non-Rasta strangers. I emphasise that the Bible is an ambivalent source of knowledge which must be interpreted accurately (or “truthfully”) since this knowledge is a key element of *sighting* Rastafari (acquiring spiritual ‘vision’ or insight) and gaining social recognition as an adult Rastaman or Rastawoman.

Since one significant aspect of Rastafari worldview is the response to oppression (or *downpression* in Rasta speech), the figure of the *sufferer* is essential here. *Sufferers* are people who are exploited by the *system* or *babylon*. In this work I use the lower case “b” at the beginning of *babylon* to emphasise both the derivation and distinction from the city of Babylon of the Bible. Chevannes offers a definition whereby

Babylon represented an entire system of conspiracy: the white establishment of wealth and privilege, served by the state; the agents of the state, especially the police; the Church, especially the Catholic presence of Rome, the whore and *downpressor* whose apocalyptic downfall was already assured by prophecy; the *headication* (education) system (2006: 97).

Niaah echoes this:

Babylon...is Rasta-speak referring to the Western system of hegemony, that imprisoning nature of societies through man-made laws reinforced by governments, the traditional church, and apparatuses of the state that oppress the disenfranchised. There are historical connotations linked to hegemonic forces from the time of the biblical Babylon (2009:117).

When Leonard Barrett did his research in the 1970s he later concluded that, through Rastafari language,

binary oppositions are overcome in the process of identity...Other sufferers in the society...[even non-Rastas] will be immediately addressed in conversation as “I and I”...it can be seen, then, that long before the philosophy of democratic socialism [came to the fore in Jamaica], which advocates the breaking down of divisions among fellow Jamaicans, was ever heard...the Rastafarians were practicing the philosophy (1977:144-5).

In Shashamane, *repatriates* also acknowledge the commonality of their circumstances as the descendants of slaves (as black peoples) and as peoples devoid of legal status in Ethiopia, with those of other *sufferers*, such as dispossessed Palestinians and black South Africans under the past apartheid regime. As I show throughout this thesis though, the boundaries of *IandI* are expressed malleably in everyday situations. When I use *IandI* in this work it usually refers to *repatriates* in Shashamane since this is its most common use in the *safar*, rather than meaning Rastafari around the world.

This ethos of a non-hierarchical *oneness* that allows for variation in individuals’ practices, ideas and cultural forms within the collective grouping of Rastafari is replicated in the relationships between Rastafari groups and elders and between Houses and leaders. Part of the foundation of Rastafari philosophy is the opposition to institutional dogma and structures of the Church, for example. Although Rastafari Mansions have leaders and elders, the basic philosophy disallows hierarchy and

relationships are built on, and are in principle guided by an ethos of equality. In the 1970s, Cashmore noted that,

though all Rastas to a great extent internalised a rough calculus, the way in which they manipulated it varied with their own particular interests and circumstances. This was facilitated by the epistemological individualism which characterised the movement. Accepting that Haile Selassie was God and that all black men were originally from Africa...did not furnish the acceptor with stipulations as to his thought and behaviour; it provided only the nucleus for the apprehension of a different reality and a special place in that reality for the Rastaman (1979: 140).

Chevannes suggests that “the adherence to this mindset of ‘accommodation’ is one reason, it has been argued, that Rastafari “have been able not merely to survive the ups and downs of its relations with the society [in Jamaica] over the years but also to influence it” (Chevannes 1998:31). Edmonds (2003) argues that this form of egalitarianism of practice and decentralisation offers an alternative form of organisation that effectively confronts state manoeuvres to impose an established institutional structure. Yet, Edmonds also notes that this type of organisation potentially increases the vulnerability of Rastafari to external divide and rule attempts or tactics (ibid).

The symbolism of repatriation holds a central place in Rastafari ideology. “Rastafari often say that “without a vision the people perish” [which]...means that as descendants of people forcibly removed from Africa, they must maintain the goal of returning to Africa” (Yawney 1999:154). Although Rastafari in general (worldwide) have different views regarding physical repatriation, Chevannes asserts that repatriation, in contrast to migration, is a divine act that only God can facilitate (1998: 30). While *repatriates* in Shashamane did not express this belief in such a direct manner, they noted indicators of their readiness to repatriate received mainly through

dreams and visions; the dream itself is an indicator that is just as important as its content.

Such a “vision” of return was an immensely powerful one that mobilised Rastafari from different Houses. In fact, a 1959 repatriation attempt was organised by Nyahbinghis - Nyahbinghi is usually considered to be the founding House or Mansion of Rastafari - who phrased their goal as “Repatriation or rebellion” (Campbell 2007:222).⁴ However, according to Chevannes, actual repatriation attempts were few in number and all unsuccessful. The earliest in 1934 was stimulated to a certain extent by the rise in popularity of Garvey’s back to Africa philosophy, and the others took place in 1958 and 1959. They were organised by different men and had differing supporters, but the organisers all named themselves after Ras Tafari, Haile Selassie I.

It is therefore worth reiterating that these repatriation attempts must be contrasted to the ongoing migration of Jamaicans and other West Indians occurring at that time. It is here that aspects of political economy analyses that are not reduced to push and pull factors may be useful in addressing the economic, social, and political factors in various home locales and migration destinations as well as the motivations of individuals and families to move. During the late 19th century migrations of West Indians that I previously noted, Jamaicans had been one of the largest groups from the Caribbean to move as sources of “cheap labour in the USA...and...Central America. In this situation, “*Ethiopia yes, England no*, became the cry of a mobile, alert and conscious Jamaican working poor who preferred to take chances in Ethiopia than go to England” (Campbell 2007:221).

⁴ Additionally, independent of His Majesty’s land grant, under pressure from Rastafari, the first official mission from Jamaica visited five independent African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, in 1961 to discuss the possibility of accommodating Jamaicans who wished to settle in these countries.

As I have discussed, for Rastafari, Ethiopianism had its precedents in a specific strand of 19th and early 20th century migrant protagonism. However, the elements that encouraged the emergence of Rastafari in the 1930s-1950s require further contextualisation. Various events occurred at the end of the 19th century and following Haile Selassie's coronation in 1930 that were significant enough to influence persons who called themselves Rastafari during the 1930s. In the next section I therefore select from these events in order to briefly explore the ideas that have been critical to the shaping and the expression of Rastafari.

Ethiopianism, Rastafari and the Jamaican *shituation*

The first academic investigation into Rastafari though brief, was undertaken by academics in 1960 at the (at that time) University College of the West Indies in Jamaica. This report noted that “much of the psychology of the brethren is the psychology of the unemployed in any place of the world...The movement is rooted in unemployment” (Smith et al 1960:28 cited in Pollard 2000:21). From this period scholars have also analysed the Rastafari “movement”⁵ as a political cult (Simpson 1978), a politico-religious protest cult (Kitzinger 1969), a messianic movement (Barrett Sr 1977), and a millenarian movement (Albuquerque 1977 cited in Chevannes 1998). Subsequent researchers continued this vein by emphasising the economic context, racial consciousness and cultural creativity of Rastafari (Campbell 2007; Pollard 2000; Chevannes 1994; Bender 2005).

⁵ The designation “movement” or “social movement” for Rastafari is contested by Price who argues that the term only captures part of what various Rastas are involved in and subsumes diverse beliefs and projects. According to Price, “Rastafari have much in common with “prefigurative” social movements in that the Rastafari identity (and its cultural complex) provides ideas for people experimenting with different ways of relating and living: people begin trying to model personally the society that they want to live in” (2009:7).

Rastafari has thus been historically placed in a framework of resistance to oppression that is broadly applied to ideology, cosmology, speech (including music) and dress. Recently, Rastafari has been described as a “universal philosophy” for “universal human rights” (Zips 2006). This approach emphasises its militant and activist foundations to improve the economic and psychological status of not only poor Jamaicans, but other *downpressed* peoples around the world, as Campbell and Rodney also highlighted. Rastafari has therefore been hailed for its liberatory “philosophy” which is commonly identified as both premised on and as the basis for black consciousness as well as for political change across race and nationality (Chevannes 1998; Savishinsky 1994).

As I have indicated, Rasta consciousness must be situated especially in a background of Ethiopianism as well as Back to Africa ideology. Ethiopianism initially emerged in various forms in the 18th century during slavery. This “dynamic mythology created out of Biblical references to a Black race (was) largely the vision of a golden past – and the promise that Ethiopia should once more stretch forth its hands to God – that revitalized the hope of an oppressed people” (Barrett 1977:70,75). Ethiopianism took on pan-continental dimensions and was formalised in the creation of new “Black” churches like the Ethiopian Churches in Africa, the Baptist Churches in Jamaica and other churches in America. Later, in the 19th century, “many self-help groups and lodges included the name ‘Ethiopian’ in their titles” (Littlewood 1993:102). Since religious gatherings were one of the few permitted ways for large numbers of slaves to meet during the colonial period, this “reinterpretation of Christianity” (Simpson

1978:21) was a successful means of challenging Eurocentric ideas.⁶ Hill (2008) additionally argues that the declarations of Ethiopian royal lineage made by poor Black men and women (the impostors previously mentioned) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries added new force to expressions of Ethiopianism.

Ethiopianism was consequently an expression of resistance to the ideological and psychological domination that slaves experienced (Shepherd 1996; Barrett 1977; Campbell 2007). This was enhanced over time by the perception of Ethiopia as “the ancient Christian kingdom...[that] appeared a place of dignity and hope” (Littlewood 1993:102) especially as it was the only black African territory never to have been formally colonised by Europe⁷ (Pankhurst 2001:215). Ethiopianism remained an essential part of Black religious thought well into the 20th century.⁸ With the increased number of schools opened in the first part of the century, mainly by religious organisations, the education in Jamaica that was accessible to poor peoples was in the form of religious schools and the Bible became well-known to ordinary peoples (see Edmonds 2000). Since these new beliefs were rooted in biblical imagery they were both accessible and familiar to a wide cross-section of (Afro) Jamaicans.

This background of Ethiopianism combined with Garvey’s ideas of African empowerment to create a radical and inventive corpus of ideas. At the beginning of the 20th century Marcus Garvey founded the United Negro Improvement Association

⁶ As Littlewood explains, “political response to White domination in the Caribbean before the 1930s did not take the form of mass secular organization” (Littlewood 1993:101). The publication of CLR James’ *The Case for West Indian Self-Government* in 1933 was reflective of the move toward successful labour union organising.

⁷ Ethiopia was never formally colonised, as occurred in the Caribbean, although Italy occupied the territory between 1935-1941.

⁸ Proof of this occurred when 1400 peoples in Jamaica, still British subjects, signed a petition (unsuccessfully) requesting permission from the British government to enlist in the Ethiopian army “to fight to preserve the glories of our ancient and beloved Empire” (Zips 2006: 48).

(UNIA) to begin the process of achieving this goal. “The UNIA set out to establish independent economic ventures which would break the hold of the white capitalists over the black communities and over Africa” (Campbell 2007: 61). The UNIA not only advocated the psychological upliftment of black peoples or as Campbell puts it, engaged in “militant claims for self-determination [that] tied the struggle for world-wide racial solidarity to the battles for the liberation of Africa” (2007:57), but also implemented plans for economic and political collective improvement, such as the Black Star Line. This was a shipping company that was meant to initiate trade between the Americas and West Africa. As Horace Campbell reiterates,

Garveyism was...much more than symbols and imagery, though it cannot be denied that the painting of a Black Christ and the singing of the African National Anthem provided a tremendous uplift...The Negro Factories Corporation was the business arm of the UNIA and this company had removal vans, publishing companies, laundries and restaurants throughout the USA (2007: 61).

These ideas were taken further by Rastafari with the claim that Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, crowned in 1930 with the titles “Lion of Judah” and “King of Kings” was God. This was supported by Marcus Garvey’s reported comment in 1916, “look to Africa for the crowning of a Black King, he shall be the Redeemer” (Barrett 1977:67) although some scholars have argued that Garvey himself did not accept this interpretation (Hill 2001; Lewis 2006). Regardless, Garvey highlighted that the coronation of Haile Selassie I, an Ethiopian monarch, was a momentous event for African peoples.

The first men in Jamaica to publicly announce that Haile Selassie I was God or the Black Messiah, independently of each other, were Leonard Howell and Joseph

Hibbert.⁹ In 1933 when Howell returned from the United States, he “began to hold his first public meetings on the subject of “Ras Tafari, King of Abyssinia” (Hill 2001: 27).¹⁰ The assertion of Selassie’s divinity was an immensely significant development that introduced what Chevannes refers to as the “first phase” of Rastafari thought. Chevannes analyses the changes in Rastafari in terms of three “phases of growth” (1998). In the 1930s-1940s the salient ideas were the existence of a Black God “living among men” and the radical idea that “being Black was a divine attribute.”

This initial “phase” entailed spreading the word of a God who was Black and one living in that time, rather than a God who died more than a millennium before.¹¹ It also included the immanentist idea that God dwells within each person so man himself is divine. This Black God was “a symbol of the black glory and ancient African lineage dating back to Solomon and the Queen of Sheba” (Simpson 1978:127). Howell and Hibbert “went further, to argue that if being Black was a divine attribute, then the African race, by being Black, shared in divinity” (Chevannes 1998:11). These views served to historically and psychologically reclaim a colonialist ethnocentric concept of the African as worthless and Biblically cursed (I will mention the Hamitic hypothesis in chapter one).

These ideas were also part of the Pan-African and Pan-Socialist inspired movements in the Caribbean during the 20th century. They filled a void for black West Indians as

⁹ These men, along with others, Archibald Dunkley, Brother Napier, Brother Powell and Robert Hinds (who was Howell’s lieutenant) are seen as the earliest Rastafari, named from Ras Tafari Makonnen who took the title Emperor Haile Selassie I.

¹⁰ Howell’s compound was raided, he was imprisoned in 1937, and was later confined to a mental asylum. Campbell connects Howell’s, Hibbert’s, and Dunkley’s rise in consciousness to their experiences as migrants in North and Central America, and the similar racial and economic *downpression* that Garvey had recognised earlier.

¹¹ See Song of Solomon 1:5-6 “I am Black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem” regarding Rasta views of Christ as a Black man.

well as poor brown West Indians (the descendents of labourers and not elites) who experienced a similar devaluation of personhood, relegated to the ‘inferior other’ within the debilitating structures of colonial thought and institutions (Carter 1997; Jagan 1966; Rodney 1975; 1981). West Indian territories, at the time of Haile Selassie I’s coronation, remained colonies and, while Rastafari gained momentum in the 1950s and 1960s, were embroiled in independence struggles that drew on Pan-African and Pan-Socialist thought. The core of this consciousness is aptly analysed by Horace Campbell who states, “these Pan-Africanists...were carrying out an exercise in self-definition which was aimed at establishing a broader sense of self-esteem and worth than that which had been permitted by the ideologues of Western Capitalism” (2007:51).

While Rastafari and independence projects shared this ideological basis, researchers have pointed to a chasm between them. West Indian independence movements consisted mainly of academics and intellectuals as the universities were the sites of consciousness-raising and organising. Although these intellectuals were “grounded” (see Rodney 1975), the movements still tended to exclude uneducated peoples (Chaney and Sutton 1987), and this gap was filled by Rastafari. During the 1960s and 1970s, as well, outside Jamaica, other West Indians who were involved with national independence movements, Black Power and anti-colonial struggles (in Grenada in the early 1980s for instance) “took up Rasta.” Other occurrences in Jamaica in the 1950s-1960s fostered the conditions for the increasing popularity of Rastafari. These included the increasing displacement of rural peoples for industrial expansion (the construction of bauxite factories for instance), the increasing overcrowding of Kingston and ghettoisation of certain areas of the city, and the previously mentioned

economic migration to Britain where migrants were most often packed onto the boats that shipped agricultural produce from Jamaica to Britain (the so-called banana boats). Accordingly, Rastafari meetings “provided lower-class and disaffected Jamaicans with opportunities to denounce the enemies of the people: “the white man” and the Jamaican “traitors”: politicians, businessmen, clergymen, and the police” (Simpson 1978:126).

The name they gave for these institutions was *Babylon* (which was previously defined). In resonating words, militant reggae singer of 1970s, Peter Tosh, also known as Stepping Razor referred to these elements as the *shitstem* and *shituation*. In this view, *babylon* stands in contrast to *zion* that is, heaven and *the promised land*, which are representative of evil and good. As will become evident in this work, this dual concept is manifested in each sphere so *babylon* exists in the *zion* of Ethiopia, but it was the conditions of *babylon* in the West Indies that fostered the formation of this worldview.

Rastafari (the emergence of the initial movement and the worldview) must therefore be situated in the combination of economic inequalities and psychological devaluation that Jamaicans and other West Indians experienced and the consciousness that emerged to oppose these elements. This consciousness, for Rastas and for independence advocates, was and continues to be, rooted in “full knowledge of the dangerous memories of oppression, exploitation, landlessness, underemployment, and other effects of colonialism” that are maintained in the collective memories of Caribbean peoples (Murrell 2000:32). Material inequality, situated in hierarchical regimes of power and “the range of influences – Garveyism, anti-slavery resistance,

Nyabingi, Ethiopianism” (Campbell 2007: 3) all coalesced in various degrees and at different moments to create the foundation of Rastafari consciousness. This historical awareness and the desire for “equal rights and justice for all” (Zips 2006) advocated by Rastafari, stimulated West Indians to reinvent ideas of personhood and advocate for societies based on concepts of material and ideological equality and upliftment.

Marx (1852) argued that people make their own history but not in conditions of their own making. I have argued that Rastafari and the actual move to Ethiopia must be situated in a history of the continuous (re)invention of personhood, and the role of movement and mobility in fostering this in the Creole societies of the West Indies as well as the *downpressing* material conditions of Rastafari there. West Indian Rastafari have re-invented themselves and re-defined their positions in various ways, from the Ethiopianism of the 19th century to Rastafari of the 1930s to the situations of *Jamaicans* in Shashamane.

Introduction Part II: *Jamaica Safar* and Shashamane

When I approached Shashamane from Addis Ababa along the smooth paved highway, colloquially called “the King’s highway,” there were indicators that I had arrived in the *Jamaica Safar*. These were the vividly painted images of the Lion of Judah on a gate in the characteristic Rastafari colours of red, gold and green (out of my right hand window) and a nearby sign in English: “BLACK LION MUSEUM” again in red, gold, green and black. These *yards* (a Jamaican colloquial term usually for a house and its surrounding area), I later learnt, are the headquarters of the Twelve Tribes of Israel (TTI) and a small museum run by the Ethiopian World Federation (EWF). They stand out distinctly against the smaller darkly-coloured adjacent wooden structures, many of which are shops, homes and restaurants. *Jamaica Safar* is a combination of the word Jamaica - of Amerindian origin - in the West Indies, and the Amharic word *safar* that roughly translates to village or neighbourhood.

The name *Jamaica Safar* identifies the presence of *repatriates*, most of whom have settled in this part of Shashamane, but may be misleading as regards the number of *Jamaicans* in the area. Despite the name, *repatriates* are a numerical minority of the population of the *safar* and Shashamane town. Renato Tomei (2010) suggests that the name indicates the extent of the cultural impact of *repatriates* on the area, although I am not certain if this is an accurate conclusion in light of some of my conversations with local Ethiopians. However, it does point to the high cultural value that some young (especially male) local Ethiopians in Shashamane attribute to those *Jamaican* characteristics and behaviours which epitomise the Jamaican “bad man” figure. I will expand on this in chapter four since these ideas coalesce into a popular image of the tough “Shashamane youth” of any ethnicity. In English, *repatriates* and youths refer

to this locality as “the village,” “the area” or simply “the safar.” They are referring to a concentrated area between Shashamane and the neighbouring town of Melka Oda (Campbell 2007 uses the spelling “Malcoda” according to pronunciation). The *safar* thus overlaps with *kebele* (sub-district) boundaries and it mainly covers *Kebeles* 01 and 10 in Shashamane as well as the separate town of Melka Oda.

Consequently, there are no official borders of *Jamaica Safar* but there are discernable boundaries. In recent years Shashamane was connected to the main highway from Addis Ababa with a paved extension that is divided into two main roads which both lead to the centre of Shashamane town. These are popularly called the “old road” and “the new road” according to the time of construction (I would describe my *yard* as on the side of the new road for example). This new infrastructure facilitates and simplifies the movements of foreign and local peoples to the south of Ethiopia and adds to the impression of increased accessibility between urban and rural areas of Ethiopia. The area at the side of both the old road and the new road is called the “front page” by Amharic and English speakers following official usage; I will explore the implications of this designation in chapter five.

I estimate that the distance between the centre of Shashamane town and *Jamaica Safar* is about one mile. People frequently go to town out of necessity to conduct business since this is the location of banks and the market, and to socialise since there are many clothing shops and restaurants. For example, one Sister had a shop selling clothing and jewelry in Shashamane town although she lived in *Jamaica Safar*. The town centre is also a hub for vehicles travelling to other areas of Ethiopia. Shashamane is usually a necessary transit point for foreign and local peoples heading

to southern Ethiopia. As the last and first major town going to or coming from the south it is well known throughout Ethiopia. Every Ethiopian adult that I met in Addis Ababa, the vast Ethiopian capital, knew of Shashamane.

Residents daily walk through the borders of Shashemene and Melka Oda which are marked by two signs on entering/leaving each town. During my initial efforts to arrive at a population count, the first time that I visited Shashamane I went to the local *wereda* office to ask in English (since I knew no Amharic), an action which proved pointless. This is partly because *Jamaica Safar* is not a state-recognised demarcation. As a result, local Ethiopian and *repatriate* residents of the *safar* are included in national demographic statistics based on the *kebele* in which they reside. The *repatriate* population does not constitute a settlement that is coterminous with the *Jamaica Safar* (see Figure 3 for map with divisions of *kebeles*). Throughout the sixty year period of *repatriate* settlement in Shashamane, *repatriate yards* have always been interspersed among those of their multi-ethnic local Ethiopian neighbours.

The location of *repatriate yards* is a significant factor in the social identification of a person as *Ethiopian* or *Jamaican* as well as his or her language, religion and dietary practices. These factors also influence an individual's view of himself or herself. Although each *repatriate* and local family's *yard* often becomes a *Jamaican* or *Ethiopian* space (as I will discuss in chapter four) there are not distinct *Jamaican* or *Ethiopian* sections of the *safar*.

Shashamane/Shashemene

“Shashamane” refers to an area of 759.53 km² in the large Oromiyya Region approximately 160 miles south of Addis Ababa between the rivers Malcoda and Shashamane (Campbell 2007:222; Central Statistical Agency Statistical Abstract 2007: 32). The population of Oromiyya Region is just over 28 million (exactly 28, 066, 993) in 2008 (CSA 2007: 29) and of Shashamane was over 300,000 (exactly 362,176) in 2008 (CSA 2007:32). Non-Rastafari usually pronounce the word Shash-eh-meh-ney and the most common transliteration into English is spelt “Shashemene.” Rastafari, by contrast, tend to say Shash-ah-mah-ney and as such it is spelt as Shashamane or Shashamene in *repatriate* publications or writing online. For examples see the website of the Shashamane Community Development Foundation, <http://shashamane.org> and the Shashamane Sunrise website, <http://shashamanesunrise.org>, which is a volunteer organisation initiated by Rastafari outside Ethiopia that focuses on educational sponsorship. In this way Shash-ah-mah-ney (Shashamane) is recast as a distinctly Rastafari place and as the site of *the land grant*. To adhere to this emic usage, I use the spelling “Shashamane” in this thesis.

Shashamane has been an agricultural province producing vegetables and cereals including teff, necessary for the dietary staple of *injera* (a flat, round, spongy bread). Sorghum, wheat and barley were the highest in production (according to the 1984 census) and sugar cane and bananas to a lesser extent. The land continues to be farmed by the government, large local and foreign-owned businesses as well as small farmers. The town is located in an area of Ethiopia that is well-known for its natural resources. For instance, the nearby mountainous area of Bale Goba is recognised for its wildlife and flora. The nearby natural lake, Langano, is also popular with locals

and tourists for fishing and relaxing, some of whom stop in Shashamane for meals or temporary accommodation (see chapter two) as well as en route to the Omo National Park, the largest in Ethiopia located in the south.

Following the 1991 TPLF-led coup d'état, Ethiopia was divided into "broadly decentralised ethnically based units called national regional states" known as regions (Adem 2004: 611). The towns of Shashamane and Melka Oda, for instance, are in Oromiyya Region since historically the largest population there were Oromo. The town of Awassa, though only about ten miles from Shashamane, is part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). The current SNNPR has historically consisted of "Sidamo" peoples, which means "non-Oromo" in the Oromiffa language. According to Holcomb and Ibssa,

George Peter Murdock in an anthropological survey of the Horn region used the term "Sidamo" to mean all the ethnic groups of south central Ethiopia, including the Bako, Gibe, Gimira, Janjero, Kafa, Maji, and the Ometo (Murdock 1959: 187-88). Anthropologist John Hamer used the term Sadama "to refer to the Gudela, Kambata [Hadiya], Tambaro, Alaba, and Walamo [Walayita]" who live in the general vicinity of Lakes Abaya and Lake Awasa (Hamer 1987: 10)" (1990: 299).

In partial recognition of this diverse reality, the political region is called SNNPR. Yet, this also demonstrates the somewhat arbitrary divisions of these politically-based regions, and the local and international influences on political nomenclature. Colloquially, this area is called "Sidamo country" in English just as Shashamane is called "Oromo country." The Oromo tribe is currently the largest in Ethiopia accounting for almost 35% of the national population (CSA 2007). Since there are, of course, non-Oromo peoples living in Shashamane, *repatriates* from various foreign locations add another dimension to the ethnic composition of Shashamane, as I will note in subsequent chapters.

Since the earliest *repatriates* moved to Shashamane in the 1950s the area has undergone increased urbanisation and migration of peoples from other areas of Ethiopia resulting in demographic, infrastructural and economic changes (Bjeren 1985). In 1970 the town population was about 11,900 (Bjeren 1985: 86), and since then, with the different movements of peoples into and out of Shashamane for varied periods of time, the periphery of Shashamane continues to be defined malleably in both political and social contexts. When long-resident *repatriates* speak about the land having been “empty” in the past this is not the colonising view of the ‘empty’ lands that were in reality inhabited by indigenous peoples of the Americas or more recently of the ‘empty land’ of Palestine. Instead, this reference to “empty” land implicitly compares the fewer inhabitants in the 1950s-1970s to increasing numbers of people at present moving into Shashamane and residing there, with the accompanying impacts on the landscape.

Since the 1970s more *chika* and concrete houses were built in the *safar* and along the main road and similar expansions took place when the second asphalt (paved) road was constructed about thirty years later. The most noticeable change is the multitude of buildings in the town centre, especially two and three-storey buildings. The increasing construction in the town centre and the wider town is partly encouraged by the regional and federal government plans for the “development” of Shashamane and the availability of agricultural land for domestic and foreign investment (I will discuss this in chapter five). In light of these official plans, one *repatriate* Brother has developed a proposal that he sends to prospective Rastafari and non-Rastafari investors in *foreign* and in Ethiopia, for a cooperative-run farm utilising organic

methods of planting and cultivation. In this way, he envisions contributing to the short-term and long-term development of *the community's* food supply, employment and well-being as well as taking advantage of local opportunities for “investment” thereby acquiring land, and adhering to a Rastafari *ital* way of living (see chapter three).

The *repatriate* population of Jamaica Safar

A number of research dissertations and one publication have discussed the movement to Shashamane in terms of repatriation for the African diaspora, their social integration in Ethiopia, and the perceptions of local Ethiopians toward Rastafari (see Gibson 1996; Minda 1997; Soroto 2008; Merritt 2006; MacLeod 2009; Bonnaci 2008). This thesis, nonetheless, is the first in-depth ethnographic account of the *repatriate* population.

I became familiar with at least one member of 71 *repatriate* households in the *safar*, 25 of which are mixed *repatriate*-local households. Based on this number there are about 200 *repatriates* and Ethiopian-born youths in Shashamane. This is a conservative estimate that includes *repatriates* from the West Indies namely Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Martinique, Dominica as well as Bermuda, Britain, USA, the Netherlands, Germany, and France who may have repatriated from a country different to that of their birth. For example, in chapter two I will introduce two recent *repatriates*, Sister Angela and Sister Anna. Sister Angela moved to Shashamane directly from Trinidad and Tobago and Sister Anna from the USA where she lived for most of her adult life after moving there from Jamaica. In chapter two, as

well, I will mention Sister Bernice and Sister Loretta who spend the majority of the year in *foreign* but refer to themselves as “living in Ethiopia.”

In this dissertation I use the term ‘*repatriate* households’ for households with at least one *Jamaican* parent. Since I have included the Ethiopian-born children of *repatriate* and *repatriate*-local parentage who in turn head their own households, usually with their spouses, as well as households headed by the local Ethiopian mothers of *Jamaican* children it is more accurate to refer to these 71 households as *Jamaican* rather than *repatriate*. When I refer to the children born and raised in Shashamane I include children of mixed *repatriate*-local Ethiopian relations as well as the children of Rasta *repatriates* solely. This is the generation born on *the land grant*, as they are popularly called by *IandI* internationally.

Information about population can also be gleaned from other sources, such as the Jamaican Rastafarian Development Community (JRDC) which is a local Rastafari-administered non-governmental organisation (NGO) registered with the government. The JRDC estimates that *repatriates* who are not citizens of Ethiopia number 110 (in 2009) and hold an incomplete list of 68 children of one or two *repatriate* parents who are also not Ethiopian citizens. Bonacci (2008) suggests that between 1950-2003, 169 “repatriates” arrived in Ethiopia for Shashamane and Soroto (2008) notes that “Rastafarians” number 219. Additionally, the fully licensed JRDC School has about 400 enrolled students who are mainly children solely of Ethiopian parentage, but I estimate that about 5-10% of the student population is *Jamaican* (see <http://shashamane.org>).

As with all demographic information my population count of around 200 must be considered as a snapshot of the *repatriate* population. It captures one moment in the existence of the *safar*. Obviously during my residence in Shashamane I was not familiar with every *repatriate* and visitor. As noted, the number is derived from the households and persons who I knew to varying degrees and it is meant to provide an approximation. In addition to permanent *repatriates* and their children I have therefore included:

- Seasonal *repatriates* who spend at least two months of each year in Shashamane;
- Children born there of *repatriate* parents and of *repatriate* and local parents (the generation born on *the land grant*) who do not currently reside in Shashamane, but do live in other areas of Ethiopia, such as Addis Ababa, and
- Their children (the second generation born on *the land grant*);
- Local Ethiopian mothers (who may or may not be Rasta) of mixed children who reside with their children, either as single household heads or as joint household heads with their male *Jamaican* spouses.

Accordingly, there are a few emic terms that should be defined:

- *Jamaican*: a male or female *repatriate* from anywhere, and not necessarily Jamaica, as well as any child of one *repatriate* parent and one local parent or of two *repatriate* parents.
- *Rasta*: a male or female *repatriate* who may or may not have physical markers of Rastafari such as dreadlocks, he or she may have come to Shashamane from literally any country outside Ethiopia, and be of any skin colour. “Rasta” also refers to the locally-born children of *repatriates* or *repatriate*-local parentage

who, regardless of their birth in Ethiopia are generally called and identify themselves as *Jamaican* or Rasta and contextually as *Habesha* or Ethiopian.

- *Habesha*: although this is not an emic term it is important in Shashamane. It is the Amharic word for Ethiopian that now refers to anyone of any tribal affiliation who is considered “Ethiopian.” A person’s birth in Ethiopia, however, does not generally entitle someone to be called *Habesha*, as evidenced by the black and brown children of *repatriates*. Similarly, white children of Italian migrants in Addis Ababa, for example, who were born in Ethiopia, are not generally considered *Habesha*.
- *Farangi*: a man or woman who is not from Ethiopia and does not natively speak a language spoken in Ethiopia. It usually refers to white people, but can also refer to black *repatriates*. The Ethiopian-born children of *repatriate* and *repatriate*-local parentage are sometimes also called “farangi” (in addition to “Rasta” and “Jamaican”) by local Ethiopians, depending on the situation. The term usually carries a connotation of insult.
- *The community*: when used by *Jamaicans*, this usually means Rastafari in Shashamane.

I also use the terms ‘early *repatriate*,’ ‘recent *repatriate*’ and ‘seasonal *repatriate*’ that are not locally used, but are useful in discussing the unique situation of the *repatriate* population on *the land grant*. A ‘long-standing’ or ‘long-resident’ or ‘early *repatriate*’ (I use these interchangeably) is someone who moved to Shashamane in the first or second periods of repatriation, and has lived there for at least thirty years. I define a ‘recent’ *repatriate* as someone who moved to Shashamane following the last organised repatriation that was organised by the Boboshanti House and the

Nyahbinghi Mansion in the 1990s (see below). Sister Angela and Sister Anna who I quote in chapter two are both recent *repatriates*. ‘Seasonal *repatriates*’ live between Shashamane and *foreign* and may spend up to half the year non-consecutively in Shashamane (for instance Sister Bernice and Sister Loretta) whereas permanent *repatriates* (such as Sister Angela and Sister Anna) live consistently in Shashamane. Additionally, in order to maintain the social distinction between Ethiopians and foreigners and the Rastafari adherence of themselves as “Ethiopians,” I use my own term, local Ethiopian, to refer to persons who were born in Ethiopia, and whose parents were also born in Ethiopia and where in both generations they speak a language native to Ethiopia at home. This might include Oromiffa, for instance, and not only the Ethiopian national language of Amharic. By contrast, although the Ethiopian-born children of *repatriates* natively speak Amharic, their parents learnt Amharic only after repatriating, and they all tend to speak English and patois at the yard.

The land grant, Houses and periods of repatriation to Shashamane

As I will discuss in chapter one, the initial *land grant* was, in effect, eliminated when Haile Selassie was overthrown in 1974, and the succeeding Derg government seized much vacant land for agricultural use. In 1975 this Marxist-oriented government introduced a number of land reforms, one of which was the nationalisation and redistribution of certain lands. This included the land granted by His Majesty, and between 1975-1976 certain *repatriates* petitioned for its return. Forty hectares in total were returned to around eighteen *repatriates* for farming purposes and this land was divided equally amongst these *repatriates* (pers comm).

Since there was no longer available land on which *repatriates* could freely settle, the Houses stopped sending members en masse. Additionally, since the succeeding government (currently in office) did not return further acreage, it is only *IandI* who can afford to ‘buy’ land in Shashamane from local Ethiopians or from earlier *repatriates* who settle there at present. The different economic capabilities of recent *repatriates* (those who can afford to buy and/or build and those who cannot) and between recent and early *repatriates*, and between local Ethiopians and *repatriates* become obvious through their houses and consumer objects that I will discuss in chapter two. Since the government of Ethiopia owns all lands in the country as well, legally when persons ‘buy’ land, they actually lease it from the government and instead they own the structure on the land, and not the land itself. For this reason, in every single sale of land that I knew of in Shashamane there was at least a small one room *chika* (mud) house on the plot that was ‘bought’ although *repatriates* would speak of “buying land” on which to build a house.

When I lived in Shashamane I did not meet any recent *repatriates* who were sent by Mansions to settle, although Rastafari from certain TTI Houses in the Caribbean did visit Shashamane “on works.” This signified that the members came on official visits whereby the House paid for their travel and accommodation expenses, and when these Brothers and Sisters returned to their country of residence they reported pertinent information to other members. The purpose of going “on works” is to keep *IandI* outside Ethiopia updated about the “development” of Shashamane and the prospects for repatriation there. Although *repatriates* ceased to arrive in substantial numbers, *repatriates* do trickle into Shashamane at present. More recent *repatriates* though, must be able to cover their initial or long term living expenses as well as afford

housing. Currently, Brothers and Sisters tend to move to Shashamane with much greater funds than their predecessors, largely because they are aware that Mansions no longer provide continuous economic support. They usually have an independent source of income, such as a pension or if younger than the retirement age they have saved for many years to pay for air travel to Ethiopia, a house and its furnishings, and their initial living expenses.

The earliest *repatriates* to Shashamane were West Indians and African-Americans “sent” from the Ethiopian World Federation (EWF). The EWF is one of the most important organisations for all *repatriates* and Rastafari. This is partly due to its founding principles which included the support of an independent Ethiopia devoid of Italian control, and “Ethiopia for Ethiopians at home and abroad” (Campbell 2007: 76). These were objectives that Afrocentric peoples across their diverse beliefs supported (see Asante 1998).¹² The purpose of the EWF was to facilitate communication with Black peoples outside Ethiopia who had advocated military and popular support for Ethiopian sovereignty.

After the 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie I instructed Dr. Melaku Bayen to inaugurate the EWF in New York in 1937 “to bring some cohesion to the many groups which were campaigning for the cause of Ethiopia” (Campbell 2007: 76). After Haile Selassie set aside land in Shashamane to donate to his supporters through the EWF, specific members of the EWF were chosen to administer the *land grant* and in the 1950s the first *repatriates* arrived in Shashamane who were

¹² Asante phrases the key aspect of Afrocentrism as “viewing ourselves as agents of history, not marginal to Europe or Arabia, but central to our own historical experiences. Without such a universal African sense of our exceptionalism within the context of our own land and activities it will be nearly impossible for us to overcome the numerous obstacles that stand in the way of a continental state” (<http://www.asante.net/articles/42/the-role-of-an-afrocentric-ideology>).

a husband and wife from Montserrat. At this time the Shashamane branch of the EWF, Local 43, was opened.¹³ Although this dissertation focuses on *repatriates* from the West Indies this historical point is significant since the earliest *repatriates* were Black American and West Indian men and women who were not Rastafarians.

However, current EWF members in Shashamane refer to themselves as Rastafarians thereby demonstrating the constantly changing character of the *repatriate* population and the changes in the EWF's composition. Since I met only three members of the EWF in Shashamane I am unable to provide an accurate membership count, but I estimate there are no more than 10 members. Some of these initial *repatriates* from the EWF left Shashamane following the 1974 revolution, and did not return. Others remained on *the land grant* and although they are no longer alive their children live in Shashamane, Addis Ababa and other areas of Ethiopia.

The second influx of settlers consisted of Rastafari sent from the Twelve Tribes of Israel House in Jamaica in the 1970s. These *repatriates* who volunteered to repatriate, including Brother David who I will mention in chapter one, often describe their purpose as “holding the land” for future *repatriates* to ensure that the community would gradually increase. Occupying the land is therefore one aspect of this repatriation, but continuing to live there and “building up the place” over time is another noteworthy facet (as I will discuss). Being sent also meant that the House paid for each Rastaman's and Rastawoman's travel expenses, such as airfare from Jamaica to Ethiopia, and provided a small subsistence to cover the cost of living expenses for a

¹³ According to Owens, an article in the Jamaican newspaper, The Gleaner, on July 17 1971 included photographs of these first *repatriates*, the Pipers, and mentioned them in the (Majority) Report of the Mission to Africa. The accompanying photographs “showed a couple of dozen adults on their land at Sheshemani, along with their houses, farm buildings, and modern farm equipment” (Owens 1976: 240). For a history of the EWF in Shashamane see Bonacci 2008.

finite time after arrival in Shashamane. Individual Brothers and Sisters would often volunteer to repatriate, and if they were chosen or their “number came up” they would have to agree to “take up” this mission.

The decision to repatriate consequently involved much contemplation and prayer, and was, and is, viewed by other Rastafari as a courageous one. There are over 50 registered members of the TTI in Shashamane (although this includes visitors and seasonal *repatriates*). Also known as the “Organ” or the “Organisation” by adherents, the TTI was founded by Vernon Carrington, the Prophet Gad, around 1968. He is called Gad because he is of the tribe of Gad, and he is also familiarly and affectionately referred to as “Gad man.” Prophet Gad formulated a cosmology around His Majesty as the personality of God and the twelve sons of Israel who were “scattered abroad.” These are Jacob’s twelve sons and for the TTI are Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Napthali, Joseph, and Benjamin. Dinah, Jacob’s daughter, also figures in the TTI cosmology and therefore one space is assigned to her representative on the thirteen-person committee that represents each TTI House worldwide.

When *repatriates* from the EWF and the TTI Mansions first arrived in Shashamane they lived in their respective headquarters that they built together as the first *yard* for *repatriates*. They often began with one room built from concrete blocks and as soon as the walls, and importantly the roof were completed *repatriates* stayed in the building while it was under construction, sleeping on the bare muddy ground. Here they reasoned about agriculture, survival, and politics while practising their Amharic language skills. Later, as soon as *repatriates* were financially able, they moved out of

the headquarters and into individual *yards* with houses that they rented or bought from local Ethiopians or which they gradually built. After this initial period of repatriation, the headquarters of both Houses (the EWF and the TTI) expanded with the collective effort of *IandI* in Shashamane providing the labour, and the monetary donations of *IandI* abroad.¹⁴ The TTI Headquarters still remains a meeting place for *repatriates* and visitors despite the move to individual *yards*.

In the 1970s then, according to Campbell, there were approximately 40-50 Rastafari residents from the Caribbean and the United States “who had set up their community with a pharmacy, a school, a small clinic...a small store and a number of modest dwellings...[but] there were no efforts towards collective farming” (Campbell 2007: 224). Since then Rastafari from around the world have repatriated temporarily, some have visited, and others have remained and expanded their families, thereby substantially increasing the population.

The most recent organised repatriation took place in the 1990s when the Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress (known as the Boboshanti) and the Moral Theocratical Churchical Order of the Nyahbinghi sent a handful of Brothers and Sisters to Shashamane. While I knew of two male and female Nyahbinghi elders and one Nyahbinghi Brother as well as two Boboshanti male elders there were also a few visitors (at most five), and the children of these Boboshanti elders are Bobo as well. There are at most 15 members of both Houses in Shashamane. As previously noted, Nyahbinghi can be regarded as the initial group formation of Rastafari and as one Brother in Shashamane commented to me, “Nyahbinghi is the foundation.”

¹⁴ This expansion included one or two guestrooms for visitors or for Rastafari staying for up to six months, although the length of time is hardly ever specified by the visitor or mandated by the organising committee of either House.

This nomenclature has historical connotations to the anti-colonial struggles of East Africa. Campbell notes that the colonial government of Jamaica was “terrified that the Rastafarians were not only linking themselves to Ethiopia, but also called themselves Nya men – linking their ideas to the anti-colonial movement of Kigezi, Uganda – *Nyabingi* – which called for “Death to Black and White Oppressors” (2007: 72). The first known large-scale gathering or Nyahbinghi was held in Jamaica in 1958. Price notes that this Nyahbinghi “was also reflective of a cohesive moment in Rastafari ethnogenesis. Both Gad (Vernon Carrington) and Prince Emmanuel (Charles Edwards), who would later become leaders, respectively, of the Twelve Tribes and Bobo Ashanti sects of the Rastafari, participated as members of the Nyahbinghi Order” (Price 2009: 73).

However, membership in a House is not the predominant marker that *IandI* use to distinguish amongst themselves or as the basis of commonality, and there are a few *repatriates* residing in Shashamane who are unaffiliated to any Mansion. While I identify three organised periods of repatriation, people also settle in Shashamane without the assistance of or direction from the House that they may belong to. For *repatriates* who are unaffiliated to any Mansion this fact mainly signifies that their repatriation was self-funded. Nonetheless the presence of the House, through its members, is critical to the significance of repatriation within Rastafari worldview. Additionally, *repatriates* who currently identify with a particular House may have been introduced to Rasta through that House. One such example is Brother Nelson in chapter three who explained that his sighting of Rasta was stimulated after attending a TTI meeting.

According to Chevannes (1998), the word “House” has become synonymous with “Rastafari.” When a Rastaman or Rastawoman who does not claim membership in any particular grouping uses this word he or she is referring to “the House of Rastafari,” he suggests. However, in Shashamane when *repatriates* and youths used the term it often referred to a specific House, usually one that they belonged to. Edmonds argues that the word “Houses” expresses the idea that “each gathering of Rastas is to be guided by the spirit of fraternity and by freedom of participation” (Edmonds 2003: 69). The core set of beliefs usually shared by each member of a House remain constant, but there are variations in practices around diet, dress and appearance. For example, Boboshanti tend to adhere to the Nazarite vow regarding the growth of dreadlocks (see Numbers 6) and the Pauline injunctions (see 1st Timothy 2:11) which contain precepts for diet, appearance, and relations between the sexes, which are not generally followed by the EWF and TTI.

Methodology: doing ethnographic research on *the land grant*

A few short months prior to beginning my fieldwork in 2008 I briefly visited Shashamane. Although I stayed in a modest, yet well-known hotel in the town my first stop was to the *safar* and to the Black Lion Museum. I had clearly seen the sign for the museum from the main road as I drove into Shashamane town from Addis Ababa. Although the small museum was closed, it is located next to the TTI headquarters (as I previously noted) and a young Brother standing outside was open to speaking with me. This *Jamaican* youth then introduced me to Sister Anna and to other *repatriates*, mainly older Brothers, who were on the grounds of the TTI headquarters. After chatting briefly, Sister Anna invited me to accompany her to

another Sister's shop about five minutes away, still in the *safar*, where I could "meet the young people" as she phrased it. As I will note in chapter two, the shop is a central locus of socialisation in the *safar*, as in West Indian society, and in Shashamane this one is located in the *yard* of two of the earliest TTI *repatriates* to arrive in Shashamane.

This setting enabled me to meet several *repatriates* – early and recent - of different Houses as well as their repatriated and locally-born children. There I met the younger children of the Braithwaite family who then invited me to their *yard* and introduced me to their father, Brother Fyah. These fortuitous yet expected occurrences led me to the Braithwaite family, in whose *yard* I spent one year between 2008-2009.

When I returned to Shashamane in the summer of 2008 I stayed at a different hotel, one in the *safar* that is owned by *repatriates*, and in proximity to the Braithwaite *yard*. I asked the Braithwaite family to help me look for accommodation that would be safe for myself, as a young woman living alone. Brother Eddie graciously volunteered to take me in, indefinitely, and suggested that I move in as soon as possible. Brother Eddie and his children were clearly accustomed to visitors and guests, both well-known and recent acquaintances, like myself, dropping by and staying at the *yard*. His five children (three daughters and two sons who ranged in age from late teens to late twenties) who were resident at the *yard* full-time were not surprised when their father announced that I would be staying for "awhile." The other children were working and studying outside Shashamane, but in Ethiopia, and visited frequently whereas Brother Eddie's wife, Sister Bernice (see chapter two), lives between *foreign* and Shashamane.

Since my primary ethnographic method was participant-observation as a resident of Shashamane, I participated in daily activities as well as community events such as TTI meetings, a JRDC clothing sale (see chapter two) and a *kebele* meeting (discussed in chapter five). In terms of daily life, my role as a resident researcher included household activities. As such, during the summer months when the school-aged children in my *yard* were on vacation from high school and university classes, I spent most of my time in the *yard* helping (or trying to help at least) with domestic responsibilities and going out with them during the day when they occasionally visited neighbours, both local Ethiopians and *Jamaicans*. When the academic year began in September I volunteered for a few days each week with the JRDC to work on fundraising for the school, primarily to acquire short and long-term sponsorship of the school-subsidised lunch programme. This programme is an important benefit of a JRDC education for parents and for students since it is an economical option for families and provides well-balanced meals to students at a reduced price. This position at the JRDC allowed me to contribute my time, knowledge and experience composing funding applications. My location in the JRDC office also provided the opportunity to interact with other *repatriates* and visitors who I may not have socialised with (at my *yard* or other locations), and in a different situation that focused more on legal and economic matters (see chapter two around house building and chapter five regarding citizenship).

By this time, as I became more familiar to *repatriates*, I visited different *yards* alone, and Brother Fyah permitted me to walk around the *safar* alone and into Shashamane town. In this way I engaged in household surveys of a certain kind since each time I

met a *Jamaican* resident more than once I enquired, rather presumptuously, into the composition of his or her household and family in Shashamane. Almost everyone then spoke of their relatives outwith Shashamane, who were usually children (in the case of adult *repatriates*) and siblings (for youths) who were studying or working in Addis Ababa and the other sizeable towns of Awassa and Nazret. In addition to my daily conversations, mostly with young women, and the more *reasoning*-type interactions with young men (all of whom were born on *the land grant*), I undertook open-ended interviews. During interviews as well I asked each interviewee for a household count. As a result, as I noted in this part of the introduction, I eventually became familiar with at least one person from 71 households cumulatively.

When I began these interviews about six months into my stay in Shashamane, I selected *repatriates* based on our familiarity, their willingness to be interviewed (clearly), and the period of their arrival in Shashamane. Since there is only one *repatriate* Brother whom I know of from the first period of repatriation in the 1950s, who currently lives between America and Shashamane, I interviewed eleven *repatriates* who came in the 1970s (three Sisters and the remaining Brothers) and sixteen *repatriates* (divided equally between men and women) who came to Shashamane from the 1990s onward of varying ages, with their families, as well as young Rastamen who repatriated alone. Of “the generation born on the land,” I interviewed eight young men and women (four women and four men) some of whom live in Shashamane and some currently in Addis Ababa. For instance, Leah and Eden in chapter four, the daughters of *repatriates*, grew up in Shashamane and moved to Addis Ababa to attend university. After graduating they have continued to live in Addis Ababa and now work in their respective fields.

Since these were open-ended interviews I asked persons to begin by simply talking about their lives – where they were born, grew up, and about their initial experiences with Rasta or what propelled them to Rasta. Such life history narratives are useful methods of acquiring qualitative data from a wide cross section of *repatriates* since “voices are not seen as products of local structures, based on community and tradition, alone, or as privileged sources of perspective, but rather as products of the complex sets of associations and experiences” (Marcus 1998:66). Through *repatriates*’ life stories, their “outernational” networks to Rastafari and their social relations in the *safar* and in Ethiopia emerged, which enabled me to make analytical connections between their experiences of movements, inter-personal relationships and economic and legal conditions. Life history narratives therefore unearth the events that are significant not only to individuals, but collectively to *repatriates* who have arrived on *the land grant* in different periods.

Across the board I interacted mainly with TTI Rastas and consequently most of my interviewees were adults and youths of the TTI House with a few Nyahbinghi and Boboshanti Rastas. While this is not a disadvantage of my research, it points to the basic contradiction within anthropological methodology of objectivity and subjectivity (Watson 1999; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1975). As a method, though, participant-observation allowed me to participate in daily activities as a member of the Braithwaite household and an inhabitant of the *safar*. As an adopted member of the Braithwaite family my relations were consequently formed to a large extent based on their social relations. Local perceptions of me as a young, brown skinned West Indian woman of mixed race but “coolie”-looking (a colloquial West

Indian term for South Asian) followed accordingly; for example, local Ethiopians began to view me as *Jamaican* as well, which in this case is synonymous with Rasta, and other Rastafari also assumed that I was Rasta or they knew that I was not but that I am from the Caribbean, and that I was conducting research. My more frequent informal associations with residents in TTI *yards* also meant that *repatriates* who got the impression that I was Rasta thought that I was specifically of the TTI House.

Regarding secondary research methods, I consulted the main library of Addis Ababa University where I located two Masters theses completed at the university and a few undergraduate papers written around the Rastafarian population in Shashamane. The sources on the Shashamane area and particularly the Rastafarian “settlement” provided historical and ethnographic background. At the Central Statistical Agency I also located historical and current maps of Ethiopia delineating the political changes to boundaries in the territory, as I discussed with reference to Oromiyya Region.

In terms of ethics and research permissions, in casual conversations and interviews I was open about doing research that would lead to a doctoral dissertation. I therefore respected the confidentiality of our discussions and adhered to people’s wishes about recording our interviews. In this dissertation each name is a pseudonym.

In this second part of the introduction I have positioned Shashamane politically and geographically within Ethiopia, as well as myself as a female West Indian researcher living on *the land grant*, noted important factors that affect *repatriates’* access to and settlement on *the land grant*, and provided a brief background to the *repatriate* population and the Houses there.

Chapter 1

“His Majesty’s People”: narratives of community and personhood

In the early days His Majesty¹⁵ came to Shashamane and he gathered the people and told them that some other of “his people” would be coming here to live with them. He asked the people if this was alright, and they replied, “of course, Your Majesty.” So when the early settlers came from America and Jamaica the Oromos living here had no problem with them, but the Oromos who live in Shashamane now were never there when His Majesty came, and they never heard this, so they think that Rastas are taking land that rightfully belongs to them. They don’t know that His Majesty gave us this land.
Brother Thomas.

One day when His Majesty was passing through Shashamane he got out his car, and looked around and saw that the land was empty. Where are all my people, he asked? Brother David.

The above comments are taken from my fieldnotes written at different times during my year long residence in Shashamane. Brother Thomas’ remarks are from our impromptu conversation one morning outside a locally-owned shop in the *safar* where we both went to buy bread. Brother Thomas is an early *repatriate* who has lived in Shashamane for over thirty years, but he repatriated from Jamaica in the 1970s, after the seminal event that he describes. *Repatriates* who arrived in Shashamane before Brother Thomas related this story to him, which he then passed on to others, as exemplified by his spontaneous description that morning.

While reviewing my notes I realised that the second excerpt cropped up many times, which meant that I heard it frequently in different settings. In this instance, Brother David related it during our open ended interview at his *yard*, and situated it in his explanation of the significance of the land in Shashamane to *repatriates* and to Rastas.

¹⁵ His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I. I use the titles His Majesty and Haile Selassie I interchangeably since Rastafari refer to Him with either title or as Selassie I (I pronounced as “eye,” not as first). There are other designations of which I will later provide examples.

Brother David explained that this event took place when His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I publicly acknowledged to Ethiopians of the Oromo tribe living in Shashamane that “his people” also live outside Ethiopia, and that he gave them land to facilitate their eventual move to Ethiopia. The “land” that Brother Thomas and Brother David refer to is, of course, *the land grant* discussed in the introduction.¹⁶

His Majesty’s act of giving indicated his encouragement, and expectation of “his” peoples’ eventual move to Shashamane. Brother Thomas’ recitation was not the only time that I heard this story, but it was the first lengthy version. Almost every adult *repatriate* and youth (born in or repatriated to Shashamane) who I interacted with, if only briefly, told me that His Majesty gave the land “to us,” “to our people” or “to Black people” so that they could “come home.”¹⁷ A common follow up statement angrily made by long-resident and recent *repatriates* was that “the Oromos today” are unaware that His Majesty “donated” this land to *repatriates* so Oromos believe that *repatriates* are “stealing” Oromo land. Depending on the subject of these conversations, the word “Oromo” referred to neighbours in the *safar* or the Shashamane town officials who tend to live outwith the *safar* closer to the centre of the town.¹⁸

Frequently, though, the collective “Oromo” was used to signify local Ethiopians in general - not only Oromo, but people of many others tribes as well. The word usually

¹⁶ Generally, *repatriates*, their children, and Rastafari visitors use the words “gift,” “donation” and “land grant” interchangeably to refer to the land given by His Majesty.

¹⁷ This idea of ‘going home’ has a long history in African American thought (see Harris 1993; Campbell 2007).

¹⁸ Local officials also enforce limitations on the amount of land that each person or family can ‘own’ as I will discuss in chapter five. This adds another dimension to this current debate between “Oromos” and *repatriates*.

indicated persons who contest or reject *repatriates*' historical claim to the land.¹⁹ The past exchange between His Majesty and "the Oromos" that Brother Thomas and other *IandI* relate reinforces their position as recipients of this grant. In so doing *repatriates* emphasise that the land cannot be "stolen" as it was part of the initial *land grant*. *Repatriates* who were not born in Ethiopia, then, are as entitled to settle there as Ethiopians who were born in Shashamane or in other areas of Ethiopia and moved to Shashamane (and who may be unaware of His Majesty's gift).

In Brother Thomas's narrative he further distinguishes among "the Oromos." Those living in Shashamane "in the early days" did not have a "problem" with *repatriates* because they adhered to His Majesty's wish that all inhabitants share the land. Oromos today, though, are ignorant of this gift, and are thus misguided in their assumption that *IandI* are "stealing" their land, he continued. Brother Thomas also implicitly noted that "Oromo" parents have failed to pass on this aspect of what *repatriates* view as their collective history, as residents of Shashamane, to their children (who are now adults). *Repatriates*, on the other hand, repeat this account to their locally-born children and to visitors and continuously reinforce its significance for *the community*.

The second excerpt, from Brother David, was repeated in conversations with slight variations such as His Majesty asking why the land was "unoccupied" instead of "empty" and where "the people" were instead of "his people." The basic content of His Majesty's passing through Shashamane, and impulsively stopping after he noticed

¹⁹ MacLeod (2009) notes that there is a "rumour" in Shashamane that Haile Selassie gave this land specifically in Oromo territory to his supporters as a psychological and physical tactic in response to the threat of organised Oromo resistance to his rule. The presence of these supporters would be a reminder of his power and they would be able to monitor the resistance. Although I did not hear of this it may have implications for peoples' opinions about Rastafari settlement on *the land grant*.

the empty land to ask about “his people,” remained the same. I especially heard it recited by elder male and female *repatriates* during our casual conversations and more structured interviews. More recent *repatriates* of varying ages and the adult children of *repatriates*, whether they were born or raised in Shashamane, also related this event to me.²⁰ I gradually noticed that almost all *IandI*, from youths of around 15 years old up to the elders, repeated specific parts of both events to different types of visitors, as I will examine. These two examples from Brother Thomas and Brother David introduce key themes that I will develop in this chapter and in subsequent chapters, namely the symbolic value of the land in Shashamane and divergent expressions of community and personhood.

In this chapter I will therefore explore the role and function of different groups in *the community*. To do this I examine how *repatriates*, youths and to a lesser extent visitors, position themselves as individuals, as Rastafari, as members and as descendants of a *repatriate* population, and as inhabitants of the multi-ethnic *Jamaica Safar* through the construction and narration of historical events. Relating these events to Rastafari visitors ensures that *IandI* internationally will hear the stories, which in turn become a source of assurance and pride for *repatriates* and for Rastafari outside Shashamane. In this way a notion of community as well as the speaker’s expression of belonging to various gradations of His Majesty’s people are formed and maintained, regardless of whether it is the aim of a Rastaman or Rastawoman to *repatriate*.²¹

²⁰ When I refer to the children born and raised in Shashamane I include children of mixed *repatriate* and local Ethiopian parentage as well as children of *repatriate* parents only.

²¹ In the introduction I noted that Rastafari around the world hold different views about repatriation. The act of repatriating is often characterised as either cowardly (escapist) or heroic (essential to salvation). These views do not, however, impact the symbolic and ideological position of Ethiopia, and the *land grant* in Rasta worldview, as I will discuss.

While interrogating the notion of community and the ideas and expressions of belonging, Karen Fog Olwig suggests a focus on how, through “statements and practices,” people create, sustain, and express “different forms of relatedness” (2009: 521). These “forms of relatedness” evidently include parameters of inclusion and exclusion that shift in practice. One such example in Shashamane is the group of His Majesty’s people. Broadly defined, Rastafari consider *repatriates* and “Oromos” alike as His Majesty’s people. Yet, in Brother Thomas’ and Brother David’s narration they are differentiated according to whether or not they specifically received land from His Majesty. There is a further distinction among Rastafari between those who accepted His Majesty’s offer by repatriating and those who have yet to reciprocate and who remain in *babylon*.

These accounts are situated in the lineage shared by all Rastafari in the House of David through the progenitors of His Majesty, King Solomon and King David. When *repatriates* begin to narrate a Rastafari history of Shashamane, then, it exists alongside that of a monolithic national history, which itself is also undoubtedly contested by various Ethiopians. Although Brother Thomas’ narrative presents an alternative to that of Ethiopian national history (as I will clarify), it also operates authoritatively for Rastafari. Because it takes on this central significance it is ‘challenged’ by other *repatriates*. When another long-resident Brother, who also repatriated in the 1970s, read a draft of this chapter he immediately disagreed with Brother Thomas’ assessment of “Oromo” discontent regarding the presence of *repatriates* on the land. He remarked instead that his relations with Oromo peoples in the area had always been “cordial” rather than characterised by resentment. *Repatriates* and youths are well aware of how these facets of Rastafari worldview

engender ideological conflict in the Ethiopian context, yet this Rastafari narrative is one aspect of re-imagining personhood and re-shaping kin relations.

Each *repatriate*'s version of the story revolves around the fundamental concept of Ethiopia (Africa), and their identification as fellow Ethiopians invited to Shashamane. As Liisa Malkki emphasises, "particular historical events support any number of different narrative elaborations. Such regimes of truth operate at a mythico-historical level which is concerned with the constitution of an ontological, political, and moral order of the world" (1995:104). The purpose of telling such events, as cited by Brother Thomas and Brother David, consequently differs depending on who is speaking and who is listening. In the words of Paul Connerton, I examine how "we all come to know each other by asking for accounts [and] by giving accounts...about each other's pasts. In successfully identifying and understanding what someone else is doing we set a particular event or episode or way of behaving in the context of a number of narrative histories" (1989:21).

Through oral expressions and actions *repatriates* and youths actively sustain a history of the *repatriate* population. Apart from storytelling, this is accomplished physically when people mark places through the simple acts of fencing off land or with artwork on the walls around *repatriate yards* or around communal Rasta spaces such as the Boboshanti Tabernacle or the TTI Headquarters. This is done while being fully aware of the variable state and local government processes that affect historical and current claims to the land, its use, and the 'ownership' of buildings on the land. These assertions of belonging thereby also entail distinguishing themselves, which I will

expand on in chapters four and five especially. This simultaneous making of history and shaping of peoples' roles are ongoing dynamics.

“His Majesty’s people”: charter myths

Both Brother Thomas’ and Brother David’s stories emphasise the foundational aspect of the Rastafari claim to the land in Shashamane, that Rastas are His Majesty’s people. This claim is explicitly supported by the words of His Majesty and his gift, which he expected “his people” to make use of by inhabiting the land. Each potential *repatriate* is assured of the legitimacy of his or her “place” on the land. As Brother Nelson, another early *repatriate* explained to me, “we were invited here, we are not refugees.” This ontological assertion by Rastafari must be contextualised in the concept of Ethiopia and in the persona of His Majesty since this gift is inextricably tied to Him.

“Ethiopia is the root of everything,” *repatriates* of various ages and their now adult children constantly elucidated. In Rastafari speech “Ethiopia” or *Itiopia* is used interchangeably with “Africa” to refer both to the African continent and its eastern region, following its historical and Biblical use. Ethiopia symbolises the divinity of Africa and its peoples. It is an African empire over 3,000 years old of which His Majesty was the last ruler, the location of the oldest Christian Church in Africa, the origin of humankind²² and especially of African descended peoples around the world whose ancestors were forcibly taken from Africa to the Americas during the Atlantic slave trade. Jean Besson (2002) notes that this image of Africa and Ethiopia was a

²² In the words of Brother Arnold, another elder *repatriate*, “we all come out of one place” i.e Ethiopia (Africa). Brother Arnold’s remark is not derived from the archaeological evidence found in Ethiopia of the oldest specimen of the *homo sapiens* species, but a more fundamental reference to the signifiers that I go on to discuss. *Repatriates* and youths only rarely referenced this archaeological find which is usually housed in the National Museum in Addis Ababa.

symbol of resistance in African-derived religions in Jamaica rather than reflective of an actual destination for repatriation. Rastafari are “Ethiopians,” natives of Ethiopia. This origin in Ethiopia (Africa) is a fundamental belief held by every Rastaman and Rastawoman, irrespective of his or her view regarding repatriation.

The legitimacy of Rastafari history is cemented through His Majesty’s words which claim Rastafari as “his people” and by extension as “Ethiopians” in Brother Thomas’ rendition. This poignant acknowledgement combined with His Majesty’s donation of land to “his people” out in *babylon* continues this history and forms the basis of the multi-layered origin story for the *repatriate* settlement. *Repatriates* emphasise that it was the *babylonian* conditions in Jamaica that stimulated this rise of consciousness that coalesced into the ideology of Rastafari. “Continuity...with a suitable historical past” (Hobsbawm 1983:1) is thus evoked through telling these stories in which “an individual’s consciousness of time is to a large degree an awareness of society’s continuity...of the image of that continuity which the society creates” (Connerton 1989:12).

Ethiopia (Africa) - often used synonymously by *repatriates* unless speaking about the state of Ethiopia - is also the birthplace of His Majesty and therefore itself divine. This is one reason that a *repatriated* Sister, living in Shashamane for over 20 years, casually and resolutely told me that *this* is the place that “God watches over.” One morning we were discussing a BBC documentary aired on television the night before about the Mursi tribe in southern Ethiopia whose land was going to be confiscated by the government to build a new dam. Some Mursi men and women, while brandishing automatic weapons, explained that they would fight to keep their land and they were

prepared to die doing so.²³ I said it is miraculous that the entire country is not in a state of persistent civil war since there are armed groups almost everywhere with the Ogaden and Somali fighters in the east, the Oromo Liberation Front close to us, the Gambella etc in the West, and the North controlled by the government. In response to my comment Sister Susan simply and confidently replied, “God watches over Ethiopia.” A recently repatriated Brother added that regardless of these internal conflicts he is certain that he is better off in Ethiopia than in *babylon* since “repatriating means moving from a place that is unsafe to one that is safe.” This idea of “safety” is premised on the relation of His Majesty and thus “his peoples” to Ethiopia (Africa).

This symbolic-historical significance of Ethiopia as an ancestral homeland and well-established African empire cannot be divorced from the figure of Haile Selassie I. Following his coronation as the Emperor of Ethiopia he became the cornerstone of Rastafari worldview as the divine and human Creator. While all Rastafari share this belief (His birth on July 23 is celebrated by all Houses) and that each person has the ability to communicate with the Creator directly, there are different beliefs regarding the precise form of His divinity. Some *repatriates* in Shashamane referred to His Majesty simply as “God,” “God on earth,” “the Creator,” “Jesus Christ,” “the personality of God on earth” or the “Black Messiah.” For instance, a TTI view of His Majesty as “the personality of God” contrasts with a Boboshanti definition of His Majesty as Jesus Christ or as God. Everyone agrees though, that Haile Selassie’s role

²³ See “The dam that divides Ethiopians” by Peter Greste, March 26, 2009 on BBC news website <http://www.bbc.co.uk>.

on earth is “to guide the people” and that He would manifest himself again in the Second Coming.²⁴

All Rastafarians consequently agree that Haile Selassie I is The Lion of the Tribe of Judah referred to in the Old Testament of the Bible. Genesis 49:9-10 reads: “Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah” and Revelation 5:1-5: “the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.” During a conversation with a Brother, an early *repatriate* whom I considered to be trustworthy and knowledgeable, I simplistically asked him to clarify who is Selassie I (eye) for Rastas since I kept hearing various descriptions of Him. In response, he immediately directed me to Revelation 5. “Go and bring the Bible so you can read for yourself,” he instructed me. This chapter was written by John shortly after the death of Christ, Brother Fyah continued, and it refers to John's visions of a ruler (he who sits on the throne) who will be able to “loose the seals,” which is a formidable task. John writes of the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah,” a term that is not used to refer to Christ before John uses it, and almost two millennia later Tefari Makonnen comes to the throne and refers to himself by this title, Brother Fyah concluded.

I gleaned, then, that this person who is able to “loose the seven seals” (irrespective of who prophesies this, whether himself or others) is one who must be worthy of doing

²⁴ As the saviour, His Majesty will return following the apocalypse to select the worthy few who will assist him in rebuilding humanity. But we must be patient and alert for signs, a young Brother of repatriated parents explained, since “no one knoweth the hour when the Father returns.” He went on to say that “2,000 years of history cannot not be wiped away so easily” and His Majesty's return will be “like a thief in the night.” This was a reference to Matthew 24 of the Bible. For example verse 50 states: “The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of” (Holy Bible).

so. As such, this redeemer will fight on the side of “good” in general, as His Majesty did (which I will later discuss). As John Homiak notes, “in Rastafari discourse, the bursting of the biblical seals is, among other things, intimately related to the idea of the judgement and destruction of the oppressor” (Homiak 1999: 118).

This title, The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, was one that Ras Tafari Makonnen gave himself in 1930 when he was crowned the Emperor of Ethiopia, and also took the name Haile Selassie I.²⁵ At that time Haile Selassie I also declared his descent from King Solomon of ancient Israel. This lineage is documented in the Kebra Negast, an “Amharic national epic” (Sorenson 1993:23). The Kebra Negast was probably first written in the 14th century in Ethiopia (by unidentified authors) and its events are based on the description in Kings 10:1-13 of the Bible. The story continues to be orally upheld in different versions by Ethiopians, and each Ethiopian-born youth with at least one *repatriate* parent who I met was well-versed in the history of Solomon and Sheba. This section of the Kebra Negast as well as the removal of the Ark of the Covenant (the tablet on which Moses inscribed the Ten Commandments) by Menelik is taught in churches and in homes, and is read by many *IandI* in Shashamane.

This story describes the travels of Queen Makeda (the Queen of Sheba who ruled ancient Ethiopia) to Jerusalem in King Solomon’s reign during which she became pregnant with Solomon’s child. After returning to Ethiopia she gave birth to a son,

²⁵ However, the Crown Council of Ethiopia (the deposed ruling family of Ethiopia and its advisors) at times tries to distance the family from this Rastafari view as seen in the statement on its website: “The title “Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah” (ፌ) is often attached to the Emperor’s name, but is not a title of the Emperor himself. As Prince Asfa-Wossen Asserate noted: “The phrase ‘Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah’ has *never* been the title of Ethiopian monarchs. Rather, the words ‘The Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath prevailed’ (see Genesis 49:9) should be seen as the Imperial motto...It is only our Lord Jesus Christ who is accorded this title [‘Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah’], and Ethiopian Monarchs used this motto in order to proclaim that they were Christians” (<http://www.ethiopiancrown.org>).

Menelik I, who later ruled ancient Ethiopia (1932: 23-76). King Menelik I is thus the progenitor of the Ethiopian nation. As a young man, before he inherited the Ethiopian throne, Menelik I visited his father in Jerusalem and either secretly took the Ark of the Covenant or his father gave him the Ark, which he then carried to Ethiopia. In both versions of events King Solomon believed that his son must have had God's approval to remove the Ark since the tablets and travellers arrived safely in Ethiopia. Most youths in Shashamane cited the version in which Solomon gave the Ark to his son.

In terms of the Ethiopian monarchy as well, Haile Selassie I's assertion of ancestral descent from Solomon and Sheba was enshrined in the 1955 Constitution of Ethiopia. This document "recognized a direct line of descent from Solomon and Sheba to Haile Selassie; the Emperor's divinity was acknowledged in Article Four" (Sorenson 1993:23).²⁶ Additionally, there is a statement regarding the 1955 Constitution on the website of the Crown Council: "the phrase "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah" appeared *above* the name of the Emperor, indicating the religious authority of the Crown." For Rastafari this lineage is extended to all peoples, Rasta and non-Rasta, since His Majesty is also the Creator and thus the father of humanity. This common ancestry is the basis for a conceptual fellowship among all "Ethiopians," Rastafarians and Oromo alike, who are therefore "brothers" and "sisters" not only to each other but to other "Ethiopians," like Oromo neighbours in Shashamane. Based on this common relation to His Majesty, Rastafari *repatriates* assumed that *repatriates* and Oromo peoples would peacefully exist together and equitably share *the land grant*. This

²⁶ "The Emperor, who is accorded the prefix "His Imperial Majesty" (in its Western translation), is, under the terms of the pre-revolutionary Constitution of Ethiopia, Head of State. He is also accorded the title "Elect of God" (*Atsie*), and is the Head of the House of Solomon, and holder of the Throne of Solomon" (<http://www.ethiopiancrown.org>). However, the website of the Ethiopian Crown Council also states that "Emperor Haile Selassie I, who, although he was descended directly from the Solomonic line, was not directly descended from Emperor Menelik's branch" (ibid).

presumption may have characterised relations in the past since “people took His Majesty’s words to heart,” according to Brother Thomas, but not any longer, as he disappointingly remarks.

His Majesty’s use of starkly Biblical terms such as “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah” and “King of Kings” (*Negus Negast*) resonated both with Ethiopians, many of whom belonged to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and with Rastafarians whose worldview draws on either or both the Old and New Testaments.²⁷ These Biblically-derived titles therefore supported the Rastafari assertion that Haile Selassie I was the Black King and the Ethiopian national claim to a dynasty of imperial Semitic descent from Menelik I to Haile Selassie I. This was reinforced by the Biblical reference to Egypt and Ethiopia (“African” nations) that “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (Psalms 68:31). In this vein, Haile Selassie I, in addition to his declaration of Semitic ancestry, and in view of his self-recognition as “African” (evidenced by his public speeches) for Rastafari, is also Hamitic, one of the sons of Ham.²⁸

As His Majesty’s people, then, Rastafari also claim this descent from King David of Jerusalem, King Solomon’s father. In this way they simultaneously maintain their Semitic and Hamitic ancestry. For the TTI Mansion especially, His Majesty’s use of the title “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah” also lent credence to the TTI belief that he

²⁷ This depends on House and individual beliefs since the Boboshantis and the Nyahbinghis, for example, usually refer to the Old Testament and the TTI to both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

²⁸ The so-called curse of Ham propagated the belief that the descendants of Ham would be punished for his sins with dark skin and enslavement (see Genesis 9 and Phillipians 4). By asserting that His Majesty and that Rastafari themselves were Hamitic, they were defying the racist Hamitic hypothesis (see Curtin et al 1978).

was, in fact, one of the members of the ancient Israelite Lost Tribes, of Judah.²⁹ For the TTI there are twelve tribes whose peoples were “scattered abroad.” The words “scattered abroad” are part of the TTI refrain which is cited at the beginning of each occasion such as the July 23 celebration, and which each child learns through repetition:

“Greetings in that divine name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who has this day revealed himself to us in the personality of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie the First. I further greet you through the Christian Orthodox faith, which is not a faith of writs nor rites, but a true function of the heart, in plain words to be born again. Greetings to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, which were once scattered abroad and now re-founded in the island of Jamaica and functioning worldwide by our beloved Prophet Gad, Dr. Vernon Carrington. I finally greet you through the Royal House of David and the Davidic Covenant namely His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie the First and Prince Zara Yacob.”

In the following sections I will examine how Rastafari and current Ethiopian national narratives converge and diverge around these points.

Contradictions and ambiguities: rights to belong

The appearance of a “Black” “African” ruler of Ethiopia in 1930, as Rastafari referred to His Majesty, who quoted from the Bible, ruled over Ethiopia, demanded the equality of all men (i.e peoples), and who fulfilled Biblical prophecies made up elements of a crucial index for Rastafari worldview. I realised the poignancy of Haile Selassie’s public words one afternoon when I was talking to a youth of Jamaican parentage and he quoted verbatim part of His Majesty’s speech to the League of Nations. This speech advocated the equality of all peoples through national autonomy (in 1936 following the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I was lobbying for

²⁹ For the TTI the sons of Noah: Ham, Shep and Japeth, are the forefathers of the twelve tribes and of all humanity. They represent Africa, Asia, and Europe (black, brown and white peoples respectively).

Allied support against Italy). His Majesty talked about fighting racism and making sure all men were seen as equal; as equal as we all are in the eyes of God, Brother Benedict explained. Haile Selassie's words demonstrated his exemplary dedication, consciousness and effort toward the psychological, economic and political improvement of Ethiopians and of Africans in general. This young Brother quoted the following,

Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another race inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race
– WAR.³⁰

When I took out my notebook to capture these exact words Brother Benedict insisted that I write “war” in capital letters. “This is what I believe,” he concluded. Although this was the first time that I heard these words quoted directly, on many occasions I heard *repatriates* refer to this speech. References to it were usually accompanied by comments that during European colonisation of the continent, Ethiopia was the only part of Africa that had never been colonised by Europeans, and that Haile Selassie was the first black man to stay at the American White House in the 1960s before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These examples were often cited together to show the exemplary, unparalleled leadership of His Majesty, his pride in himself, his people (meaning Ethiopians and Africans) and his perseverance in maintaining the sovereignty of his empire.³¹ These efforts were meant to ensure that African peoples

³⁰ See Selected Speeches of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie First 1918 to 1967. The word “War” is the Brother’s inclusion following a song by Bob Marley and the Wailers entitled “War” recorded around 1975-6. This example shows the extent to which music is also an integral part of the making of Rastafari history (see chapter three).

³¹ Additionally, Haile Selassie I’s speech to the Jamaican Parliament during his 1966 visit is well known by many *repatriates* from the Caribbean. *IandI* who quoted it highlighted His Majesty’s insistence that each territory’s independence should be maintained, his exhortation that “small countries...combine all their energies for prosperity and development,” and his mention of “a bond of gratitude and brotherhood” between Jamaicans and Ethiopians (1967: 141). This sentence “a bond of gratitude, a bond of brotherhood...in a broader sense between the people of Jamaica and the people of

and nations were not continuously exploited by European powers, which was blatant in the Scramble for Africa (Campbell 2007).

However, the numerous inequities within the Ethiopian Empire over which Haile Selassie ruled often emerged when Rasta people related Ethiopian comments about the former emperor. The most common of these include that he was a bad, unjust ruler, and that he allowed his people to starve while his lions ate meat. Since this is a view commonly held by local Ethiopians, and *repatriates* are aware that Haile Selassie is perceived in this manner, it is one major point of disagreement between local Ethiopians and *repatriates*. An example of the disagreement over Haile Selassie's divinity occurred one afternoon while I was walking along a busy side street in the *safar* with an Ethiopian-born young man of Jamaican parents. The following excerpt is from my field notebook:

Malcolm heard the two teenage-age looking girls walking in front of us speaking in Amharic. He immediately stopped them, abruptly said something in Amharic and encouraged me to walk away. I did not understand the exchange but he was obviously angry. Then he explained that they said that Rastas think that Haile Selassie is God just because when He visited Jamaica they were having a drought, but after Selassie came the rains fell.

Translated from Amharic to English by a young Brother born in Shashamane to *repatriate* parents from Jamaica, this was the first time that I had directly heard someone repeating this common local explanation for the Rastafari deification of Haile Selassie I. It was obvious from Malcolm's infuriated reaction and his exclamation that "they don't know what they're talking about!" that their conversation was mocking what is perceived as a silly Rasta belief. Prior to this, I often heard

Ethiopia and Africa" (1967: 141) referred to those who fought in the British forces on behalf of Ethiopia against the Italian invasion and was taken in its broadest sense by Rastafari.

tidbits of popular conceptions about “what Rastas believe” from many Ethiopian men and women of diverse ages in varying degrees of English proficiency.

Outside Shashamane as soon as Ethiopians learnt that I, a *farangi*, lived there they either assumed that I was *Jamaican* or that I was not *Jamaican* (and thus not Rasta) but worked for an NGO. Based on the latter assumption, their comments focused on how “misguided” or “mistaken”³² Rastas are in their belief that Haile Selassie is God. Haile Selassie was just a man, they continued, and went further to comment that he was also a “bad” man or “bad” Emperor or “exploited the people.”³³ After a few months of living in Shashamane though, it was striking that local Ethiopians with whom I interacted in the *safar* knew that I lived there and since they assumed I was *Jamaican* did not make similar comments. This prevalent view that Rastas erroneously deify Haile Selassie I dominates popular Ethiopian perceptions of Rastafari beliefs. This is the underlying tension in an abrupt verbal exchange between a local Ethiopian youth and a young *repatriate* that I will describe in chapter two. For both local Ethiopians and *Jamaicans*, the belief that Haile Selassie is God is the defining marker of a Rasta and of a *Jamaican* identity in the *safar*.

As I have noted, the formation of historical events that are interpreted by Rastafari *repatriates* and by Ethiopians who are not Rastafari both overlap and diverge. In this case an event that is individually and socially reiterated, and at times commemorated by *repatriates*, His Majesty’s visit to Jamaica in 1966, is here derided as emblematic of the fallacy of Rasta beliefs. By contrast, when *repatriates* tell this story they also vividly describe when the aircraft carrying Haile Selassie landed in Kingston. At that

³² These were often the words that more fluent English speakers who I interacted with in Addis Ababa used. Other Ethiopians who were not as fluent in English used words such as “wrong” or “lying.”

³³ Again, depending on their educational level and fluency in English.

moment the rain stopped, the airplane door opened and when His Majesty emerged on the aircraft steps the clouds cleared to reveal the bright sun and clear blue sky. For Rastafari, then, the change in weather is a metaphor for the “rightness” of His Majesty’s presence in Jamaica and the clarity that he brought, which accompanies the *sighting* of Rastafari (or becoming Rastafari) that I will discuss in chapter three.

These varied interpretations can be analysed in terms of Anna Tsing’s theory of the “friction of engagement” (2005: 270) or “the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (2005: 4). This “friction” results from and continuously (re)creates the discursive, social and political-economic yet “creative” clashes that occur in the production of cultural ideas. Tsing notes that these processes take place both at ideological and fundamentally tangible levels that are translated into economic and political inequalities or “asymmetries.” She also addresses the relationship of the local and the global, perceived and interpreted by scholars as either dichotomous polarities or now negligible due to the practices of globalisation, especially increased technology. Tsing emphasises that universal models often subsume relevant “local” conditions, as her research in Indonesia indicates. The convergence of Rastafari and Ethiopian narratives of history and personhood exhibit such friction. This requires elucidating not only the different views, but how these are manifested in and impact on the formation and stability of social relations in the *safar* (as I will show in later chapters). In this case, Rastafari have incorporated facets of Ethiopian history into the divine figure of His Majesty according to their own cannon. As Robert Hill frankly commented, Haile Selassie is “a West Indian God” (pers comm.).

Contradictions and ambiguities: reclaiming blackness

Africanness, blackness, antiquity, and divinity are key qualities that Haile Selassie I personifies as a human leader and divine personality. As such, blackness and Africanness here are categories that are manipulated by Rastas and Ethiopians in varying positions of power in relation to their subjective and hegemonic constructions of the territory of Ethiopia, their positions in this schema and their relations with each other in Shashamane. For *IandI* “blackness” is reclaimed as a powerful signifier of the history of ancient Ethiopian kingdoms, a past that was denied and belittled during European colonialism of the West Indies. However, in the narrative of the Ethiopian nation, and the preceding Abyssinian Empire, blackness was and is ideologically rejected.

Historically the term “Ethiopian” was synonymous with “Amhara” the tribe from which the rulers of ancient Abyssinia, and until recently the modern Ethiopian state belonged to, including His Majesty. Donald Donham clarifies that “Amhara” was a tribal as well as socio-economic distinction in Abyssinia which indicated that persons were Orthodox Christians, spoke the Amharic language, and lacked “markedly negroid facial features” (Donham 2002 [1986]: 12). It also denoted an individual’s high status as a ruler or a holder of a military title (ibid). Juxtaposed against the Amhara were the Muslim Oromo. Oromo peoples were “long regarded as primitive, backward, and inferior to the Amhara...as savage and warlike invaders, the antithesis of Amhara culture” (Sorenson 1993:68-69). This hyperbolic Abyssinian-constructed image of Oromo peoples reflected the actual threat from Oromos who outnumbered the Amhara elite, who constantly resisted Abyssinian invasions of their lands, and the potential for the success of Oromo resistance (cf. Holcomb and Ibssa 1990: 288).

These conceptual boundaries of Oromo and Amhara (Ethiopian), savage and civilised, were represented in the topographic and metaphorical “lowlands” of Oromo territory, in contrast to the Abyssinian “highlands.” Such lowlands “were to be avoided – they were wild and dangerous, infested with disease, and inhabited by savages who did not acknowledge God” (Donham 2002: 20). A generalised distinction of skin colour whereby Oromos are dark-skinned and Amharas are light-skinned was similarly interpreted and discursively reproduced. Oromo peoples, historically dark-skinned, were not referred to as “Abyssinian” although today they are called “Ethiopian,” as citizens of the state of Ethiopia. This is related to the systematic construction of an image of Oromo peoples as “war-like invaders” (Sorenson 1993) and the actual historical position of Oromos as slaves in Abyssinia.³⁴ This hierarchical distinction is obvious in the Amharic language where the word *barya* is used interchangeably to mean both “slave” and “black.”³⁵ In one memorable comment when I vicariously felt the effects of this word, a young dark-skinned Rastawoman, Sister Marion, calmly described her former Ethiopian husband’s cruelty toward her and their children: “he used to call me *barya* and boss me around like I was his slave or something. It was like he didn’t know that the days of slavery done. It used to really hurt me.”³⁶

³⁴ There were of course also Oromo rulers of the Abyssinian Empire. The Oromo Muslim ruler Iyasu in the early 20th century who succeeded Menelik was one notable example. Iyasu’s father “was from a Muslim Oromo background...Shewan nobility...deposed him in 1916, citing his reported conversion to Islam” since he attempted to forge alliances in the south and in Wollo, predominantly Muslim areas, which the Amhara elite viewed as a threat (Donham 2002: 26).

³⁵ I heard young people (*Jamaicans* and local Ethiopians) use *barya* on many occasions amongst themselves, not in a derogatory manner, but as a word that indicated their familiarity with each other.

³⁶ Sister Marion’s husband was not from Shashamane, but another town in Ethiopia, which shows the widespread use of the word.

This Oromo and Amhara juxtaposition is merely one example of local and hegemonic discourses of Ethiopian nationhood that were formed over time, and another manifestation of “friction.” Donald Donham notes that historically,

among the groups against which the Amhara expanded, forms of ethnic consciousness seem to have been only weakly developed, at least until the late post-occupation period. Examples include the Agaw, most highland Oromo groups, and the Gurage. These peoples no doubt retained a belief in the worth of their own cultures, but there seems to have been little development of a political critique of the inferior position they occupied *vis-à-vis* the Amhara (2002:35).

In the current Ethiopian milieu though, this is changing. One indication is the recent initiative of the Journal of Oromo Studies out of the Oromo Studies Association (see www.oromostudies.org). The journal is an academic initiative mainly by Ethiopians, inside and outside the country, who identify themselves specifically as Oromo that signals the recognition of non-hegemonic versions of history to question the existing ideological basis of the Ethiopian nation. This is another ongoing dynamic into which Rastafari worldview is inserted.

At the conceptual level of nationhood and at a psychological level, this internalised pejorative connotation of “blackness” is expressed by many Ethiopians of different tribal affiliations. “Blackness,” “Africanness,” and darkness of skin colour are not considered as “Ethiopian” characteristics. Most Ethiopians who I met in Shashamane and in other urban areas of Ethiopia informed me that their ancestors were either simply Semites or Semites from ancient Israel, and therefore they were not Africans, but Ethiopian or *Habesha*, an Amharic word that has come to mean “Ethiopian,” a member of present day Ethiopia. This idea was reinforced by the declarations of previous Amhara rulers, including Haile Selassie I. This colour-status-economic

dimension is also present in West Indian Creole society, albeit in a different structure, which I will bring up in chapter four.

While His Majesty declared his Semitic descent, he nonetheless explicitly called himself “African.” This is evident in the example above from his speech promoting the equality of all peoples, and his overt political support for the implementation of the Pan-African Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU). For Rastafari, blackness is an essential characteristic of defining “Ethiopian” and “African” personhood. This definition creates a contextual historical connection among Jamaicans and other West Indians of African ancestry which follows His Majesty’s example of defining African and Ethiopian as complementary, not contradictory. While for Rastafari in general, and for *repatriates* this provides a discursive means of creating a fellowship of “Ethiopians,” for local Ethiopians of various tribal affiliations in the *safar* it is an ambivalent designation that may be rejected or embraced depending on its use. This Rasta definition of Ethiopian is supported by His Majesty’s act of donating land to “his people,” which I will examine in the next section.

Inalienability of the land, visitors and pilgrimage

When *repatriates* utter the words “the community” they generally refer either to Rastafarians in Shashamane or, to a lesser extent, to Rastafarians around the world. In both references, nonetheless, shared ideals and ideas of morality and spirituality are an important aspect of this emic notion of community. This is specifically a Rasta community. Members maintain a common belief in the divinity of His Majesty, of Ethiopia (Africa) as the ancestral homeland of humanity and of Black peoples, of a

fellowship of all “Ethiopians,” the sacredness of the land in Shashamane given by His Majesty, and of good and evil and of worthiness to be saved. When used in relation to Rastafari in Shashamane the powerful emotional resonance that the term carries is foregrounded (Amit and Rapport 2002). It signifies that they have arrived in His Majesty’s land, in Ethiopia (Africa), and now live in (and on) this divine land that they have overcome much “tribulation” to reach. For some Rastafari as well this is the *promised land*; the most sacred and divine earthly land that they could possibly physically inhabit.

The word “Shashamane” is imbued with and evokes a similar sentiment when spoken by *repatriates* and Rastafari. I began to understand this emotional significance when I briefly met other visitors to Shashamane and Rastas in Britain. After the latter learnt that I lived on *the land grant* for a year, although I was not a Rastawoman myself and I was required to stay in Shashamane to fulfill my academic obligations, they often expressed surprise and approval. Visitors to Ethiopia that I met in Shashamane reacted similarly to my residence there. For Rastafari around the world the land in Shashamane functions as an “inalienable possession” which gains “absolute value that is subjectively constituted and distinct from the exchange value of commodities or the abstract value of money” (Weiner 1992:191).

As the site of the land granted by His Majesty and of the *repatriate* settlement (in response to this gift), this land will “retain for the future, memories, either fabricated or not, of the past” (Weiner 1992:7). Consequently, “the loss of such an inalienable possession diminishes the self and by extension, the group to which the person belongs” (Weiner 1992:6). Even for Rastafari who are not full-time *repatriates*, then,

it is emotionally and symbolically significant to have some kind of material stake in the land. Yet, it is the capitalist exchanges which occur between local Ethiopians, *repatriates*, and *IandI* visitors when houses are bought and sold that enable recent *repatriates* to acquire the land that was initially part of *the land grant*. This alienability, then, paradoxically allows certain portions of *the land grant* to remain with *IandI* and to retain its inalienable quality, albeit as property in a capitalist economy.

There are parallels here to family land in the West Indies. Researchers have emphasised the function of family land in maintaining economic and kin relations with peoples in the Caribbean and in *foreign* as well as an alternative mode of inheritance to colonial primogeniture (Wilson 1973; Besson 2002; Barrow 1992; Crichlow 2005). Family land is meant to be inherited by all children of the owner, and theoretically it is available to any descendant who wishes to settle there. As such, it is indivisible without the consent of all owners, and remains in the family lineage in perpetuity. On a household level in Shashamane elder *repatriates* envision individual *yards* as a legacy for their children (which has certain legal obstacles as I note in chapter five). On a community level the *repatriate* presence on the land is meant to ensure this longevity. As Besson emphasises, it is the “immortal quality of the land that symbolizes the perpetuity of the enduring descent line. Providing this symbol of identity for the kin group is a primary function of the family-land...” (2002: 295). In practice though, as in Shashamane, family land is divided and sold and can be the nexus of disagreement between persons. I will further discuss house purchasing in the second chapter.

I frequently heard *repatriates* and youths relating the two events quoted by Brother Thomas and Brother David at the beginning of the chapter to various peoples on different occasions. When foreign visitors who were not Rastafari visited the *safar* and I happened to be at the office of the Jamaican Rastafarian Development Community (JRDC) organisation, my *yard*, or a popular restaurant, *repatriates* of all ages and their children explained to visitors that “this land” was granted to them by His Majesty. Occasionally *IandI* would follow up this claim with Brother David’s example (quoted at the beginning of the chapter). This was cited as proof that His Majesty, by asking about the whereabouts of “his people” expected them to “fill up” *the land grant* and to support the Rastafari conclusion that they have a historically and morally sanctioned “right” to live in Shashamane.

I eventually noticed, though, that while *repatriates* and their adult children frequently related the first event to non-Rasta visitors, the second event (“Where are all my people?”) was usually related to Rastafari visitors living in *foreign*. Visitors regularly came to Shashamane on their own and from the various Mansions in the Caribbean especially Jamaica and Barbados as well as Britain and America. In the year that I lived in Shashamane there were at least two to three Rastafari visitors each month who I met or heard about, who were “sent” by Houses or came independently. Almost all were visitors belonging to the TTI Mansion whose membership is the largest in Shashamane, and one or two from the Nyahbinghi Mansion and the EWF.

Rastafari visitors to Shashamane are either funded by the Mansions to which they belong, and therefore “sent” on official business or self-funded although many people visit for both official and personal reasons. Specific members from Mansions are

sometimes sent “on works” in preparation for their return to Ethiopia or to prepare the members who expressed a readiness and desire to do so. In these cases the House will pay the travel costs and provide a “small change” until the members who volunteer to repatriate find a sustainable means of livelihood. Self-funded visitors tend to return to Shashamane for many reasons: to visit *IandI* with whom they have close relationships, to donate items of clothing and other goods to members of *the community*, to “see about” their investments, such as a house that they may have bought on a previous visit, and to gain an empirical awareness of “how Shashamane is developing.” Most visitors commented on their future plans to repatriate in conversations with other *IandI* and with strangers such as myself.

These visitors therefore maintained ties with *IandI* already socially, if not economically established in Shashamane, and they worked on “building up” *the community* through material and monetary donations to specific persons and to local organisations. For example, I met two Brothers from Jamaica living in America who donated supplies to the Rastafarian-administered school every year for the past three years. They regularly visit Shashamane and provide in-kind and monetary support. Additionally, they encourage Rastafari in America on the basis of moral responsibility, and non-Rastas on a humanitarian basis, to “help out” the community by visiting, and sending donations of any kind. These actions are partly a fulfillment of the moral responsibility to *IandI* in Shashamane who live on *the land grant*, as well as the desire of individuals to ensure the viability of their future repatriation. As a result, the few visitors who did not mention repatriation as a goal nonetheless maintained economic and social relations with specific people in Shashamane. In this

way they fulfilled a duty to assist their repatriated Brothers and Sisters. I will delve into these relations in chapter two.

Visiting Shashamane and donating to community organisations are symbolic actions that reinforce the higher status of *repatriates* in relation to Rastafari outside Shashamane. Travel to Shashamane can be compared to pilgrimage since *the land grant* takes on a dimension of the sacred because it is in the *zion* of Ethiopia (Africa), and because it was given by His Majesty. All Rastas are the recipients of this grant, and they acknowledge each other as His Majesty's people. A feeling of *communitas* (Turner 1969) is formed, to a certain extent, between Rastafari and the wider group of His Majesty's people, including local Ethiopians, through the idea of a fellowship of all His Majesty's people as well as specifically between *IandI* in Shashamane and *IandI* in *foreign*.

Yet differentiations are visible among visitors who can, in this sense, act as pilgrims to Shashamane. The ability to visit at the outset is taken as a gauge of some financial means by permanent residents of Shashamane (*repatriates* and locals). The frequency of subsequent visits is also closely noted by *repatriates* as indicative not only of the visitor's economic situation, but of the degree to which he or she fulfills an obligation to economically support family members there (if any) and *the community*. This kind of pilgrimage thus reinforces the inalienable aspects of the land and the Rastafari relation of different gradations of His Majesty's people to each other, to His Majesty himself and to Shashamane.

Elders, pioneers and being *heartical*

When Brother David arrived in Shashamane from Jamaica in the 1970s as a young man, getting along with local people was difficult for many reasons. He was unfamiliar with the place and the language, and there was intense competition over scarce work, he explained. This was exacerbated by the Derg government's policy of *Ethiopia tikildim* (Ethiopia first) so local Ethiopians were hired in town instead of *repatriates*. *I and I* had to "live off the land" primarily in order to survive, and this was accomplished by planting crops that would hopefully flourish including corn, potatoes, plantains and peas. These are also staples in the West Indies which enabled *repatriates* to maintain at least certain dietary similarities in the new environment of Ethiopia.

At first, local Ethiopians called Rastas who settled after the initial Black Americans from the EWF, "*tukul Americans*" because they thought "we were all the same," another Brother explained to me (on a different occasion while recounting his early days in Shashamane in the 1970s). But, Brother David continued, after living here for "so many" years people got to know him and now local Ethiopians say "*anta innay*" (he is ours in Amharic), claiming him as one of their own. Notwithstanding these comments from elder *repatriates*, I often heard long-resident *repatriates* as well as their children comment that Ethiopians still view them as *farangi* (foreigners) even though they have either lived in Shashamane for at least thirty years or they were born and bred in Ethiopia. While Brother David did not need this social assurance of his Ethiopian-ness, he was clearly proud at the transformation of his relations with his local Ethiopian neighbours. An Ethiopian by ancestry, according to Rastafari genealogy, Brother David, and by extension each Rastafarian, will always remain

Ethiopian whether other Ethiopians claim him as “ours” or as *farangi* or as *tukul American*. I will discuss the fluidity within the social and subjective designations of *farangi* and *Habesha* (Ethiopian) as well as *Jamaican* in chapter four.

This change in Brother David’s status to “one of ours” exists with another role, that of a *pioneer*. Both are cultivated over time, and the length of residence in Shashamane is a critical factor in acquiring this role. I predominantly heard Rastas from the TTI use the term “pioneer”³⁷ to refer to the earliest *repatriates* from the Mansion or from the EWF who remained continuously in Shashamane from the time when they first repatriated. Although I never heard elders use this word to refer to themselves, recent *repatriates*, youths, and Rasta visitors frequently used it. As one TTI youth born and bred in Shashamane of *repatriate* parents explained,

Pioneers are viewed differently by each Rasta. For example, if you ask a Rastaman in Jamaica he will tell you that *pioneers* are those who first welcomed His Majesty. If you ask a Bobo[shanti] he will tell you those like Prince Emmanuel is a *pioneer*. If you ask a EWF he will tell you those who settled issues with Melaku Bayen [who opened the first EWF branch at Haile Selassie’s behest] and those elders or those who came to live in that time [meaning the 1950s] are pioneers. Even for us those are *pioneers*. For us the TTI, *pioneers* are those who came to hold the land and defended it in the Derg time, which no other Bobo or Federation [EWF] or [Nyah]Binghi ever did. Brother Benedict.

This status of *pioneer* is one that all Rastafari, irrespective of their physical location or group membership attribute to these long-standing Brothers and Sisters. It is a mark of “nuff respect” for their courage to arrive and their tenacity to remain in Shashamane. The term also recognises the initiators of Rastafari, as Brother Benedict alludes to when he notes that a Rastaman or Rastawoman of the Boboshanti Order would

³⁷ The word appears in written published and unpublished work on the settlement. Bonnaci (2008) refers to the first *repatriates* as “heriters” in French and Soroto (2008) as “pioneers.”

designate Prince Emmanuel as a *pioneer* (see my introduction). Those in Jamaica “who first welcomed His Majesty” refers to the public declaration of Haile Selassie’s divinity in the 1930s, and his popular reception in 1966 by men and women who called themselves Rastafarians. *Pioneers*, then, in Shashamane are *IandI* whose actions turned prophecy into reality, a reality that is meant to last in perpetuity, as young Brother Benedict’s comments indicate.

My conversations and more formal interviews with male and female elders and with their children were constantly peppered with stories about the Brothers and Sisters who came to Shashamane “in the early days” and left shortly after because they were unable to deal with “the hardship.” For instance, Brother Nelson related that when he first arrived in Shashamane in the 1970s he came with twelve Brothers and one Sister, six of whom were meant to stay and “hold the land.” The remaining Rasta travellers were supposed to return to Jamaica to pass on information about Shashamane. This action of “holding the land” by remaining in Shashamane, on the *land grant*, is a huge accomplishment that is one criterion for the status of *pioneer*. Through this act, they are exemplars for Rastafari.

Brother Nelson further explained that despite this assignment given by the Executive Members of the TTI House in Jamaica, and accepted by *IandI*, only three Brothers, including himself, and the Sister managed to stay. On his first morning in Shashamane Brother Nelson and other *IandI* woke to find one Brother missing who had apparently secretly left during the night. They later heard that he had returned to Jamaica. This act of fleeing in the dark is a quintessential act of cowardice, and is at odds with the actions of a *pioneer* who ought to demonstrate physical, mental and moral strength

and courage. These are qualities that the *heartical Rastaman* also exhibits. This figure is relevant to a discussion of *pioneers* since they may categorically overlap.

The *heartical Rastaman* is a morally superior man who aims to emulate His Majesty's example of leadership, strength and fairness, and is successful in this endeavour. It is often difficult for a Rastaman to achieve this status though, without a *heartical Rastawoman* at his side, as one long-resident Brother reminded me. This is one reason that Brother Lester, who announced his plan to stage a series of concerts with a cover charge (an entrance fee) to honour the role of "the pioneers" in "building up the community" and to raise funds for each *pioneer*, mentioned Brothers as well as Sisters who were *pioneers*, and not only male *repatriates*. This initiative can be viewed as an expression of *repatriates'* awareness of their moral responsibility to each other since Brother Lester's economic situation is more stable than many of these elders. In this case Brother Lester creatively devises a means of economically and socially supporting the elders, entertaining the community, and promoting his music as one of the performers. Anyone can be a *heartical Rastaman* or Rastawoman since it can be achieved cross generationally, but it is most clearly exemplified in the elders. As Ennis Edmonds notes, for Rastafari generally "eldership is...[an] inspirational position" (2003: 69).

The reactions of *pioneers* to hardships that they experienced in *the early days*, and at present demonstrate the abovementioned characteristics. I often heard *repatriates* reflecting favourably on *the early days* regarding the better relations among *IandI* people (that *IandI* used to "help out each other") and with local Ethiopians while still acknowledging their hardships of earning a living, and improving their living

conditions. Sister Carolyn, for example who is herself a *pioneer*, described how shocked she was at the lack of electricity and indoor plumbing and the long walk to the closest river to catch water when she arrived in Shashamane. (Most early *repatriates* came from urban areas of Jamaica and the Caribbean where, although electricity and water services may have been poor, were still common and they were used to having these services). Sister Carolyn emphasised how hard it was to earn a living sewing clothes to sell in the town, and at times the situation was so dire that she sold her own clothes. Years later when she saved enough money to start building her own small house, the robberies that she was subjected to further impeded her progress, but she persevered.

Among these early *repatriates* as well, the Brothers who were skilled in woodworking or carpentry would carve utilitarian items of furniture, like stools, to sell on the roadside. Yet Brother David also said that earning enough money and producing enough crops to feed everyone was so hard that as he half-jokingly commented, they ate so much red pea soup it is amazing they did not turn red. Since meat was expensive, they used to go to the slaughter house in order to take the leftover animal parts that were usually discarded, like the cow foot and ox tail. These were used to make typical West Indian dishes that were shared communally. These narratives of innumerable physical and economic hardships that Brothers and Sisters eventually overcame or mitigated are critical aspects of their *pioneer* status.

Each Rastaman and Rastawoman who described to me their initial experiences in Shashamane had key themes. When many *repatriates* emphasised that *IandI* used to be “closer” in those times, they generally associated these “close” relations with their

common experiences of poverty in Shashamane and lack of familiarity with their neighbours. These factors ensured that they could commiserate with, and “look out” for each other. Although it remains difficult to earn a living, which was obvious, male and female elder *repatriates* told me that their lives had improved in other respects. They formed friendships and intermarried with their Ethiopian neighbours, they learnt Amharic and now are generally familiar with “the runnings” of the place. Not a single *repatriate*, amidst their narratives about facing difficulties with living conditions and building lives for themselves, their families, and the community ever said or hinted that they regretted repatriating to Ethiopia. Verbally expressing such a thought would have probably meant reneging on their *pioneer* status.

One role of *pioneers* is therefore as vessels of history and the embodiment of individual and collective memory. It is the presence of elders who are still alive and living in Shashamane that lends legitimacy to the two historical events quoted initially, albeit these stories may have been passed on to them from even earlier *repatriates* who are no longer living. Although Brother Thomas had not yet repatriated to Shashamane when the two events occurred, his acquaintance with other Brothers and Sisters who were physically present and from whom other elders directly heard these stories, lends immense credibility to his telling of that period in relation to his long residence in Shashamane. As such, other *IandI* express their respect for and gratitude to these elders and initial *repatriates* in various ways, including Brother Lester’s planned concerts.

Rastafari who have repatriated and live in Shashamane, then, accrue an exalted status in relation to other Rastafari around the world, including those living in Ethiopia but

not on the *land grant*. *IandI* who do not intend to repatriate will still “big up” (respectfully acknowledge) those who have repatriated and, most importantly, those who stayed and raised their families in Shashamane. “Holding the land” demonstrates their reciprocity to His Majesty’s gift, a gift that implicitly included the expectation that it would be used. Malinowski’s argument that myths serve as charters for actions is relevant in two ways. The first is by reciprocating to His Majesty’s gift of land, and the second by following His example of leadership and laudable initiatives on behalf of “his people”, who are Ethiopians and Africans. As Malinowski notes, “it is to the behaviour of the past generations that the Trobriander...looks for his guidance” (Malinowski 1922: 327). In this way, “myths” which relate the actions of honourable ancestors become sacred because they act as guides for the behaviour of current inhabitants. In sum, reciprocating to His Majesty’s gift by holding the land is a *repatriate* strategy that ensures a prolonged Rasta presence on the land, ideally in perpetuity. In the following section I begin to discuss narratives among the children of *repatriates* who have a different status as the generation born on *the land grant*.

“The generation born on the land grant”

Having discussed the achieved status of elders, I turn to the partly ascribed status of their children. I quickly realised that the children of *repatriates* were well versed in the history of their parents’ repatriation and of the *grant*. Children as young as 10 often casually remarked to me that His Majesty gave “us” this land. Older children regularly told me about these events to teach me about *the community’s* history. Unlike the elders and recent *repatriates* they were not too concerned about the information that I would disseminate about “Rasta people” in my thesis. Rather, it was

their responsibility to educate all outsiders and strangers, especially the “sheathens and heathens” as one young Brother said (like myself I presumed) about “Rasta.”

The focus and content of my conversations with young men and young women born on the land differed. This was determined in large part by my gender and age. As a relatively young woman myself I associated predominantly with other young women and girls in the *safar* and my daily conversations were primarily in their company. On the less frequent occasions that I engaged in discussions with young men it was at my *yard* or the shop in the company of men and women of various ages, and not in the more common area of the roadside where young men often socialised. The history of the settlement was highlighted in my few casual conversations with young men, and when, for instance, I ran into young Brother Benedict (whom I quoted earlier) in a neighbour’s *yard*, he used that opportunity to remind me about the importance of understanding His Majesty’s example on behalf of Ethiopians, Africans and “small countries.” When I actively sought out young men born on the *land grant* or those who repatriated to Shashamane with their parents to talk to one-on-one, and I explained that I wished to hear about their lives in Shashamane, they combined aspects of *repatriate* history with their specific experiences to formulate their life histories.

By contrast, my conversations with young women in their teens and twenties involved both discussions about their lives, and other family histories as well as the events that I heard elder and long-resident Brothers and Sisters studiously and proudly relate, as I discussed in the preceding sections. The subjects of the former types of conversations ranged from family members and neighbours (*repatriate* and local Ethiopian) to *Iandl*

abroad and in Ethiopia. I certainly learnt a lot about events in peoples' lives that they might not have wanted me as a quasi-stranger to know, and they about me since our conversations often involved the exchange of our past experiences and significant life events. Through our multiply-themed conversations, young women represented and conceived of themselves as individuals, as youths, as women, and as Rastas living in Shashamane.

Although our conversations often focused on daily actions and events, it did not exclude the ideological context of Shashamane and of repatriation.³⁸ These young women also repeated – to each other, to younger *IandI*, to visitors, and to myself – the seminal stories about the founding of *the community* when they reminded children about pivotal events, especially His Majesty's gift of land to "their people." I often heard older children (in their early teens) then remind their younger counterparts the names of *IandI* who arrived first in Shashamane. Consequently, they also highlighted pivotal aspects about "Rasta" that young men and elders did, namely the *land grant* and the significance of Ethiopia as the birthplace of His Majesty, the origin of humankind and one of the oldest African civilisations in the world.

In our casual conversations young women also talked about the hardship that their parents and elders underwent to build up *the community*, and their relief that they do not have to "suffer" as their parents did. In this way, emulation and contrast emerge through these young women's representations of life today and in *the early days*.

³⁸ This is clearly shown in the last chapter when I give the example of young women born in Shashamane (of at least one *repatriate* parent) discussing a *kebele* (sub-district) meeting and the chairman's comment around the prospect of the government declaring Rastafarians the 81st tribe of Ethiopia. In that chapter I will show that legal and political concerns that are specific to *community* members are incorporated into mundane actions and conversations.

These young Sisters favourably contrasted themselves to other Rasta youths outside Shashamane. Although they all share a “consciousness,” beliefs and practices as *IandI*, these young people in Shashamane live on *the land grant* whereas others live in *babylon*. Rasta youths outside Shashamane have not achieved the ultimate goal of repatriation, an action that the parents’ of Shashamane youths had, which ensured their children’s high status among *IandI* internationally as the first generation born on His Majesty’s land.

This higher status of children born and bred in Shashamane is recognised by youths themselves as well as other *IandI* internationally, and passed on through the words and actions of visitors to youths in *the community*. The existence of children born of at least one *repatriate* parent is fundamentally significant to the *repatriate* goal of *holding the land*. It is proof that this is underway and provides hope that there will be a Rastafari presence on the land in perpetuity. Children who take on characteristic Ethiopian speech and dietary habits are the living products of this long term goal. Typical Ethiopian practices like speaking Amharic fluently and eating *injera* (a flat, round bread that is an Ethiopian staple) daily are undertaken by children who also engage in *Jamaican* habits such as speaking Jamaican patois at the *yard*, declaring their Rasta adherence, and reiterating the history of *the community*, to which they also belong. Such expressions of co-exisiting, lived, and mixed *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian* forms are the gratifying results of a Rastafari concept of His Majesty’s people, their parents’ actual repatriation and the continued practice of declaring a Rasta definition of Ethiopian-ness that takes place in the *safar*.

In both events cited by Brother Thomas and Brother David the gift of land given by His Majesty is the starting point for the ongoing production of a history of *the community*. However, this seminal event is only one part of the Rastafari formulation of a fellowship of His Majesty's people, which stimulates both the creative and confrontational processes of "friction" at ideological and social levels. One clear instance of this is their shared lineage with the Ethiopian nation that also challenges certain aspects of Ethiopian national history. In the local context of the *safar* this category of His Majesty's people is differentiated into various Rastafari and non-Rastafari groups including "Oromos," other local Ethiopians, *pioneers*, visitors and children born in Shashamane. Each group derives status and continuously reinforces their roles through daily expressions of belonging through similar and different worldview and practices that are underscored by the shared Rastafari aim to ensure the inalienability of *the land grant*.

Chapter 2

Making a living (outer)nationally in Shashamane

One of the first Brothers that I met in Shashamane, who had repatriated two years earlier from Jamaica, told me that he was waiting for his wife in Britain to send him “a change.”³⁹ As soon as he got this money in his hand, he said, he would fix his cellular phone. In future his wife could then reach him easily when she needed to send “the Western Union number,” that is the receipt number required to collect funds. Brother Jacob’s comments indicated that without his wife’s economic support he was unable to complete the mundane action of fixing his phone.⁴⁰ Months later I remembered this comment and realised that his was not a unique situation, but a common one for many persons and households in Shashamane. One striking aspect of this movement to Shashamane is that it subtly transforms a stereotype of migration whereby migrants leave the impoverished global south to acquire wealth in the rich global north. This chapter will partly explore the transformation of economic ideas that the *safar* represents.

Another noticeable feature about livelihood in Shashamane is a gendered division of labour whereby women tend to engage primarily in wage labour and men in unpaid

³⁹ “Change” has the connotation of small amounts of money, but the definition of “small” varies depending on the economic situation of the person. On average it means about 10-20 Ethiopian Birr. In 2009, 11Birr was equivalent to US\$1.

⁴⁰ Having a cellular phone in Shashamane is not only a symbol of status but serves an important practical purpose for recent *repatriates* without fixed places of abode. These *repatriates* may be building a house, embroiled in disputes over ownership of houses or may be unable to install phone lines without a local identification card. While technological services, like internet, are common in Shashamane the service is generally poor, and few families can afford internet at the *yard*. Although many *repatriates* do maintain contact with peoples abroad electronically, the telephone remains the most accessible medium of communication. Horst and Miller (2005) argue that cell phones are used by low income men and women in Jamaica to “link up” with persons who are not relatives, but with whom kin relations are also formed and maintained. In their study, men and women also use cell phones to maintain heterosexual relationships for different reasons, which is applicable in Shashamane.

work. As such, I begin this chapter with Sister Anna's and Sister Angela's comments. Their comments partly echo Brother Jacob's remark, and point to the concerns and practical opportunities for earning a living that are shared by many full time *repatriates*. These Sisters' reflections highlight the common role of adult women in *repatriate* and mixed *repatriate*-local households as those who earn most consistently. The following excerpts are from our recorded interviews:

You come to Ethiopia, you think, ok, I'm going to be a farmer, I'm going to be this, I'm going to be that because Shashamane is the grant land, you know, people have this idea [that land is free and it is easy to live here]. But when you come here you find it's a business town. So whatever talent you have, you have to go down and pull that talent out and see what you could become. Sister Anna.

They're [local Ethiopian teenagers and young adults] "different to the older ones and the babies simply because they are the path now and they're seeing the western world. They're seeing our people walking around with whatever and they feel that we have so much...They feel that we're all rich and that we all get money from Western Union...You can understand how they come to think that way, [and then] they brand us *farangi*...A lot of people here are burdens to their families out in the so-called west. We [her immediate family in Shashamane] call them the "Western Union recipients," including myself. I'm trying to ease up on that. Sister Angela.

These two recently repatriated West Indian Rastawomen⁴¹ in their 40s articulate a myriad of sentiments around the efforts to build their lives in Shashamane. This includes not only forming economic relations with peoples in Shashamane and in *foreign to make a living*, but also social relations with local residents. Having fulfilled the goal of repatriation, feelings of pride, frustration and determination emerge out of their goal to create relatively independent livelihoods, to do their part to *build up* the Rastafari community, and to develop cordial relations with various neighbours. These actions are meant to ensure that their repatriation is successful, and that they can live

⁴¹ Sister Anna moved three years ago from the USA although she and her husband visited Shashamane frequently since the late 1990s, and Sister Angela arrived in Ethiopia two years ago with her family from Trinidad for the first time.

permanently on the *land grant*. Accumulating the money and the courage to repatriate, but then returning to *babylon* is a huge mark of failure among *IandI*, regardless of whether a House financed the move or it was self-funded. As one young man commented with reference to Rastafari who move to Shashamane and then return to *foreign* unwillingly or reluctantly, “them can’t tek the livity.” On a collective level, this goal is partly related to the act of holding the land, and its inalienability for “His Majesty’s people” as noted in the previous chapter.

Sister Anna then confesses that she still asks her mother for money frequently, which is more often than she would like to, or expected to, at her age. This was because, she clarified, she borrowed money from a number of Brothers and Sisters in Shashamane and in *foreign* to start her business, and she simply has not been earning enough to repay them. She trudges along in debt to *IandI* and to relatives in *foreign*, persevering in the hope that soon she will be able to pay off her loans. If a Brother or Sister has to become indebted in order to better him or herself, *repatriates* tend to view indebtedness to *IandI* as preferable to a financial institution of *babylon*, like a bank. This is part of the responsibility of *IandI* to “look out for each other” but includes the expectation of monetary repayment. This does not mean though, that *repatriates* do not conduct business with financial institutions. In fact, the majority of households are overwhelmingly reliant on the financial services of Western Union,⁴² as evidenced by the above comments.

Sister Angela similarly expresses her chagrin at depending on “Western Union money,” meaning remittances, from her relatives in the Caribbean when she

⁴² Western Union, an established financial institution embedded in capitalist economies, was started as a telegram company, but its services have changed to money transfers in the post-industrial period.

acknowledges that she is one of the Western Union beneficiaries that she regardless criticises.⁴³ I use the word remittances to draw attention to the immense structural inequalities between the global north and the global south⁴⁴ that impact on each aspect of peoples' lives including, but not limited to, their ability to earn a living and provide material items as well as opportunities for their children. In this thesis "remittance" means only money and goods sent or brought from *foreign*.

While past economic analyses tended to conflate the practice of sending remittances with a notion of dependence that is implicitly framed as shameful and interpreted as evidence of the failure of state economies, anthropologists drew attention to the social facets of remittances (see Philpott 1973). At present, economists have recognised this importance and, combined with the high amount of money sent as remittances from the global north to the global south in general, have begun to analyse remittances in terms of potential toward the economic development of countries in the global south. For instance, based on the overall increase of remittances following the 1989 hurricane and 1997 economic recession, Clarke and Wallsten (2003) suggest that remittances to working class households across Jamaica can act as "social insurance" in response to "exogenous" factors such as natural disasters and economic recessions. While this is also relevant for certain households in Shashamane (as I will explain), for Rastafari in *foreign* sending money to relatives and *IandI* there is a collective method of maintaining the presence of *IandI* on *the land grant*. Sister Angela and

⁴³ Remittances are defined by the International Organisation for Migration as "private funds" sent from individuals or organisations generally in "developed" countries to those in "developing" or "less developed" countries (2006: 2). Remittances usually take the form of "personal, cash transfers...they can also be funds invested, deposited or donated by the migrant to the country of origin" (2006: 1). Although this is a simplified definition, and Sister Angela who is legally a migrant in Ethiopia is the recipient of funds instead of the sender, the idea of sending money that the recipient would be unable to live without is the basic premise.

⁴⁴ The United Nations defines the global south as Africa, the Americas without North America, the Caribbean, Asia excluding Japan and Oceania except Australia and New Zealand (see <http://www.acpmigration-obs.org/sites/default/files/South.pdf>).

Sister Anna nonetheless emphasise that their dependence was temporary and this was part of their strategy to “stand on their own” in the long term. Consequently, Sister Angela’s daring description of her fellow *repatriates* as “burdens” confronts the failure of *the community* to “develop” (in her words) over the past 50 years.⁴⁵ *Repatriate* ideas of and actions toward community development exist with their various ways of earning a living as well as receiving remittances. Sister Angela’s analysis also reflects the (mis)conceptions around relations between *repatriates* and locals as well as her personal disappointment with her inability to “make it” in Shashamane.

Less than two months after our interview Sister Angela returned to Trinidad with her children, expecting her husband to join them shortly. One significant difference between Sister Angela and Sister Anna is that Sister Anna does not have children whereas Sister Angela has three, all of whom were overwhelmingly unhappy in Shashamane. She frankly told me that she feels her “selfishness” in *repatriating* has adversely impacted her children’s lives and severely limited their educational opportunities. (It must be remembered that education is a means of socio-economic *betterment* in the West Indies). Returning to “the west” is her way of rectifying the wrong that she believes she has inflicted on her children by insisting that they move to Ethiopia. Sister Anna, on the other hand, continues to “pull her talent out” and maintains her goal of *bettering* Ethiopia and Shashamane particularly, as this is the site of *the land grant*. Each repatriated Sister finds different strategies of dealing with the struggle of building a life in the *promised land*. Although Sister Anna and Sister Angela often had to economically depend on relatives and *landI* in *foreign*, there was

⁴⁵ Sister Anna also explained to me that she was questioning her belief in “Rasta values” and her adherence to “the Organ” (the Twelve Tribes).

a self-projected awareness that, ultimately, they would be able to support themselves and their families by depending solely on their hard work and initiative. Perhaps this awareness might better be described as a self-resilience combined with the determination (to economically support the family), and at times to *better* their children's lives by ensuring that children completed their education for example, while fulfilling their own ambition to live in His Majesty's land.

The aim of this chapter is to construct an image that reflects the mosaic-like character of livelihood practices of *repatriate* households. This kind of piecing together involves examining how men and women individually, as members of households, and as Rastafari belonging to particular Mansions and residing in the *safar*, work and make money and how they actively shape their roles and reflect on their varied activities also within the Ethiopian national economy. Every single *repatriate* who I met indubitably earns a living through a variety of means or what Lambros Comitas calls "occupational multiplicity" (1973). This entails a combination of work, largely in the informal economy of Shashamane, and receiving remittances of goods and money from individuals and Mansions in *foreign*.

Living in Shashamane, I quickly realised that livelihood activities are not restricted to Shashamane, but take place with the economic and emotional support of *IandI* outside Shashamane or outernationally. I will expand on this in the section on household earnings. Yet, I only gradually began to understand the degree of complexity with which these activities are enmeshed in capitalist structures, the production of local social relations at household and community levels, especially the idea of "looking out for each other" and the Rastafari goal of maintaining a presence on the land. The

concept of mobile livelihoods that emerged out of migration studies is useful in this chapter since,

an important aspect of people's livelihood strategies is the social relationships and cultural values that various strategies involve, the communities of belonging they circumscribe, and the kinds of movement in time and space they make possible or necessitate (Olwig and Sorenson 2002:10).

Livelihood activities must therefore be contextualised in *repatriates'* obligations to “look out” for each other in Shashamane, their expectations of *IandI* outnationally and the corresponding obligations of *IandI* in *foreign* to *repatriates* since *repatriates* occupy the sacred physical site of His Majesty's land in Shashamane. As Aihwa Ong points out, “political economy” and “human agency” cannot be analytically separated since “political-economic forces [are not] external to everyday meanings and action” (1999:5). In Shashamane, livelihood is bound up in manifestations of a moral economy among *repatriates*. As a result, surviving and *bettering* oneself in Shashamane must be examined in light of this point.

The notion of *betterment* that is prevalent in studies of West Indian migration continues to be partly applicable in this repatriation “settlement.”⁴⁶ *Betterment* in the West Indies often refers to improving material possessions and opportunities for earning a living, thereby gaining upward social mobility through economic means in societies of origin. “‘Bettering one's condition’ primarily refers to outward appearances, what people look at. It is, in other words, what is examined, and hence judged, by others. By bettering one's condition, one may therefore gain others' recognition and respect” (Fog Olwig 2005:194). This may include sending children to private schools or expanding a family house. In Shashamane, though, *betterment* is

⁴⁶ As a reminder, some early *repatriates* may refer to *the land grant* as “the settlement,” but it is not an empirically accurate designation. I use the word in situations when I have heard *repatriates* use it.

about each family's effort to improve conditions on *the land grant* for themselves but also collectively for *the community*, and not about improving the lives of family in countries of origin. "Helping out each other" in Shashamane means simultaneously working toward household and community *betterment*. It means not only economic and educational improvement, but also the spiritual changes associated with repatriation (see chapter one).

Bettering oneself must be measured against the importance of Shashamane as the location of the *land grant*, and as the nucleus of an international web of movement of peoples, money, goods and ideas. Also, a Rastaman's or Rastawoman's actions and attitude toward other *IandI* while *bettering* him or herself impacts on the respect that others accord them. Although the money earned is primarily for the earner and his or her family, if a Brother or Sister is parsimonious with these funds, his or her possessions or time then this diminishes his or her respect since *the community* should not be neglected.

Repatriates usually have "closer" relations with frequent visitors or *IandI* that they maintain regular contact with, than with siblings or parents. Elder Brothers and Sisters repeatedly explained to me and to visitors that they rarely "heard from" their siblings and other relatives and most early *repatriates* had not returned to Jamaica since repatriating more than thirty years ago. Talk of relatives (meaning those abroad since there are no extended family members in Shashamane) hardly arose in conversations unless I specifically enquired into *repatriates'* families or childhood. On those occasions, I asked about the last time that they visited or communicated with relatives or I asked the children of *repatriates* who were born in Shashamane if they met the

relatives of their West Indian parents. Additionally, there were only a handful of *repatriates* whose immediate relatives like brothers and sisters or aunts and uncles, had visited them in Ethiopia. Sister Carolyn, an elder who is a long-resident *repatriate* (see chapter one) explained that after many years of minimal contact with her brother, he recently called her, but this had ebbed in the past year. This kind of erratic communication is characteristic of the relations between long resident *repatriates* and their relatives in multiple locations outside Ethiopia. Recent *repatriates*, however, tend to maintain more frequent communication with relatives in the global north and the Caribbean, as Sister Anna's and Sister Angela's remarks indicate.

Certain types of economic exchange predominate in Shashamane: persons partly supporting their families from money earned in Shashamane, Rasta people giving "change" or small items to other individuals in Shashamane, and Rastas in *foreign* providing money and goods to specific persons and community organisations. In practice, these actions occur simultaneously and constantly overlap with other kinds of economic relations. The remittances that I will focus on are monies sent from person to person and to locally-grown small organisations in Shashamane (like the JRDC), not funds from international agencies (like the International Monetary Fund or the United States Agency for International Development) that are referred to as "aid" or "development assistance" lent to national governments or organisations.

Like many West Indians in various locations, then, the economic relations of *repatriates* with each other, with relatives, and with *IandI* around the world are embedded in these global exchanges of what become capital and resources, as Brother Jacob's, Sister Angela's and Sister Anna's comments at the beginning of the chapter

exemplify. These international networks among people, households and community organisations are highlighted in this chapter. The types of residence other than full-time repatriation, like seasonal residence, are examples of the strategies that *IandI* develop in response to macroeconomic factors in order to maintain the *repatriate* presence on *the land grant*, and to fulfill their individual goals.

One aim of this chapter is to evoke the regular movements of peoples into the *safar*, itself located in the busy town of Shashamane. Not only do Rastafari visitors and seasonal *repatriates* frequently arrive and depart, but the trajectories of many recent *repatriates* from the Caribbean also show that they arrive in Ethiopia “by way of” western territories, most commonly Britain, the United States or Canada after living and working in the global north for varying lengths of time from six months to thirty years. The terms “by way of” or “via” are commonplace in *repatriates*’ descriptions of their journeys to Ethiopia, and particularly to Shashamane.⁴⁷ One Brother from Barbados explained that he came to Ethiopia “via Holland” where he lived for five years and met his wife who later repatriated with him, and a Sister referred to herself “as Jamaican by way of Britain.” Another Brother related to me his “short” stay in Britain for almost one year to earn money. This income helped to cover the travel costs of airline tickets from Jamaica to Ethiopia for his family, and provided the start up funds for a small business in Shashamane, where they joined him after he moved from Britain. While these examples demonstrate the multiple facets of *repatriates*’ lives that can be politically and academically characterised as economic migration, *repatriates* emphasised that this was not the sole or even primary motivation for their movements. Rather, their decisions to move to various locales were underscored by an

⁴⁷ Unlike more recent *repatriates*, the earliest *repatriates* who came from the USA and Jamaica, and arrived between the 1950s and the 1970s repatriated directly from these countries. *Repatriates* from Jamaica only spent a few days or weeks in Britain en route to Shashamane.

intense determination to fulfill the “dream” and the “goal” of moving to Ethiopia, and especially to Shashamane with God’s help, and to achieve salvation (see chapter three).

Household earnings: waged labour and sexual division of labour

By and large *repatriates* in Shashamane are self-employed. With the decrease in land available to *repatriates* following the 1974 revolution, and with the subsequent increase in internal Ethiopian migration to the wider Shashamane area (Bjeren 1985), *repatriate* farming land was reduced to small kitchen gardens in each *yard*.⁴⁸ Restructuring of the national economy after the 1991 change to capitalist leadership additionally altered the opportunities for earning a living.⁴⁹ Since subsistence farming is no longer a viable way of *making a living* in Shashamane, at present if a person is not self-employed selling goods or offering professional and skilled-based services like medical care or masonry, the only other available jobs are working in public sector employment such as government administration. These positions, though, are difficult for *repatriates* and their children to acquire since many are neither Ethiopian citizens nor legal residents, which are prerequisites for such jobs.⁵⁰ The basis of household income in Shashamane must therefore be divided into money earned locally through such multiple activities in Shashamane and in Ethiopia, and remittances of money and goods from *foreign*.

⁴⁸ The caretaker will usually plant crops that have yielded in the past such as potatoes, corn, plantain and bananas, and sorrel. Sorrel is called “hibiscus” in English in Ethiopia. If the household cook needs a vegetable or plant from the kitchen garden he or she will either pick it themselves or send a child to do so.

⁴⁹ Since the adoption of “a free market economic policy” in 1992 the Ethiopian government has encouraged private foreign and domestic investment and the earmarking of farming and residential land for “development.” Various “reforms” such as the “privatization of state owned enterprises, liberalization of foreign trade, deregulation of domestic prices, and devaluation of the exchange rate” have been implemented (Trade and Investment section of Embassy of Ethiopia, London. www.ethioembassy.org.uk).

⁵⁰ In Shashamane to get a job with a government office, a person usually has to be a citizen or resident of Ethiopia, speak Amharic fluently and have some knowledge of the regional language, Oromiffa.

The basic premise of Lambros Comitas' notion of occupational multiplicity "wherein the modal adult is systematically engaged in a number of gainful activities, which for him form an integrated economic complex" (1973: 157) is applicable for *repatriate* households in Shashamane. All *repatriate* men and women in the *safar* follow this labour pattern. Comitas suggested that earlier analyses of types of peasant economic activities did not adequately represent the reality with which such peoples engaged in multiple activities simultaneously. Significantly, external factors including the political and economic context also determine which activities people engage in during certain periods and their duration. For instance, fishing would depend on the "availability of land and sea resources" as he noted, so residents undertake fishing, cultivation and wage employment variably (1973:165). In this example the sea area that is designated as national marine territory, the extent to which the water has already been fished, and the boats that the fishermen can afford also affect residents' ability to fish successfully.

The most common form of self-employment in Shashamane is the small neighbourhood shop or restaurant which is also a typical feature of the rural and urban landscape of the Caribbean. These shops, which are popular in the *safar*, are owned by both *repatriates* and local Ethiopian men and women. In the shop (*souk* used in Amharic, a word of Arabic origin), like the one owned by Sister Pauletta that I describe below, a variety of goods are generally sold. These include dry, packaged foodstuffs, cooked foods, and homemade drinks. A few *repatriate*-owned shops sell homemade juices like soursop, mango, sorrel and pineapple that are also sold in restaurants in the town since these are tropical fruits that grow in Ethiopia, which are familiar to *repatriates* from the Caribbean. Juices and typical Jamaican dishes such as

rice and peas, fried fish, and curry goat and rice are popular with both local Ethiopian and *Jamaican* customers.⁵¹ *Repatriate* shops may also stock “Rasta” clothing and accessories that are often bought from other persons in Ethiopia (mainly Addis Ababa) and sent from *foreign*, like tams or t-shirts with characteristic red, gold, and green colours. Shop-keeping is a type of self-regulated work that is a legal way of earning a living “outside the system.” It enables *repatriates* to maintain their autonomy which is a common desire for Rastafari, as they emphasised.

For men, waged labour can involve using skills such as carpentry or masonry in local construction projects. Men who moved in the second period of repatriation (1970s) often told me about how they built certain community buildings together like the headquarters of the TTI, and in a few cases, their own houses. This is one reason that Rastafari from the TTI House who were skilled in the areas of masonry and carpentry were specifically chosen to repatriate. Few *repatriates* had more than rudimentary knowledge of agriculture, though, since most grew up in urban areas of the West Indies. In Shashamane they augmented this knowledge with the guidance and assistance of local Ethiopian farmers. Many Brothers who have resided in Shashamane for at least twenty years framed their comments about *making a living* today in relation to past practices of supporting themselves through subsistence farming which is no longer feasible.

Taking this into context, and their creative multiple ways of *making a living*, Brothers of all ages, though, including youths born and/or raised in Shashamane, reiterated the

⁵¹ Preserved juices in boxes or cans are commonly sold in shops. Cooking food for sale is a recent way of earning a living since West Indian and Jamaican dishes have gradually become increasingly popular among local Ethiopians in Shashamane. Ox tail and cow foot may be less well-liked since they are usually discarded by local Ethiopians after the animal is butchered.

difficulty of acquiring steady work both in the past and at present. As Brother Lewis highlighted, finding work in Shashamane is the main obstacle to “progress.” Men and women concurred on this point. In practice and in our conversations, older men consequently focused more on other non-paid work that they did, such as the administrative and day to day running of Mansions, child care, and household activities including cultivating kitchen gardens. Notwithstanding these realities, local Ethiopians tend to associate *Jamaicans* with wealth. As Sister Angela bluntly states, “they feel that we’re all rich and that we all get money from Western Union.” The popular conception of Rastafari men in particular is one of wealth and thus as desirable spouses. This perception is related to factors such as the constant Rastafari visitors from *foreign* to the *safar*, and visible markers of well-being including clothing, vehicles, and houses, which I will expand on.

There is another side to this alignment of wealth with *Jamaicans* (meaning *farangi* here) that means *Jamaicans* will be taken advantage of in certain situations. This implication emerged in the daily conversations between Brothers and Sisters as well as a few Ethiopians. One Brother who had repatriated about three years ago explained that his most recent domestic electricity bill, after a few months of arrears, was an exorbitant sum that he intended to query since *farangis* are often charged higher rates for public services than local Ethiopians. A young local Ethiopian Brother, who grew up in the *safar* and had “manifested” Rastafari (see chapter three) concurred with this statement. He claimed (in a combination of English and Jamaican patois) that if officials see a “foreign name” then the amount on the bill is automatically increased. Another repatriated Brother concurred. On other occasions I heard similar comments regarding the increased prices quoted by locals to *repatriates* for the sale and rental of

houses. For example, one Sister asserted that she heard, firsthand, Ethiopian owners requesting higher prices for land from “farangis” than from “them own people.”

For women, income-earning work usually involves selling various goods. Importantly, as well, through shop-keeping women are able to support themselves and their children instead of depending on their husbands or their children’s fathers for income. Women in their 20s-50s who were *repatriates* or locally born, with whom I interacted daily, were usually extremely matter of fact and practical about their work to earn money and their work taking care of the household. Their comments were usually phrased in terms of the necessity of making money to live, which they did not present as a burden but, rather, as a responsibility. In support of their pragmatic view of the necessity to earn money, they pointed to basic household expenses including the cost of food, electricity and telephone bills as well as their children’s school fees and supplies. Although *Jamaican* mothers expect to receive money from their children’s fathers, whether in Shashamane or other locations in Ethiopia or in *foreign*, and possibly likewise from relatives abroad or *IandI* in *the community* or abroad, they were usually not surprised if people did not fulfil these expectations for various reasons.

Caribbeanists have emphasised the long history of female wage labour independent of earnings from male spouses, but this practice must be considered in relation to class (see Wilson 1973; Reddock 1994; Crichlow 2009). From the post-emancipation period onward, peasant women and working class women have historically needed to work, and certainly did so, in order to support themselves and their children, often in the informal sector and in trades such as vending. In contrast, elite women did not

need to learn to do this, and middle class women or aspiring middle class women have gone to great lengths to avoid earning a living themselves, particularly outside the home. As scholars have recognised, the informal sector in which women dominate is responsible for a large proportion of the earnings of poor households as well as national economies (Mies 1986; Katzin 1959).⁵²

Rastawomen in Shashamane often continue this involvement by undertaking other activities like sewing and selling clothing, as early *repatriates* did in the past. One such instance was a clothing sale organised by the JRDC where people donated the clothes to be sold. Most sellers were seasonal *repatriates* and the remaining clothing had been donated to the JRDC by visitors and *repatriates*. Each seller received monies from the sale minus 10% of the sale price which was donated to the JRDC. Such sales can only be held sporadically since a few Sisters, not all, who travel between Shashamane and *foreign*, buy new clothes on their return to western countries after selling older clothes in Shashamane shortly before they leave. This is one type of vending that West Indian women currently engage in that now involves international travel. It is just one aspect of these Sisters' occupational multiplicity since they also work for wages in *foreign*, money that they may also send to family members and other *IandI* in Shashamane. A comparable example is what Carla Freeman calls "transnational higglering" of young women in the outsourced service industry in Barbados who act as "suitcase traders" or informal commercial importers (2000; see also Ulysse 2007).

⁵² As Freeman notes, with reference to her research in Barbados, "with economic fluctuations and structural adjustment measures testing Caribbean women's well-known ability to "cut and contrive," the informal sector has ballooned dramatically" (2000: 241).

In Shashamane elder Sisters and young women undertake unpaid work as well as their waged work on a daily basis. While both men and women are constantly busy, most men are busy with unpaid work whereas women are busy with both. For instance, Sister Pauletta's hectic daily routine reinforced my initial perception of the sharp contrast between women's and men's wage-earning work. After Sister Pauletta makes breakfast for her family and gets her younger children ready for school with help from their older siblings, she goes to the market or shops in town to buy any necessary fruits or ingredients for the homemade drinks or the lunch menu or she may go to the bank in town to pick up the money for her family that her daughter in *foreign* has sent. The younger children take the school bus to their school in a neighbouring town, and her older children catch a *bajaj* (small motorised vehicle imported from India) to a private tertiary institute in Shashamane town. Each child usually helps with cleaning the house when he or she returns from school in the afternoon. Sister Pauletta's husband checks the kitchen garden, and leaves for the headquarters of the House to work on administrative and practical matters. He may be there for varying lengths of time depending on what needs to be done that day, from inspecting the grounds, balancing the accounts or preparing the space if there is an event taking place.

Around mid-morning the young *Habesha* woman who assists with the cooking arrives and assists with the preparation of lunch dishes. When Sister Pauletta returns to the *yard* she cooks the main dishes, and serves customers with the help of her older children or employees while another family member watches the shop. Throughout the day customers drop by; these include residents of the area who buy basic foodstuffs, young people who sit and drink juice while socialising if they are in the area and not in town, and around lunchtime, from noon to 2pm especially, the bulk of

the local Ethiopian and *repatriate* clientele arrive for lunch (not daily, but maybe once or twice a week), as well as Rasta and non-Rasta visitors. If a young adult in Sister Pauletta's household is in at night the shop remains open, and primarily young *Jamaican* and local Ethiopian men and women will socialise there, although this takes place more often on the weekends.

Regarding household earnings as well, the frequent Rasta visitors to almost each household must be incorporated into its income, and not only its more permanent members. Each month I was introduced to visitors who I had not previously seen in the area who were Rasta and non-Rasta alike, but mostly Rastafari. Tourists or visitors who are not Rasta may briefly stop in Shashamane en route to or from the south, and have meals at *repatriate*-owned restaurants or may stay overnight at *repatriate*-owned hotels. Rooms may also be rented out to non-Rasta tourists or to Rasta visitors who are strangers, which is another source of income for *repatriate* households. More frequently, though, I met Rasta visitors who *repatriates* knew by name or by face, either because they had visited Shashamane before or because they all had communal *IandI* contacts in Shashamane and in foreign. In one *yard* alone during my year's residence in Shashamane I met at least ten Rasta visitors from abroad. This also highlights the constant presence of visitors in the *safar* and the frequent movements of Rastafari visitors between Shashamane and abroad.

Visitors may stay for any length of time from one week to six months, and will often bring goods as well as monies for persons. Almost every household that I was familiar with had at least one visitor from *foreign* who was well known to household members, and who financially contributed, even if only minimally, to the household expenses.

This cash can be considered an “unrecorded” remittance, and researchers have noted that distinguishing between “officially recorded and unrecorded flows” of remittances is useful in recognising diverse means of transference (Sander and Munzele Maimbo 2003: 5). Both types of remittances are received in Shashamane, as I will discuss.

The Western Union run⁵³: transnational monetary transactions and “helping out” *IandI*

This title is meant to indicate that collecting money from Western Union becomes part of many *repatriates*’ daily schedules, as seen in the description of Sister Pauletta’s routine above. Most *repatriates* combine their income from small businesses and occasional jobs with remittances. Remittances of goods and money are sent through financial organisations and brought by visitors to Shashamane, and as previously noted, can be considered as “recorded” and “unrecorded” remittances. *Repatriates* tend to rely, to different degrees, on funds sent from individuals, relatives in the West or in the Caribbean, and from the official Rastafari Mansions.

Some older *repatriates* additionally rely heavily on other *IandI* in Shashamane for meeting daily needs such as meals or on specific occasions of birthdays or around celebrations. For example, one *repatriate* Brother who is married but does not have any children, which is highly unusual in Shashamane, is partly supported by monetary donations in Ethiopian Birr from a local social service support group that was initiated by *repatriates*. This group’s funding comes from local *IandI* and Rastafari in *foreign*,

⁵³ The Western Union sign that is distinctly visible outside the main national bank in Shashamane town evokes memories of particular items and occasions when funds were received, and of friends, relatives, *IandI*, and partners with whom *repatriates* and their families share global relations of reciprocity and trust. Whereas this sign evoked no sentiment for me before living in Shashamane, I realised its symbolic significance after I left Ethiopia and I saw the yellow and black sign while walking along a busy downtown street in Europe. With just a glance at this sign I was immediately transferred to Shashamane.

and it is independent of any House in Shashamane. *Repatriates* may support this Brother in small ways that they can afford by providing him with meals or giving him a “little change.” Like many other *repatriates* this Brother is also supported by his relatives in North America and in Jamaica. Rastafari visitors from the west to Shashamane have also brought him clothing and money in the past.

Many local Ethiopians in Shashamane also receive monetary remittances from relatives in the global north.⁵⁴ Though I had less contact with members of local Ethiopian households, my impression is that these funds are likewise spent on the household and familial expenses of food, electricity, water, education, and transportation, similar to *repatriate* households. Local Ethiopians are also bound up in transnational relations and I met quite a few working class persons in Shashamane and in Addis Ababa who had worked in Dubai, expressed a desire to work there or were applying for their American green card through the “green card lottery” (see chapter four). Middle class and elite Ethiopians in Addis Ababa with whom I interacted also spoke of relatives, friends and colleagues abroad who they visited frequently in their travels.

IandI in *foreign* send remittances to individuals and organisations in Shashamane for various purposes, not only for daily expenses. As Figueroa notes, “remittances are...not simply transfers; they may include market transactions. Remitters may for example, send money to look after business on their own account” (2008: 247). One such example is the mutually beneficial relationship between *IandI* abroad who own houses in Shashamane and *repatriates*, usually elder or older males. Rastafari owners

⁵⁴ Figures from the World Bank estimate remittances to Ethiopia totalled US\$387 million in 2008 (2011: 34).

in *foreign* may ask a *repatriate* member of the community whom they trust to look after their property or to keep watch over the local male Ethiopian caretaker of the house to ensure that he does not exploit the absentee owner.

This kind of work provides a small income for male *repatriates* that enables them to contribute to their household income. When the owner sends funds the *repatriate's* role is multi-faceted. It includes verifying that the cost estimates for upkeep and repair that the caretaker provides is accurate, verifying that work has been done and/or that the house remains in good condition, and especially ensuring that this Ethiopian or any other “thieving” Ethiopian does not attempt to sell the house to another Rastafarian who is also in *foreign* or to another *farangi* (who may not be Rasta). This occasionally happened in the past, according to the incidents that I heard of from visiting house owners and permanent *repatriates*.

The relationship between the house owner in *foreign* and the *repatriate* liaison that is framed as trusting is juxtaposed against the presumption of a deceitful relationship between the house owner and the local Ethiopian since “Ethiopians” are stereotypically “thieving, lying” people who should never be trusted, especially in financial dealings. In this way a moral distinction is made between the *heartical* Rastaman and the “thieving” Ethiopian. Whereas the *heartical* Rastaman will not deceive the Brother or Sister abroad, the categorical “thieving” Ethiopian man will inevitably attempt to. This hyperbolic distinction reinforces the high status of older *repatriates* in the *safar*. I will expand on this in the fourth chapter in relation to the gendered social categories of *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian*. These Rastafari owners often view this relationship as part of their contribution to “developing the community”

both physically through constructing houses, and by providing opportunities for employment, although short-term, for their fellow *repatriates*. This relationship is implicitly and purposefully regulated by a Rastafari ethos of fairness and trust. This must be examined in relation to “helping out” each other, and obligations to *the community*.

“Looking out” for and “helping out” each other refer to the expectations of behaviour among community members and to a lesser extent within the household. One such example is Sister Pauletta’s shop/restaurant in the *safar* that is maintained through the effort of all the members of her household since it is located in their *yard*. Although this business was primarily initiated by Sister Pauletta, her husband as well as their adult and teenage sons and daughters assist with the family business when they are in Shashamane. Their responsibilities range from buying ingredients and goods in town and in Addis Ababa, cooking, and attending to customers or *watching the shop*. Acquiring stock for the shop primarily entails Sister Pauletta buying perishable items like fruits, vegetables and meats locally and travelling to Addis Ababa for dry goods that she buys wholesale from sellers and not directly from producers. Her adult children will also pick up canned or preserved items on their personal or business-oriented travels between Shashamane and Addis Ababa. If, however, Sister Pauletta is unable to make the eight hour round trip journey to Addis Ababa, and spend the requisite time buying goods, she buys dry goods at retail prices from shopkeepers in Shashamane town and then slightly raises the prices.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ For instance, one kilogram of sugar in town before I left, at its highest retail price, was 10Birr in town, and 12Birr at shops in the *safar*.

These prices, however, do not usually deter other *Jamaicans* from buying at the shop. This is partly due to the shop's proximity to other *repatriate yards*, and because it is important to patronise the shop as much as financially viable because it is a *Jamaican* business and owned by one of "our people." For recent *repatriates* especially who speak limited Amharic, it is simpler to communicate in English rather than to attempt broken Amharic with a shopkeeper. This pervasive effort to support "the community" and "our people" also emerges in other situations. For example, a few times when I went to Addis Ababa one or two Sisters would ask me to get specific items that were necessary for their livelihoods but unavailable in Shashamane at that time. If I bought spices for a Sister who earns a living selling baked goods she would sometimes give me a discounted price if I later bought these goods. Without this kind of support from other *IandI* in Ethiopia and not only monetary support from abroad, *repatriates* would often be unable to consistently maintain their business ventures.

These relations can therefore be analysed in terms of moral obligations and as an aspect of a moral economy. Such relations can be fostered among *repatriates* but rarely with state officials or other locals since one obligation of a Rastaman or Rastawoman is to "watch out" for other *IandI* in particular.⁵⁶ This is related to a collectively shared consciousness and effort to maintain the existence of the *repatriate* population in Shashamane (see chapter one). It is this expectation that underlies the prevalent complaint of long-resident male *repatriates* that the Mansions "forgot bout

⁵⁶ While each Rastaman and Rastawoman deploys notions of "looking out for each other" and offer help to each other daily, there are disagreements that co-exist with these relations. For instance, although the profits from Rastafari events are supposed to be shared equally among each House, this does not always happen. Since most *repatriates* are members of the TTI Mansion they have the largest number of volunteers to organise and execute these activities, and this House frequently receives the largest amount of money raised. This is partly responsible for the conflicts between members of each House about the perceived disproportionate distribution of money and the time and effort that people put into preparing for the events.

them.” This reflects the position of the *repatriate* population within the international community of *landl* and *repatriates*’ awareness of their high status since they are “holding the land.” They should therefore be supported in various ways (see my discussion of their *pioneer* status in chapter one).

Support from Rastafari outernational is therefore expected, and is often received, by almost every *repatriate* who I met in Shashamane. This adds another dimension to the extensively researched flow of remittances from Britain and North America to the Caribbean since relatives in both the wealthier countries of the west and, to a lesser extent in the poorer Caribbean countries will support *repatriates* and the Houses in Shashamane.⁵⁷ As Carla Freeman points out, “those people who move/migrate are defined primarily as workers, and those who stay put as consumers within the transnational continuum. The two processes, it seems, have remained relatively separate as categories” (2002:69). Although goods and money do primarily move from the global north to Shashamane, due to hierarchical global economic factors - meaning that the countries that sell raw materials or agricultural produce to the global north for consumption must usually import finished and refined goods at exorbitant tariffs due to their lack of manufacturing capabilities (see Sassen 1988; Basch et al 1994) - a simple producer-consumer analysis would be misrepresentative of the economic context of Shashamane as goods and money move to this part of Ethiopia from various locations in the world.

⁵⁷ Similarly, Figueroa notes that remittances from the Caribbean to the global north are ignored or under-analysed by researchers (2008:252).

Stuart Philpott also discusses “mechanisms of social control” (1973: 175) like shaming (see also Wilson 1973) that ensure the migrant continues his or her economic obligations to kin at home:

social control with regard to remittance obligations is rooted largely in the nature of the migrant’s social network...As long as his social ties are mainly with other Montserratians there is something of a continuing general reminder about what the migrant should be doing for the people back home. The Montserratian migrant network in its broadest sense (i.e the totality of links between Montserratian migrants) mobilizes no specific action against a migrant who does not send money home. In a diffuse way the defaulting migrant may suffer a loss of esteem among those who hear that his family at home is having a difficult time (Philpott 1973: 177).

Although Philpott is discussing the network of Montserratian migrants in Britain who exert social control on fellow migrants in *foreign* through their communication with those at home in Montserrat, this is partly relevant for Shashamane. Since communication over the telephone and internet and through visitors is constantly maintained between *land* in Shashamane and in *foreign*, it is often well-known to what extent and with what frequency those in *foreign* send or bring money and goods, thereby helping to ensure the longevity of the *repatriate* population. I will discuss this later in the chapter with the examples of Sister Bernice and Sister Loretta.

Work and social relations

Economic relations are influenced by socially constructed perceptions as well as practical needs that can be the cause of tension that Sister Angela brings up (at the beginning of the chapter). In Sister Pauletta’s shop, and any shop in the *safar*, it is local Ethiopians who provide most of the revenue due to their numerical prevalence. One method of forging social relations is through crediting (Wilson 1973). This is practised mainly with locally resident peoples since they or their relatives can be

found and held accountable for any unpaid bills. This is done by *repatriates* and local Ethiopian shop owners. Accordingly, these proprietors will engage in crediting with long-resident *repatriates* as well as more recent permanent *repatriates* or seasonal *repatriates* whose families live in Shashamane, but not with visitors. Over time customers and shopkeepers become more familiar with each other and customers also prove their trustworthiness if they pay their accumulated bills.

Economic relations between *repatriates* and local Ethiopians take other, less common forms outside the consumer sphere to that of employment, which can also be a source of “friction.” Although the *repatriate* population is a numerical minority of Shashamane (around 200), they tend to employ more Ethiopians than vice versa. While there are quite a few local Ethiopians who work in *repatriate* businesses and *yards*, few *repatriates* work for local Ethiopians. The few cases of *repatriates* working for local Ethiopians include teachers in a private school, and *Jamaican* youths who work in Addis Ababa for private language schools, in entertainment or in transportation for instance. By contrast, local Ethiopian women and men are more commonly employed in economically stable *repatriate yards* as domestic workers, washers and watchmen and in the few Rasta-owned businesses as teachers, drivers, and all round errand/sales assistants. In most *yards*, for example, labour-intensive jobs like washing clothes, are done by hand and were usually assigned to a young woman who may be employed in the *yard* only to wash, of which local Ethiopian women are well aware. One afternoon, for example, when I was walking on the main road in the *safar* a young local Ethiopian woman from the *safar* stopped me to ask in broken English if I needed someone to wash my clothes because she was looking for work. She explained that she already washed for a recently repatriated Sister and that I could

ask this *repatriate* about her, implying that her employer would provide a favourable recommendation.

Ideally, as well, if the members of a household could afford to employ a full time watchman (*zebeniya*) they would, but few families could do so. Household members who are unable to collectively afford a *zebeniya*'s salary would make an effort to ensure that there was usually at least one person at the *yard* to avoid potential theft.

The *zebeniyawoch* (plural of *zebeniya*) who I knew were local Ethiopian men from Shashamane who knew a smattering of English and Jamaican patois, which was important for recent *repatriates*, and who had been recommended by *repatriates*. In the *yard* either one *zebeniya* worked at night or two worked day and night shifts interchangeably so there was always someone *watching the yard*.

The practice of *watching the yard* has to do with an awareness of the insecurity of Shashamane, the typically more elaborate furnishings and items in *Jamaican* households, and the hyperbolic perception of the area as inundated with thieves, and specifically Ethiopian thieves. In response to these factors and perceptions, *repatriates* and their families have modified their behaviours to secure possessions in the house. Notwithstanding this view of "thiefing Ethiopians" some degree of trust is involved in the relationships between *repatriates* and employees. Since most employees are usually local Ethiopians from the area they are relatively familiar with *Jamaican* habits. If, for example, a young woman is employed as a domestic worker inside the house she would smell the *herb*, which is illegal in Ethiopia. Since the use of *herb* could potentially be reported to the police, *repatriates* tend not to smoke

initially in front of strangers or outsiders. An aspect of trust within social relations must be cultivated over time (as with crediting).

In terms of the JRDC as well, when a job vacancy is posted on the organisation's notice board any qualified Ethiopian will apply, whether he or she is Rastafari or not. Most applicants for the Project Officer post advertised during my residence there were all qualified local Ethiopian men and women. Yet, a long-resident Sister explained to me that many Ethiopians who work for the JRDC School and NGO often "get a lot of pressure" from their relatives and friends for working with Rasta people. For instance, the Sister continued, the newly (at that time) appointed Headmaster of the JRDC Primary and Kindergarten School who taught there for at least three years before his recent promotion, is seen by other Ethiopians as "selling out" his own people and "on the Rasta side of things" since he does not teach at an Ethiopian-administered school and is now the head of "the Rasta school."⁵⁸ (I only heard a few local Ethiopians use this phrase "the Rasta school" in English so I was unable to determine how popular an expression it is). However, one day while we were talking, this Headmaster frankly explained to me that his parents and siblings financially depend on him and this job allows him to adequately support his family.

The tension that may be present in local-*repatriate* socio-economic relations was most clearly evinced in an exchange that I noted in detail between a young recently repatriated Sister and a young local Ethiopian man in a *repatriate*-owned small business. The following is from my fieldnotes:

⁵⁸ Local Ethiopians perceive the JRDC School as a "Rasta school" because the administrators are mostly Rastafari, however, the overwhelming majority of students are the children of local Ethiopians who are not Rastafari.

As I looked out the (metal) grill window of the small office I saw a tall brown skinned young man walk towards the entrance. I was there with the employee, a young woman from Tobago, and we both noticed his approach but it became apparent that she knew him whereas I did not. Her disgruntled, barely suppressed sound of irritation was an obvious indicator that they had met before. Before I could ask about the youth though, he purposefully entered the office and headed for the thin, metal chair designated for visitors. This meant that he was familiar with the office, I thought to myself. Although I looked up briefly we did not greet each other, and I again bent my head to continue reading. Without any kind of salutation in English or Amharic he asked Simona, in English, if there was any “news.” His accent while speaking English immediately told me that he was not from the Caribbean, his dress and hair indicated that he was not one of *Iandl*, and neither did he preface his question with the usual “Greetings” that is a common form of hello among Rastas. Simona replied, in a pained, curt manner that there was not, and as she explained before, when there was news she would call him. I do not have any more information to give you, she concluded.

She went back to her work in front of the outdated desktop computer, but instead of getting up and leaving as I expected him to, the young man remained seated. After about five minutes of silence that seemed much longer, I sneaked a glance at him and saw that he seemed to be calm, but was impatiently tapping one leg up and down. After this interval Simona looked up and scornfully asked, “Can I help you with something else?” He simply replied “No” and looked away. After another few minutes he suddenly blurted, “Did Jah go to college?” This question was problematic in many ways, the foremost being: who is Jah and what do you mean when you use that term as an Ethiopian who is not Rastafarian, and prompted the following exchange:

Simona: I don’t know what you mean by that.

Youth: (Repeating the question) Did Jah go to college? While asking he jerked his head toward the poster of Haile Selassie I that was on the wall to his right.

Simona: (Noticing his head movement) He was your king...don’t you know? Don’t they teach you history at school?

The young man had no reply to this but staunchly remained seated. A further few minutes later he got up and left without a word or a glance in our direction, just as he entered about twenty minutes before. I silently witnessed this tense exchange and as soon as he walked down the incline out of hearing range, I exploded with questions: “Who was that? What was that about? What kind of question is that?” Simona explained that the young man had applied for a job in the business, and keeps coming by to ask if she heard anything regarding his application. She repeatedly told him no, and that she would call him and the other applicants to inform them of the outcome.

This communication exemplifies not only the tensions surrounding work, money and the disproportionate numbers of *repatriates* who can offer opportunities for employment to local Ethiopians who far outnumber *repatriates*, but also the (mis)conceptions that permeate social relations between Rastafarians and non-Rastafarians, and results, to a certain extent, in “friction.”

The young man was clearly being antagonistic and attempted to insult Simona as Rastafarian, and to generally demean Rastafari beliefs. This kind of provocative interaction is quite common in Shashamane around the figure of Haile Selassie I. Haile Selassie I is a formidable, complex historical persona for Ethiopians and Rastafarians, and is additionally a divine figure for Rastafari. Some Rastafari claim him as God, others liken him to Jesus Christ, and yet others claim that his biological grandson, Zara Yacob of the dethroned royal family, is himself God.

In this instance Simona, herself Rastafari, is aware of these varied interpretations held by Mansions and by Rasta people and is also cognisant of the homogenous idea held by Ethiopians that all Rastas “worship” Haile Selassie I. She uses Haile Selassie’s role as a former emperor of Ethiopia to test the young man’s knowledge of Ethiopian history, which is also the history of his ancestors. In this way he reveals the inanity of his loaded question and his ignorance. This allows Simona to successfully deflect and contest the implied ridicule of this fundamental Rastafari belief. This (at times) antagonistic and opportunistic relationship between *repatriates* who own or are employed in small businesses, the larger Rasta population and local Ethiopians is connected to the general perception of *repatriates* as wealthy. This is partly because it is well known that many businesses started by *repatriates* receive funds from *foreign*,

as many individual Rastafari do, which is indicated by their frequent trips to Western Union.

Goods to Shashamane and to *foreign* and status

This local Ethiopian perception of the wealth of Rastas also stems from the goods sent from *foreign* to *IandI* in Shashamane. In this section I focus on non-monetary remittances that are mainly brought to Shashamane by Rasta visitors and seasonal *repatriates*, but are occasionally shipped to Ethiopia from *foreign*. Regular and first-time visitors, relatives and other *IandI* to Shashamane brought different items such as clothes, toys and cellular phones for specific peoples and families, stationery and school supplies for the JRDC-administered school, as well as items that each person may have specifically requested like mp3 players or perfume. Visitors may or may not be reimbursed for goods depending on their relationship with the *repatriate* or their agreement on each occasion. The bulk of visitors who I met were *IandI* from *foreign* who stayed at other *Jamaican yards* in the *safar* or at a hotel. In my *yard* there were four *IandI* visitors who stayed for more than one night while I, a visitor myself, lived there for almost an entire year. Each guest brought various consumer items for family members that ranged from foodstuffs like chocolate to cellular phones, clothing and books.⁵⁹

While goods are usually brought by visitors or smaller items sent in the mail,⁶⁰ occasionally family members in *foreign* also send barrels to relatives in Shashamane.

⁵⁹ During the most important celebration of His Majesty's birth on July 23 the number of visitors substantially increased, as well as in the months of July and August when people often took lengthy vacation time off from work.

⁶⁰ The danger of sending goods in the mail, such as small items of clothing, is that post office employees in Ethiopia often open packages and will charge recipients the requisite tax on electronic

The barrel method is less common because it is more expensive and it is more time consuming to fill the barrel and send by air or sea. Additionally, barrels must be opened by customs officials and the contents checked whereas packages may not be opened. Barrels usually contain clothing, kitchenware, and dry foodstuffs including particular items such as canned ackee, a popular fruit in Jamaica which is available in Britain and North America⁶¹ but unavailable in Ethiopia. During my residence in Shashamane I only heard of two barrels sent to different households in the *safar* and of two other households that received barrels in the past. (Since the arrival of barrels is a rare occurrence I would have most likely heard through word of mouth if there were other recipients). One Sister in *foreign*, Bernice, an early *repatriate* who moved there after repatriating to Shashamane from Jamaica, was responsible for one barrel, and she later told me that she sent another barrel to her family after I left Shashamane, as did another Sister in Britain who sent one previously. The frequency of Sister Bernice's barrels is one indicator of her dedication to providing for her children and reflects favourably on the fulfilment of maternal responsibility. The amount and frequency of remittances of money and goods are not only an important source of income for *repatriates* and households, but also carry status for recipients in Shashamane.

In some sense, then, if the barrel is taken less as a routine than as a ritualised occurrence, Shashamane is the site not only of "barrel children" but barrel families. The term barrel children was coined by social workers in Jamaica to describe the situation of children, mainly in poor households, whose mothers worked in low wage employment in the global north and sent their children necessities and desirable goods

items, for example, or take items from packages and claim that they have been stolen during the examination (pers comm.).

⁶¹ Presumably exported from Jamaica to *foreign*.

in barrels sent to Jamaica; “social work practitioners in Jamaica have coined the term ‘barrel children’ when referring to children who receive barrels of goods from their migrant parents (Crawford-Brown and Rattray 1994). In working class families, it is usually women who migrate to the global north to work in service sectors such as elderly care or child care. The effect of asymmetrical international capitalist processes is that these migrant workers are paid to care for children of middle class and wealthy families while they are unable to provide for their own children who are left in the care of relatives at home, and who receive barrels in lieu of the actual presence of their mothers. Although “barrel children” is not quantitatively representative of a similar situation in Shashamane, it indicates the marked dependence on persons in *foreign* that is the reality of each household member’s subsistence and *betterment* strategies. *Repatriates* and youths, however, can claim this economic support from *landI* abroad precisely because of their high status derived from “holding the land.”

The barrel also becomes symbolic of wealth and maternal affection since items are chosen by senders with care based on the needs and wants of recipients. Such goods from *foreign* afford greater status than those locally purchased, and are therefore usually items that can be displayed on the body, like clothing, or in the home. *Repatriates* who are legal residents of Ethiopia, and therefore able to travel in and out of country also bring small items back to Shashamane, usually for individuals in response to specific requests or as gifts when they travel outside of Ethiopia. Regardless of the length of the trip, the distance travelled or the reasons, whether to visit relatives or children or for medical purposes, they are expected to bring some item for certain people or for community use. This is similar to the practice of members of working class and middle class West Indian families who bring consumer

items, both requested and non-requested, for relatives and friends especially when they visit western countries since not everyone can afford to travel frequently but many people often ask for material goods from *foreign*.

In Shashamane these foreign-bought items act as a distinguishing marker between households and persons who can materially demonstrate their connections to *foreign* and those who cannot show comparable relations as they do not have such human resources, locally or abroad. When Sister Angela remarks that her Ethiopian neighbours “think we have so much” she accurately captures this local perception based on the foreign goods that *repatriates* and their families own as well as their frequent trips to Western Union. Such items range from the variety of clothing that is clearly unavailable in Shashamane (although there are numerous clothing shops in the town) to the conspicuous use of baby strollers and plastic baby carriers. I only saw comparatively privileged young *Jamaican* women in Shashamane, and middle class or elite women in Addis Ababa using the latter since they are horrendously expensive in Ethiopia compared to the significantly lower prices in *foreign*. Since baby strollers are usually bought abroad these women must either purchase them while travelling to Europe, Britain, North America or Dubai or have them sent by persons living there. For example, one afternoon when I saw an unfamiliar young woman, who could have been Ethiopian or *farangi* based on her dress and skin colour, walking along the main road in the *safar* with a male companion, I immediately guessed that they were foreigners because she was pushing a stroller. (I later met this couple in a neighbour’s *yard*, and they were in fact visiting from America).

The visit of a Jamaican Sister from Britain exemplified the relation between *IandI* abroad and *repatriates* holding the land in Shashamane that is influenced by capitalist economic relations. She lived in the same city as Sister Bernice, who I will return to in the migrant-*repatriate* section. This visiting Sister, who was well-known to *repatriates* since she had previously visited Shashamane, brought small items that could easily fit in her suitcase that Sister Bernice sent for her family, and took photos of Sister Bernice's family to give her on the return to Britain. Given the limited access to, and sporadic service of, internet and online communication services, like skype, in Shashamane that allow users to see and speak with each other in "real time electronic communication" (Plaza and Henry 2008:158), photographs enabled Sister Bernice to see the physical changes in and the growth of her family. In this way Sister Bernice was able to watch her children grow from her location in *foreign*.

Peter Lawrence notes that among Garia in Papua New Guinea security circles are composed of peoples that ego categorises as "distant" and "close" kin (1984). As a network of relations among *IandI* the security circle entails obligations for prestation that are formed among *IandI* in Shashamane and those in *foreign* that is both collective and individual-oriented. Each *repatriate* and youth develops such a security circle throughout his or her lifetime. Sister Anna is one such example since she financially and emotionally depends on her mother and relatives in various locations abroad, her husband and other *repatriates* in Shashamane, and her friends in America where she lived for many years, to start up and run her business in Shashamane. In the following sections I examine seasonal repatriation and migration following repatriation as strategies for earning a living and fulfilling goals of *betterment* and repatriation itself.

Seasonal residence and repatriation

Rastafari visitors may live for a few months each year in Shashamane, and then spend the remaining months abroad. These seasonal *repatriates*, unlike seasonal labour migrants, do not travel to Shashamane for work but to spend time with kin there. Their movements between *foreign* and Shashamane are nonetheless dependent on factors such as available vacation time from work, the cost of airfare, and the affordability of material items including clothing and books for children or other Rastafari in Shashamane. Seasonal *repatriates* may originally be from the Caribbean, but are now usually citizens or permanent residents of the European Union, Britain, the USA or Canada. Like many West Indian migrants, they too may initiate the further migration of family members by “sending for” relatives from the global south. For instance, Sister Enid told me that when she moved to Canada from Jamaica under a migrant employment scheme initiated by the Canadian government, she later “sponsored” her mother. This allowed her mother to legally move from Jamaica to Canada. Later, Sister Enid’s husband and Canadian-born children repatriated to Shashamane while she remained in *foreign*. Accordingly, she currently tries to spend at least two months each year in Shashamane with them.

This kind of seasonal residence between the global north and Shashamane is thus far only practiced by six out of 71 households with which I was familiar. It is the outcome of the economic need to remain outside Shashamane in order to earn money which enables *IandI* to purchase property in Shashamane and the necessity of fulfilling familial obligations and attachments there and abroad. Such seasonal *repatriates* may or may not have kin, most often children and a spouse, and other *IandI*, whom they financially support in Shashamane, but they will usually own a

house there that was either built or bought. Higher currency exchange rates for US Dollars, Euros and Pounds Sterling in relation to Ethiopian Birr facilitate this type of residence and property ownership. When the Birr was again officially devalued in 2010, the exchange rate was consequently affected, and the amount of Birr for the same amount of foreign currency slightly increased. For instance, if a Brother or Sister abroad sent US\$500 to a *repatriate* caretaker for construction costs in 2009, this amounted to about 5,500 ET Birr, but closer to 7,500 ET Birr by the end of the following year.

Although this residence practice is currently limited, it may signal the beginning of another type of repatriation that is not defined by full time residence, and potentially questions the definition of a *repatriate* as a Rastaman or Rastawoman who intends to settle permanently in Shashamane. According to Sister Enid of the TTI, the Prophet Gad said that “not everyone will be able to come and stay all the time but some people will go to and fro.” Those who can stay, however, should “hold the fort and pray,” she elaborated. Sister Enid’s comments emphasise that peoples’ constant movements between Shashamane and *foreign* do not diminish their emotional or spiritual attachment to Shashamane or how *IandI* frame their discussions of repatriation. Whereas the movement of money and goods to Shashamane is crucial to *repatriates*’ survival and potential for *betterment*, the movements of *IandI* themselves from Shashamane to *babylon*, which facilitates the economic support of *IandI* on *the land grant*, are nonetheless negatively framed. This is one reason that seasonal *repatriates* and regular Rasta visitors describe their residence in *babylon* as a necessity that is legitimated through the Prophet Gad’s words for the TTI, for instance.

Repatriates' comments about their intent to repatriate or future plans to this effect are usually framed in vague terms of post-retirement plans. The plans that I heard usually included building a small house where they could comfortably settle for their remaining years in Shashamane having worked hard in *foreign* for many years prior to that. However, when I lived in Shashamane a Brother and Sister, both in their 50s made their respective concrete steps toward full-time repatriation, having retired from their long term jobs. This Sister, who is Jamaican and lived in the USA for most of her adult life, visited Shashamane for many years and knew other *IandI* from the Rasta movement in Jamaica. After she and her husband fully repatriated, while overseeing the construction of their own house on land that they purchased from a local Ethiopian family, they stayed in another Sister's *yard*. Another Brother from *foreign* also started building a house and returned to Shashamane once or twice during the year that I was resident there specifically to check on its progress.

Rastafari in *foreign* also save money for the future and for prospective full time repatriation to Shashamane. Sister Bernice thinks about saving for the future when she no longer works or is unable to work as well as meeting the more immediate economic needs of her family (see Gonzalez 1971; Fog Olwig 1993; Sutton and Chaney 1987; Philpott 1973). This is another trend in migration research of West Indians and current studies focus on "return migrants" or people who choose to return to countries of origin after extended periods of residence in the global north (Thomas-Hope 2002; Plaza and Henry 2006; Burrowes 2008). In Shashamane recent *repatriates*, not all, tend to move to Ethiopia when they feel that they have acquired sufficient funds to support themselves as retirees. Before fully repatriating though, *IandI* abroad who visit Shashamane, whether regularly or occasionally may decide to

purchase or build a house. (I discussed this in terms of the obligation to help out *repatriates* earlier in the chapter). In other words, a few Rastafari visitors who live in countries of the global north who are neither regular visitors nor intend to settle full time in Shashamane, may nonetheless decide to buy or build a house there after visiting Shashamane once or twice.

As a result, some Rastafari visitors also enquired about the process of buying a house or acquiring land on which to build. Almost every Rasta visitor who I met in Shashamane was concerned with this subject. They either dropped by the JRDC office while I was there to ask about the above or spoke with permanent *repatriates* on this subject. It was usually first time visitors who asked these questions. Frequent Rasta visitors tended to be familiar with “the runnings” in Shashamane but if they were not house owners themselves often asked for updates on specific peoples’ plots of land or the changes in purchasing procedures, while continuing to talk about their future plans for moving to Shashamane or to Ethiopia. Each house must be registered with the *kebele* for which a *kebele* identification card is required, and the sale usually occurs as a “gift agreement” between the parties that is registered with the local *kebele* authority so it is legally binding. Recent *repatriates* undergo this process whereas earlier settlers simply occupied the land, and fenced an area where they gradually built a house. I will expand on this in terms of legal status in chapter five.

Seasonal repatriation is therefore not only another form of repatriation, but also holds the potential for conversion into more permanent settlement. It is usually feasible for frequent visitors to build a house, instead of buying, as they are able to travel to Shashamane quite regularly to review the progress of the construction. It also provides

short term employment for other *repatriates* and for local Ethiopians since the Brothers and Sisters employed fellow *landl* who lived full time in Shashamane, were trained in construction and acted as the foremen who then employed a combination of local Ethiopians and fellow Rastamen with various skills. These house-owning seasonal *repatriates* must therefore be financially able to maintain their houses in both *foreign* and in Shashamane. House ownership is thus a visible indicator of the different economic positions of *repatriates* since not all recent *repatriates* or Rasta visitors will be able to afford to purchase or build a house in Shashamane. Neither Brother Jacob who waited for his wife to send him funds, for example, nor Sister Angela and her husband could afford to. Sister Anna did build, as did Sister Enid and her husband, although Sister Enid only lived in Shashamane during the summer. This difference in economic situation is not usually a cause of conflict within *the community* since the money that people earn through their own hard work is not begrudged as long as people adhere to their obligations to those permanently residing on *the land grant*.

Migration following repatriation

In three households that I know of there are cases of migration to the global north for economic reasons following repatriation to Ethiopia. These *repatriates* may also return to Shashamane seasonally after living there full time for varied periods of time. By migrant-*repatriate* I do not mean Rastafari who repatriated, left and then never returned to Shashamane, but to those who remained in Shashamane, raised their families and then migrated, or more recent *repatriates* from the Caribbean who repatriated with their families and then left Shashamane to find work abroad in the global north, i.e those who still have family and economic obligations on *the land*

grant. For example, Sister Bernice who initially repatriated with her husband in the 1970s subsequently migrated to Britain after ensuring that her husband would remain to care for their children in Shashamane. Since there are few opportunities for making money in Shashamane, and their family had grown substantially, this carefully considered joint decision was meant to explore the possibility of better providing for their children. With the help of other *IandI* in a particular location in Britain who told her about employment opportunities, Sister Bernice moved there and found work. Since there are usually greater opportunities in sectors which target women such as domestic work, and the feminisation of low wage industrial and service employment is a reality of the lives of many families around the world (see Mies 1986; Sassen 1988, 1998), Sister Bernice took a job in the service sector.

Maria Mies has coined the term “housewifeisation” to capture the connections between exploitative capitalist structures and the sexual division of labour. She argues that housewifeisation “means not only the *wageless reproduction* of labour power but also the cheapest kind of production work, mainly done by women in homeworking or similar work relations. The housewifeisation of women’s labour is not eliminated when women do enter the wage labour market as full-time workers, or even when they are the only breadwinners of their family” (1999:34). As Elizabeth Thomas-Hope emphasises, what are termed legitimate “migration ‘opportunities’...are themselves a mirror reflection of the migration ‘requirements’ of countries outside the [Caribbean] region seeking to augment their labour force” (Thomas-Hope 2002:1).⁶² Although Sister Bernice now spends most of the year outside Shashamane, she considers herself

⁶² Significant examples of this include the 1962 British Commonwealth Immigration Act that curtailed previously encouraged West Indian migration, and the “point-based system” for migration to Canada in the 1960s which favoured well-educated English speakers, mainly from the Anglophone Caribbean (see Fog Olwig 2007; Thomas-Hope 2002).

to be living in Ethiopia, and specifically in Shashamane, as I heard her emphasise to other *IandI* in Britain. These comments reflect her emotional attachment to immediate family there, whom she financially supports, and her intention to return full time as soon as it is economically viable.

The funds that Sister Bernice sends for her family are used first for the major expenses of private school fees and maintenance for her four children in public and private secondary and tertiary education in Ethiopia, and for daily expenses in the household such as food, paying electricity bills and transportation costs. These household costs are supplemented by the income of her adult children. Collective earnings of household members go toward daily needs and occasional expenses like minor household repairs, while major improvements to the structure of the house are planned when possible and will be funded by money “set aside” for this purpose. At certain times during the year or in times of celebration or crisis such as marriages or funerals, remittances sent to individuals, families and official Houses will increase. For example, during the July 23rd celebration of His Majesty’s birth or when school begins and a family has to pay their children’s school fees, monetary remittances increase and then decrease after these obligations are met, as previously noted.

An emphasis on completing at least a high school level of education is sustained in Sister Bernice’s family by herself, her husband and the older siblings. This could be the result of the parents’ middle class upbringing in urban Kingston, Jamaica or the practical desire for their children to *better* themselves. As soon as it was financially possible, the children were withdrawn from public schools, and enrolled in private schools. As a result, the younger children have only attended private schools unlike

their older siblings who initially went to public schools, and then furthered their education at private tertiary institutions. Almost ten years after their mother's migration the family's quality of life has improved significantly regarding the children's quality of education, and thus opportunities, material possessions and diet. This Sister who variously occupies the social and legal categories of *repatriate* (in Ethiopia) and immigrant (in Britain) moved from Jamaica to Ethiopia to Britain for various ideological and economic reasons that partly satisfy her individual goal to return to Ethiopia as a Rastawoman, and her obligations as a mother.

While all *IandI* who I met acknowledged the importance of training in a particular skill, whether through apprenticeship or in an academic institution, I am not certain if the emphasis on formal professional training that I saw in Sister Bernice's household is also present in other *repatriate* households, although people expressed approval when I said I was completing a doctorate. *IandI* from the Caribbean tend to deride tertiary educational pursuits since the university, particularly The University of the West Indies (UWI) is viewed as an elitist state institution that largely produces "followers." "Followers" are people who submit to popular opinion on matters ranging from governance to marriage that maintain socio-economic inequalities. The notion recognises the deeper psychological afflictions regarding selfhood resulting from centuries of colonisation as well as the particular pitfalls of national post-independent political leadership (Simpson 1978; Barrett 1977). I was therefore pleasantly surprised when no Rastaman or Rastawoman ever openly disparaged my doctoral studies in my presence, but rather encouraged me to graduate and then return to Shashamane. This focus on completing a formal education has been noted as a critical component of *betterment* from the period of independence in the 1960s across

various colonial territories for the families of West Indian migrants within the Caribbean and for those in the global north (Fog Olwig 2005; Waters 1999; Philpott 1973) and appears to be present in certain households in Shashamane.

Like Sister Bernice, Sister Loretta now lives in Britain having lived in Shashamane for more than ten years, and now returns to Shashamane at least once a year when she is eligible to take extended time off for vacation. Like Sister Bernice's younger children, her children also attend private schools and are cared for by their father who lives permanently in Shaashamane. Sister Loretta and her husband stress to their children the importance of being admitted to a tertiary level institution either to earn an undergraduate degree or a skill, like carpentry. This is derived from their parents' desire for their children to later acquire jobs where they earn enough money that enables them to have a "better life" and to avoid the suffering that they went through when they initially repatriated. Generally though, if a child does not attend university this does not appear to be a great source of disappointment to his or her parents.

There does, however, seem to be a greater encouragement in more than one *yard* for girls to finish school and become qualified in some area so that they could potentially acquire stable employment. This may be partly to ensure that they are able to be financially independent in the future. In sum, education is valued in Shashamane because it provides training to make a living. On another note, Diane Austin-Broos (1983) argues that being "educated" refers to more than academic qualifications and the potential for economic *betterment*, and that the desire for "education" indicates a disposition toward acquiring status in the complex yet unequal colour and class dynamic of Jamaican society. However, *repatriates* demonstrate their awareness of

how this idea of “education” is embedded in inequalities. While “manners” are valued and taught by parents, then, the idea that formal education enhances “education” and thus status does not seem to arise.

The frequency of visits to Shashamane is also an indicator of status. Sister Loretta, for example, usually visits twice a year or at least once each year since she is able to receive vacation during these times. It becomes obvious, then, that she can afford to do so. This sense of wealth extends to the entire family, imbuing members with a higher status than when Sister Loretta lived and worked in Shashamane. Status is thus also fluid for migrants and their families since it is dependent on economic and material factors as well as the fulfillment of responsibilities to kin in Shashamane.

The continual movement of *IandI* visitors whose goods and funds assist the *repatriate* population as well as the activity in the *safar* from non-Rasta visitors became obvious to me shortly after moving there. Although *repatriates* are living outside their natal communities as migrants of sorts from the perspective of kin in the West Indies, they do not send remittances to the Caribbean like migrants in the global north. Rather, *repatriates* depend on remittances themselves also from the global north, and from the Caribbean. Yet, this regular flow of money to Shashamane also creates tensions in the *safar*, often with local Ethiopian neighbours.

To highlight the connectedness of Shashamane and *Jamaica Safar* to *foreign* and to other locations in Ethiopia, to a lesser extent, I have pieced together the various ways that *repatriates* and their families *make a living*. In so doing I have emphasised that this is largely an outernational process related to wider Rastafari concerns and

practices as well as international and national economic and political structures and plans. The symbiosis that characterises relations between *repatriates* in Shashamane and *Iandl* in *foreign* is essential to the continued *repatriate* presence on the land granted by His Majesty.

Chapter 3

*Sighting Rastafari: word-sound-power*⁶³

As children we used to go to church, our parents was Christian, we were taught to read the Bible from an early stage, you know? Well,...once, I as about 16...I start to read and I read something in Revelation, and what I read in Revelation you know, that was on my mind. That night same, I said of all those things that I read, where will I be in those times? That's what came to my mind first...So one night I went to my bed and I got a vision, I look and see a man. I didn't see the face but just like the uniform that His Majesty wear, that khaki uniform and the top with the red, I see someone like that⁶⁴...what he was saying, it was not in English [so] I couldn't understand...When I started to cry he hold me by my hand and he turn me around three times, you understand? [He laughs slightly, probably at my look of astonishment].⁶⁵ Yeah, he turn me around three times then after he did that I wake up out of the vision. At that time...I left the country and was living with my sister in the town, Kingston, so in the morning I told her [about] the vision...She said that maybe God is ready for you...no, she ask me what happen to my face, and I said what? She said I have a different look, features in my face, you know? So I went to [look]. I didn't see it still but she said, you know?...So after, 'bout two weeks after, I have some friends and they went to the meeting, Twelve Tribes meeting, so when they came back they told me that they see a gathering and the man that was gathering the people said that they should read their Bible, one chapter per day. So they say, come man, you can come with us and hear. So I went with them and that was the first time I met the Prophet,⁶⁶ and you know, he was talking, and I'm telling you Sister [shaking his head from side to side] that is the first man that made me afraid when he was talking. And on that same night I joined the Organisation. Brother Nelson.

The above is taken from Brother Nelson's response to my intentionally long open ended question: how did you come to learn or hear about Rasta, were there any

⁶³ Word-sound-power describes certain key elements of Rastafari cosmology that I will discuss in this chapter. Price notes that "Rastafari used harsh language as part of an elaborate linguistic system based on a Rastafari theory of "word, sound, and power." Subscribers to the theory believe that words and their sounds hold power, that it can be directly harnessed and used" (Price 2009: 71). As Pollard summarises, in a "Rastafarian linguistic sense...the word was the "organ" of the movement" (2000: 19).

⁶⁴ The uniform is Haile Selassie I's military uniform in which he was photographed on many occasions. As Emperor he was also commander of the royal defense forces (the Imperial Guard or *Kebur Zabangna* in Amharic).

⁶⁵ References to actions done three times and the number three are well known in rituals of death in the West Indies since it is a common folk belief that three is a number that scares duppies or bad spirits (see Simpson 1957; Wardle 2001). I immediately assumed that Brother Nelson had been severely injured in the past or had almost died. This did not happen, but my raised eyebrows and blatant expression of astonishment and dreaded anticipation made him chuckle.

⁶⁶ As noted in the introduction, Prophet Gad (Gad man) is the founder of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

particular incidents or events that propelled you to join the Organ or to call yourself Rasta, and what about the philosophy of the Organ (the TTI) attracted you? When Brother Nelson shares this seminal vision in response to my question he not only highlights the starting point for his *consciousness* of Rasta, but also key Rastafari practices and ideas. For Brother Nelson this *consciousness*-raising takes the form of epistemological query of his childhood “churchical” teachings, of Rastafari notions of morality and specifically those of the TTI House, and ontological questioning of his spiritual state on the day of judgement. *Consciousness* is a new kind of awareness that entails not only changing the way one views the world and one’s spiritual place in it, but also one’s behaviour and actions. Brother Nelson’s reinterpretation of beliefs would consequently lead him, in time, toward the new and radical teachings of the TTI and thus eventually toward his salvation by adhering to Rasta *livity* or lifestyle that I will expand on in this chapter.

Brother Nelson’s choice to relate this dream highlights the role of visions and dreams⁶⁷ in “manifesting,”⁶⁸ (or becoming) Rasta that is shared by other *repatriates*. For instance, Sister Carolyn, a long-term resident of Shashamane related to me a series of visions that culminated in her *sighting* His Majesty. When Sister Carolyn found herself standing alone in a desert she was confused and disoriented until she saw a figure in the distance and realised that it was Haile Selassie. As she walked toward him though, he ignored her and turned to leave. At that moment she shouted:

⁶⁷ I use vision and dream interchangeably to maintain Brother Nelson’s use of the two words. Other *repatriates* also used both terms.

⁶⁸ I use the word manifest in this chapter to highlight the general Rastafari aversion to the term “convert” since it carries fundamental religious, particularly Christian resonances. As I am aware of this, I phrased my question to Brother Nelson in terms of “calling himself Rasta” rather than asking when he converted to Rasta. Researchers have used the word “manifest” in accordance with its emic use in their research (see Homiak 1999; Chevannes 1998). However, I did not hear this word in Shashamane. People instead spoke of their “involvement with Rasta or Rasta people” or “learning and hearing” about His Majesty or learning “the truth” as synonymous with becoming Rastafari.

“can you take me to Ethiopia with you?!” but he continued to walk away from her. She realised that she was meant to follow, and that his silence and lack of acknowledgement signified that she herself must work toward achieving this without expecting any further assistance from Him since He had already allocated land in Ethiopia for the purpose of repatriation, as she explained to me. Brother Nelson’s disclosure of his vision and Sister Carolyn’s description evoke the central idea of *sighting* expressed by Rastafari through “word-sound-power.” I will further discuss these connections in the section on *the word*. These are literal as well as metaphorical sightings of His Majesty.

Brother Nelson’s description of this influential period in his life begins the discussion of how *repatriates* narrate their arrival to *the word* (meaning Rastafari or the truth), how this affects the development of certain key facets of a Rasta personhood, and how *IandI* in Shashamane enact this cosmology through speech, the expression of which influences the formation of roles and statuses in the *safar*. One instance of the interconnection of these features is that an individual cannot become *conscious* without the knowledge and guidance of others who are themselves aware of the truth. For example, different people are tested⁶⁹ by *repatriates* and youths of varied status in Shashamane. Elders in *the community* test youths as a way of ensuring the young peoples’ spiritual knowledge of *the word*, which is a necessary condition for achieving Rasta adulthood. Both *repatriates* and youths interrogate Rastafari and non-Rastafari visitors in the *safar* to unearth their personalities or to get to know a person’s real character.

⁶⁹ The word testing is mine and it is not used in Shashamane. *Repatriates* tend to use the word “reasoning” but in some cases I have used “testing” to highlight this aspect of certain *reasonings*.

This knowledge is used to distinguish between strangers who are *conscious* and those who are not. Consequently, as I will show in this chapter, any study of oral expression must be examined in relation to wider symbolic meanings and practices (see Bauman and Sherzer 1989; Reisman 1989; Abrahams 1983) which are both derived from and reflective of cosmological concepts and expressions. This is achieved here partly by examining *repatriates*' stories of coming to *consciousness* themselves and showing how these ideas are reiterated through speech forms such as *chanting* and *reasoning*. The idea of *consciousness* for Rastafari must be situated within the wider concept of *babylon* or *the system*⁷⁰ as an institution. *Consciousness* must therefore also be discussed in terms of notions of good and evil as well as peoples' efforts to circumvent or oppose *babylon's* unjust and perverted effects on the psyche and the epistemological basis of knowledge. As a result, when a person *sights* Rasta with the guidance of others including elders, prophets and His Majesty himself, as Brother Nelson experienced, he or she will begin to or at least attempt to live in opposition to *the system*.

Hence, in the following sections I will discuss situations in which this orientation is daily expressed among *repatriates* and with Rastafari and non-Rastafari visitors. By employing word-sound-power in these settings, Rasta cosmology is continuously reiterated and rebuilt by *IandI* in the *safar*. Consequently, I will discuss the oral and aural expressions of manifesting Rastafari through reading the Bible, and relate these practices to fundamental concepts within a Rastafari ethos, particularly that of salvation in a post-apocalyptic world.

⁷⁰ *babylon* and *the system* are used interchangeably by *IandI* so I follow this practice.

Sighting and knowing

Sighting, “citing up,” “reasoning” and “grounding”⁷¹ are various ways of naming the oral sphere of Rasta intellectual, political, and spiritual commentary (although some Rastas would disavow any reference to politics or *politricks*). *Sighting* describes the beginning of Rastafari *consciousness* that will unveil knowledge previously hidden to *repatriates* or that they were unaware of due to the deceit and hierarchy of *the system*. A dream or vision or the speech of elders, like Prophet Gad, are situations that have the potential to stimulate a person’s *sight*. As a result, the visions that each older or younger *repatriate* related to me had a common theme regarding individual salvation. Saving one’s soul is inextricably connected to “manifesting” Rastafari and repatriating, in the view of *repatriates* (see chapter one). These layers are captured in the homonymic use of words that indicate sight and express the relation between *consciousness* and Rastafari: “see,” “eye” and “I,” “I-man” and “IandI” (the latter two as synonyms for Rastafari).⁷² As Pollard explains, “SEE” appears at the beginning and the end of Selassie’s name because he is the beginning and the end...“Selassie I” becomes “Selassie eye”. It is hardly coincidental that the rejoinder to indicate understanding of any matter is “/siin/seen” (2000:28).

This relation of *sighting* Rastafari and salvation emerge clearly in Brother Nelson’s vision. When Brother Nelson alludes to the “something” that will occur “in those times” in the Book of Revelation he is referring to the apocalypse (see Revelation 20-

⁷¹ These words all carry multiple connotations of seeing and understanding the truth as well as being guided by basic principles of *livity* or a Rastafari way of living.

⁷² Homiak outlines these connections between cosmology and speech when he argues, “the ‘I’ morpheme performs one of the most important functions of ritual metaphors. It signifies a ‘return to the whole’ (Fernandez 1986); it is about source, authenticity, primordiality, and completion. All of the related symbolism and interlocked codes with which this dialect originated serve, within a specific historical discourse (e.g., Ethiopianism, the Bible), to support this function” (Homiak 1998:173).

21). He thought about when every man would be judged “according to his works” and potentially being rejected from the “pearly gates” of heaven and instead sentenced to the “fire and brimstone” of hell for a thousand years (ibid). These two chapters of the Bible vividly depict the contrast between an afterlife of beauty and tranquility in New Jerusalem, heaven, to the “lake of fire” of hell.⁷³ Brother Nelson realises that it is not a coincidence that he attended the TTI meeting shortly after ruminating on his own spiritual salvation and dreaming about His Majesty. In that meeting the Prophet saturated the audience with scripture in which he vividly described the day of reckoning, further motivating Brother Nelson’s *sighting*. “Where will I be in those times” he asks himself?

After he attends the meeting and sees that the man in his dream is Jah (God), he relates the words of the TTI Prophet, Gad man, to his vision. Brother Nelson therefore understands that the man in his dream was His Majesty Haile Selassie I, to whom Prophet Gad refers, who is a brown-skinned African, Ethiopian man and not the Judeo-Christian image of a white Jesus Christ and correspondingly white God. Instead of portending death, as his sister implies when she says that perhaps “God is ready” for him, Brother Nelson recognises that God is ready for him in a different way, as an intellectual and a spiritual rebirth. Although His Majesty’s words were unintelligible to Brother Nelson (since presumably they were spoken in Amharic, Haile Selassie I’s native language) His Majesty attempted to use these words to guide Brother Nelson toward the right path.

⁷³ For instance, “the holy Jerusalem, coming out of heaven from God...Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Revelation 21:11) and “...the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 23). “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 20:8). Rasta images of heaven and hell adhere to these descriptions.

In order to achieve this rebirth, then, Brother Nelson must decipher the hidden meanings in the Bible that will enable him to manifest Rasta by connecting this reinterpretation to the Prophet's words. Brother Nelson consequently *sights* (reads and interprets) the Bible in a different way than that perpetuated by the Church.⁷⁴ He begins to imbue the book with new meanings, realising that this is crucial to his spiritual-emotional yearning for the salvation of his soul in particular, and not solely that of his physical body. This Rastafari *sighting* of a fundamental Christian book is one part of a distinct worldview that interprets long-standing texts, and more recent ones like *The Holy Piby* and *The Promised Key*,⁷⁵ to reconceptualise West Indian personhood.

However, Littlewood notes that “radical utopian movements” such as the Quakers and Shakers, also engaged in comparable reinterpretations of the Bible and reached similar conclusions. He maintains that “not only the beliefs, but the very ‘style’ of Rastafari closely recall that of the seventeenth century British utopians” (1998: 241). These included “the common arguments...[of] the rejection of the established churches, their sacraments and priestly power; the pope as anti-Christ; the guiding inner light and the presence of Christ in all...a rejection of state authority...[and] the occasional suggestion that heaven and hell were of this world” (1998: 242). In bringing these ideas to Ethiopia, Rastafari have extended the reach of such cultural ideas that have been part of the historical dynamic of the Caribbean for centuries.

⁷⁴ Generally, Rastas do not distinguish between Christian sects so when “the Church” or “the Pope” are referenced this does not necessarily refer to the Catholic Church. Rather, it is metonymic of Christianity.

⁷⁵ *The Promised Key* was written by Leonard Howell who declared the divinity of Haile Selassie in a text that also promotes “Black supremacy” (Hill 2001). *The Holy Piby* or “the Blackman’s Bible” as it is often referred to, was written by Robert Athlyi Rogers to advance the salvation of all “Ethiopians,” meaning black peoples inside and outside the African continent (ibid).

After a Rastaman or Rastawoman sees and understands, then, he or she can participate in *reasonings* or *groundings* with fellow *IandI*. *Reasoning* can also be practised as a ritual element of *grounding*. Ennis Edmonds notes that “Homiak defines *grounding* as “informal instruction in Rasta precepts and ideology; the ritual process (reasoning) by which circles of like-minded brethren are formed and maintained...to reflect on their faith or on any current or historical event that affects their lives” (Edmonds 2003:74-75). The last point will be exemplified by the following *reasoning* in Shashamane around the financial crash and its lack of impact on the Vatican Bank. Although I did not attend any ritual *groundations* (*groundings*) in Shashamane, I was often privy to everyday *reasonings* which were immensely difficult to document since most people preferred that I did not record their conversations, and I was unable to capture these exchanges in writing. One such everyday *reasoning* took place in 2008 around the time when large international companies, like Lehman Brothers, declared bankruptcy which had disastrous economic consequences around the world. Many *repatriates* referred to these events as a sign that the fall of *babylon* was increasingly imminent. One Brother commented as well that we never heard media reports about the Vatican Bank going bankrupt or even requiring a financial bailout from the Italian government or an international organisation. This was an indication of the Church’s economic and political stability, he adamantly emphasised.

More than a year after I left Shashamane I read an article on the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) website regarding the financial investigations into the Vatican Bank and I imagined the spirited *reasonings* that would be occurring in *repatriate yards* (see “Vatican Bank ‘investigated over money-laundering’”

September 21, 2010 <http://www.news.bbc.co.uk>). These would probably centre on the inevitability of investigations into the corrupt institution of the Church, of which the Vatican is its highest authority, hopes that the Vatican Bank would also ‘crash’ as other financial institutions had, and of the investigation as an example of God’s judgment upon the Church that would prevent this institution from escaping unscathed from the problems of other economies and financial bodies. For Rastafari, the Church is a fundamental part of *the system* because of its “ideological justification of the status quo” (Edmonds 2003: 45).

Knowing your Bible and coming to *consciousness*

In order to become *conscious* and recognise the inequality built into *the system*, then, the Bible must be carefully read. When I directly asked Brother Eddie if I could talk to him about Rasta and how he came to live in Ethiopia from the Caribbean, he simply replied, “if you want to reason with us then you have to know your Bible.” Brother Eddie’s frank response reinforced the hints that I had been receiving from Brothers and Sisters of varying ages since my arrival in Shashamane when they realised that I had little knowledge of either the Old or New Testaments.⁷⁶ I often explained that I had not read the Bible since I was a child and went to church with my family during the major Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter.

I and I argue that although it is a canonical source of Eurocentric knowledge, the Bible is one of the only “true” and “accurate” historical sources that enables each person to

⁷⁶ I distinctly remember when a Sister calculated that, at my age (late 20s), considering my lack of Biblical knowledge, it would take me about ten years to get through the entire book so she advised me to start reading immediately.

come to the truth himself and in his own time⁷⁷ (see chapter one for a discussion of Rasta reinterpretation of the Bible). The Bible is a morally ambiguous text since, according to Rastafari, it is the word of God as well as the distorted result of a *babylonian* interpretation. Rastafari reinterpretation of the Bible is emblematic of the long history of creolisation practices in West Indian societies. Although Rastas have particular interpretations of the Book, in order to find the truth each person must engage with the text on an individual level to grasp the truth for him or herself. This notion of truth refers to realising that His Majesty is the Redeemer, and the one able to “loose the seven seals” (Revelation 5:5).

Since the divine personality of Haile Selassie I is the cornerstone of Rastafari worldview, one cannot profess to be a Rastawoman or Rastaman without *sighting* this fact, as Brother Nelson and Sister Carolyn literally did when they had visions of His Majesty. Knowledge obtained through reading and recognising the truth in the Bible is one way of ensuring spiritual salvation in the afterlife and in the post-apocalyptic period. *Repatriates* thus maintained that reading the Bible, acquiring knowledge, and *reasoning* were central to a Rastafari ethos. As a result, one cannot simply read the Bible in a hegemonic manner, but must insert a Rastafari *sighting* to its words.

Cashmore’s emphasis on “epistemological individualism” is relevant here (1979:126). Since people are able to communicate with God directly in Rasta worldview without needing intermediaries, the individual comes to know what he or she knows through himself or herself, and not through the doctrine of the Church for instance. I would

⁷⁷ Although “knowing your Bible” is essential for all Rastas, for the TTI this was enforced by its founder, Prophet Gad. TTI members constantly reminded me that Gad man suggested that each person read the Bible “a chapter a day” in order to realise the truth for themselves through this important medium.

additionally note that each individual is directed to this knowledge by other *IandI*. Since people are often misguided by *babylon*, such as the Church, the guidance of other conscious *IandI* instead allows them to realise the truth. While *repatriates* spoke about “coming up in the faith” though, they adamantly stated that a man or woman cannot “learn Rasta,” but must simply know it from “inside.” *Repatriates* constantly explained that “Rasta” is an inward or “inside thing” that simply needs the right impetus for the person to manifest Rastafari. This was often the role of dreams, visions or hearing the words of those already “in the faith,” particularly elders and prophets, as well as reading the Bible for oneself.

While elders do have a higher status in Shashamane and generally among Rastafari, this is not institutionalised which is significant not only to the structure of Rastafari but also to its ethos. Homiak notes, discussing Yawney’s work on speech, that elders take on the roles of “preachers” and “teachers” depending on context; “the ability to effect these roles being determined by the relative intellectual and charismatic attributes of particular speakers” (Homiak 1999:95). Edmonds makes a similar point using sociological analysis that *reasonings* “induct the initiatives into the movement and confirm old adherents in the principles and precepts of Rastafari” (Edmonds 2003:76). As a result, being able to *reason* convincingly, and to hone one’s skill at wordplay and inversion is one facet of the role of a male or female elder. As such, it is often elders who test (and guide) youths to shape young people into adult Rastamen or Rastawomen. It is only when an individual Rastaman or Rastawoman can hold his or her own in verbal exchanges with other *IandI* that he or she is regarded as fully “in the faith.” “Knowing your Bible,” in Brother Eddie’s words, is thus a key part of becoming a Rasta adult.

Cashmore also notes that it was not only elders who valued and practiced these skills among Rastafari in England in the 1970s, but groups.

Responsible for reminding newer affiliates were those who had already drifted near the core of the movement to such an extent that they had unconditionally accepted Haile Selassie's divinity. The chief method through which the reminding was done was 'reasoning' procedures: the discussion and interpretation of virtually any topic had the effect of mutually reassuring the new acceptor and he who had already accepted (1979:127).

Yet, an individual cannot come to this realisation until he or she is "ready," as Brother Nelson's vision attests to. It was only shortly after contemplating his fate on Judgement Day, having read the Bible, that he dreamed of His Majesty and heard the words of Prophet Gad. Although the potential is always present within each man and woman to become *conscious*, various factors need to be present for *consciousness* to be realised. Each prospective Rastaman's or Rastawoman's initiative must be nurtured by others and his or her knowledge augmented by reading the Book. This is precisely Brother Nelson's experience through the combination of his own Biblical reading, his vision, and hearing Gadman's speech.

As a result, becoming *conscious* must be situated in relation to the Rastafari notion and characteristic of *livity*. According to Homiak, *livity* can generally be defined as "lifeways" but "encapsulates an underlying philosophy, a blueprint for a total way of life" (1998: 128). Consequently, *livity* is both an intrinsic or *inside thing* and a learned quality.⁷⁸ Homiak notes the various layers of the idea of *livity* stating that "Rastafari have traditionally drawn upon multiple sources of authority in the social construction

⁷⁸ Like many other Rasta concepts it has trickled into wider West Indian society so non-Rastas in the Caribbean also use the word *livity*. To a certain extent, this is also the case in Shashamane where some local Ethiopian youths from the *safar* will sometimes use key Rasta words such as *livity* in everyday conversation (see the later section on music).

of their livity. These sources include continuities with...the Bible, and the ideology of the 'natural man' ” (1998: 139).

Jonah, a youth born and raised in the *safar* of Jamaican parents talked about *livity* as a way of opposing the harmful effects of *babylon* one day during our conversation. The following is an excerpt from my fieldnotes:

babylon according to Jonah refers to a “system that keeps people down” and pays them so little they won’t be able to return i.e come to Africa, so they’re also kept poor...*babylon* mainly refers to the west, and his examples were America and England. When I asked if he considers the Caribbean to be *babylon* he said no because many Rastas come from there and he wouldn’t really label the region as part of *babylon*. At the same time he says that the west will burn because *babylon* will be destroyed by any means. In this case he did include the Caribbean because he went on to say this will probably happen through sinking or overcrowding of the West Indian islands. I had also repeatedly heard this from older Brothers that either a natural disaster like a tsunami or social conflict would lead to deadly violence and potential implosion.⁷⁹

He also says that he wants to visit the places of *babylon* so he can experience for himself the type of environment other people live in. Then he could tell people about Ethiopia and Africa because when people hear that he’s from Ethiopia and they see him they’ll probably be surprised that he looks healthy and well fed since people believe that in Ethiopia everyone is starving and that if they moved here they’d never be able to survive. They’re buying into all the Western hype about Africa and Africans. This also relates to *livity* since, Jonah continued, *livity* means living well with people, living a good life yourself and giving up the materialist habits that people probably acquired in *babylon*. Jonah also said that even if one’s purpose in life isn’t clear then it’s nonetheless important to live well and your purpose may later be revealed to you.

From Jonah’s perspective then, *livity* essentially means exerting the moral and physical strength to live good or well in the context of “a system that keeps people down.” Jonah’s definition of *livity* as “living well with people, living a good life yourself and giving up the materialist habits that people probably acquired in

⁷⁹ Edmonds notes this “theme of self-destruction” is prevalent within Rasta worldview and speech (2003).

babylon” is related to becoming *conscious* and realising the truth. In one sense, then, *livity* refers to both an aptitude for living well and the perseverance to live on the *land grant*, outside *babylon*. The ability and the opportunity to live well are connected to many other aspects of Rasta that he evokes in this monologue. These include the place of Ethiopia (Africa) in Rasta worldview, being able to recognise this truth that is especially hidden by *babylon* and that primarily discourages people from manifesting Rasta and repatriating to *the land grant*. Finally, his role as a youth who was born and bred in Shashamane, and who has in some sense inherited *the land grant*, emerges to address the *babylonian* media’s skewed Eurocentric representation of what he calls his country, meaning Ethiopia.

On another occasion the idea of *livity* as a learned quality emerged after I met a recently repatriated family from Barbados at their *yard* and I was left ruminating on their comments. Sister Carla had expressed her disappointment that greater numbers of *repatriates* had not arrived in Shashamane. These Brothers and Sisters are “full of talk” but no action, she told me. I raised the point that there are immense economic obstacles to repatriation since it is quite expensive to accumulate the funds for the journey and for subsistence in Shashamane until you find a means of earning a living. For example, one way airfare alone from Barbados to Ethiopia is about US\$2,000 per person, and basic monthly expenses for a household of four to five exceeds 2,000Birr (see chapter two for exchange rates; in 2009 about 11Birr to US\$1). This becomes especially difficult if the family must be self-sufficient for an initial six month period after repatriating.

Later that day, as I pondered aloud on these expenses, the youth who I was walking with, Simon, who is not related to Sister Carla's family but with whom I talked about these economic concerns, provided other insights to explain the low numbers of *repatriates*. He framed his explanation in terms of *livity*. Below is a paragraph from my fieldnotes of our conversation.

...economic hardship is not the only reason. Although raising the money for airfare and for living expenses in Ethiopia is a struggle, even after they arrive many of them can't handle the *livity*, he replied. When I asked what he meant by that he explained that he was talking about the physical conditions of life in Shashamane. Every day most people need to catch water because even if they have indoor plumbing there often isn't any water coming into the house, and Ethiopians will overcharge them for everything whether it's for water or for housework...In short, Simon explained, *repatriates* who come from the west can't live like how we live here mainly because they're too used to the comfort in *foreign* and partly because they don't learn how to get along with the people.

In this conversation *livity* means a way of living. Both Jonah's and Simon's explanations connect *consciousness* to the physical and material aspects of life, especially living in the *promised land*, to formulate a definition of *livity*. When Simon mentions "the comfort" that is more common in "the west" than in Shashamane, like a regular supply of running water, he emphasises that the familiarity with and expectation of such comforts prevents some *repatriates* from fully embracing the *livity* of Rastafari. *Livity* entails not only an ideological and spiritual revisioning of one's worldview and one's position, but also of the material facets of life. As a result, repatriation involves not only the physical move to Ethiopia and spiritual awakening of Rastafari, but the resilience to build and maintain a life in Shashamane. Physical strength and spiritual perseverance are thus qualities that distinguish a *heartical* Rastaman or Rastawoman, and someone who clearly exerts *livity*, from other *landl* (see chapter one).

Although realising the truth has primarily spiritual implications, the body must also be cleansed and uplifted, like the soul. In this way the idea of *ital* becomes relevant. *Ital* is generally defined by Rastas and non-Rastas as “natural” and/or “vegetarian.” In general, Edmonds observes,

ital living is...a commitment to using things in their natural or organic states...the Rastafarian ideal proscribes the use of synthetic materials and chemically treated foods. I say “ideal,” because the economic reality of life for most Rastas makes strict ital living difficult, if not impossible...Rastas believe that the entire universe is organically related and that the key to health, both physical and social, is to live in accordance with organic principles (2003:60).

Repatriates have various definitions of *ital*. Some adhere to the moral emphasis on living well with other peoples and doing “good works” to ensure future salvation, and they prioritise less eating foods grown organically or dietary prohibitions other than avoiding pork, which all *IandI* do. Some *repatriates* do, however, strictly espouse a vegetarian or vegan diet, and refrain from seafood and meat as well as some or all dairy foods such as milk or eggs. Nyahbinghi and Boboshanti *repatriates*, for instance, often adhere to the food taboos in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 of the Bible while TTI *repatriates* mainly avoid pork and seafood other than fish (see Douglas 1984).

Although Simon did not use the word *ital*, his comments about giving up the material aspects of life including the valuation of things and “comfort” like indoor plumbing, hint at the idea of *ital* as simple and *conscious livity*. Although Simon himself has lived for almost his entire life in a concrete house with indoor plumbing, and certainly expects a comparable standard of living in the future, he has learnt to do without these conditions due to the frequent interruptions of electricity, water, and telephone services in Shashamane. Instead of becoming dependent on material human

inventions, he views them as comforts and not necessities, unlike other *IandI* who come from *foreign*. This position of favouring the natural over the man-made is part of the Rasta definition of *ital*. While *livity* is often taken to mean “living good” and *ital*, Jonah’s and Simon’s accounts nuance these definitions. These young men highlight the connections between conceptual and material *livity*, and permanent repatriation to Ethiopia (Africa).

Testing knowledge of the Bible

Testing a person’s knowledge of the Bible is relevant not only for the children of *repatriates* and young *repatriates* (those who moved to Shashamane as children with their parents) but also for visitors to the *safar* who are known to *repatriates* as well as for strangers in *safar*. Although the adult Rasta visitors in Shashamane who I met would often display the physical markers of Rastafari, such as *dreads*,⁸⁰ these “outside” manifestations were only one element that influenced *repatriates*’ opinion of the visitor as a fellow Rastaman or Rastawoman. As *repatriates* reminded me, Rasta is irreducible to external characteristics,⁸¹ and the devil himself could be disguised as an angel. (See 2nd Corinthians 11: 13-15 “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light”). I inferred that this Biblical reference was both meant as a warning to me not to immediately trust everyone in the *safar*, and as a way of telling me that *repatriates* themselves would not immediately trust me since only in time would they get to know my true character. Rather, people’s

⁸⁰ Also spelt “dreds” meaning dreadlocks for uncombed or matted hair characteristic of Rastafari. This is another homonym of the standard English verb to dread or “to anticipate with great apprehension or fear” (www.oxforddictionaries.com).

⁸¹ For the Binghis and Bobos I met these outward signs are important but not as significant for the TTI and unaffiliated Rastas in the *safar*. This is one reason, for example, that some parents did not insist that their children grow *dreadlocks*.

character should be gleaned from their “works,” which is the basis of their judgement in the afterlife as well (see Revelation 2: “I know thy works...”). This means examining not only a person’s words, but also actions.

This belief, that one can never know a person based on external characteristics like appearance, constantly guides *repatriates*’ interactions with strangers, Rasta and non-Rasta alike. When I asked knowledgeable long-standing *repatriates* if a foreign researcher who had stayed in Shashamane before I moved there and who had *dreads* was Rasta, *repatriates* would often shrug and nod in an uncommitted manner, and reply “a so him say” or “well, him say him is Rasta,” but usually with a note of skepticism. Hardly any Rastafarian would describe another ’fari (Rastafari) as a “true” Rasta, but in this case until the researcher convincingly proved that he was Rasta, as he claimed, *repatriates* would continue to doubt his manifestation.

Ascertaining a Rastaman’s or Rastawoman’s character therefore entails more than viewing his or her appearance or knowing if he or she belongs to a particular Mansion or not. I often wondered when any visitor casually strolled into my *yard* or the JRDC office, as I did two years ago, how this acceptance was accomplished. Since an individual can manifest Rasta at any time, and others must accept this assertion based on his or her word, interrogating a visitor about knowledge of the Bible or *reasoning* with a visitor is one method of determining a stranger’s trustworthiness. It is a method of getting to know his or her character and a way of testing the proclamation of visitors who profess to be Rasta. Assessing a person’s knowledge of the Bible can potentially be useful in interactions with both Rasta and non-Rasta visitors since it is a seminal text for all Rastafari, and usually familiar to peoples of various religions as

well. This is a useful method to “test the Irits [spirit]” within a person (Homiak 1999:96) since Rastas never know if a stranger is “on the side” of good or evil unless one gets to know “how them stay” (in Jamaican parlance).

Testing men’s or women’s knowledge of the Bible, their views on repatriation and regarding His Majesty were integral to accepting them as fellow Rastafari. *Repatriates* usually expected any Rasta visitor to concur with certain truths and to hold similar, though not necessarily the same, ideas regarding the injustice of *the system*. By interrogating the visitor on his or her reading (interpretation) of the Bible, *IandI* would come to build a more holistic image of the visitor sitting in front of them on *the land grant*. While every Rastaman and Rastawoman would not have the same opinion about every visitor, interacting through this kind of testing enabled *repatriates* to determine if the visitor was a *heartical* Rastaman or Rastawoman since being *heartical* is predominantly an “inside thing.”

Both visitors who professed to be Rasta and those who were not Rasta, like myself, underwent this kind of challenge. I was often in awe at how ostensibly open and friendly *repatriates* and their children were to all visitors, especially as each non-Rasta visitor inevitably asked *repatriates* the same questions. I later realised that *repatriates*, in turn, usually engaged in an initial period of questioning these visitors about themselves: where they came from and their reasons for visiting Ethiopia and Shashamane. In these conversations I often overheard elder male and female *repatriates* also highlight the importance of Ethiopia and Africa as the origin of humankind and as their ancestral land (see chapter one) to hear the visitor’s responses as a way of gauging their ideological proclivity and the extent of their *consciousness*.

Then they may have segued into questions that tested the visitor's knowledge of certain events in the Bible. For non-Rasta visitors, their presence in Ethiopia was usually taken as the first reliable indication of their inclinations. Making the effort to come to Ethiopia, and to Shashamane especially, indicated a desire to visit the *promised land* and the land granted by His Majesty. This was seen as a favourable indicator of *consciousness*, but did not necessarily mean that the person was actually conscious as yet.⁸² In the case of tourists who simply passed through Shashamane, interacting with the person was usually about getting to know his or her character, and not about accepting him or her socially.

Although I was not Rasta, during a conversation with Brother Shiloh, a recent *repatriate*, he fired one question after another about Biblical events in my direction, most of which I could not answer. His blatant shock and disappointment when I did not know what Moses did after he came down from Mount Sinai (to reveal the Ten Commandments) and my resulting shame and embarrassment indicated that after living with Rasta people for months, I still had not learnt enough. This incident indicated the priority given to knowing the Bible and the role of elders in ensuring that this is accomplished (see chapter one). As my conversation with Brother Shiloh indicated, this kind of test was one that I had failed miserably, but redeemed myself in our other conversations about structural issues regarding inequalities of power, and capital, the historical context of life in the West Indies, and my general *consciousness* of the “trickery” (“politricks”) within the *system*. It was largely because of this that Brother Shiloh later agreed to be interviewed for my thesis. Since testing usually

⁸² This is not the same status given to locals or tourists who simply stop off in Shashamane en route to the south or other areas of Ethiopia since they did not travel with the intention of visiting Shashamane.

includes some element of judgement or measurement of how a person actually answers the questions, in this sense it literally is a “test.”

At that time, I asked Brother Shiloh about how he came to be involved with Rasta, when he started to think about repatriation, and how he prepared for coming to Shashamane. Like Brother Nelson he did not provide a chronological account of seminal experiences that brought him to the moment when we sat in his yard on *the land grant*. Instead he began with the Biblical verse about building a throne, and the Davidic Covenant that the descendants of King David would rule and that the throne shall never be short of one, which is a significant verse for many Rastafari.⁸³

Since I could neither follow nor record our session (as he did not wish me to record it) I finally put aside my notebook and listened. Then Brother Shiloh described the Organ and its purpose as “the true function of a man’s heart,” once again intermittently asking me questions about events in the Bible. These included asking me to quote the Commandment regarding parents and children (which I later understood was related to the Davidic Covenant), to quote the sentences describing how the earth is the Lord’s, and finally he asked me about the righteous living upright in the land. As I reviewed my notes, I realised that the few comments that I managed to capture from Brother Shiloh’s account connected particular events in his life with Biblical passages, most of which I was still unfamiliar with. “Forget bout this interview business and come trod with us, chaaww,” he concluded, sucking his teeth. In this situation Brother Shiloh was taking on the role of a teacher, attempting to guide me

⁸³ See 2nd Samuels 7:12: “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. Verses 13-14 continues: “He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men” (Holy Bible).

toward the truth since I had already taken one decision that demonstrated my potential for *consciousness*, of travelling to Ethiopia and to *the land grant*, albeit for the misguided reasons of doing “research.”

Visiting *the land grant* is also an indicator of a person’s proclivity or potential to become *conscious* for Rastafari outside Shashamane. During my visit to a well-respected Sister in London I briefly met other *IandI* at the TTI Headquarters there, and although I am not Rasta, accompanying Sister Bernice meant that I was not subject to any kind of interrogation. Yet this was reinforced when she introduced me, and explicitly remarked that I had just returned from not only visiting, but living in Shashamane for a year. Based on these factors, other *IandI* assumed that either I was Rasta or that I was trustworthy enough not to have to be tested since I was already in the Rasta space of the Headquarters. Instead, I was quizzed about my impressions of Shashamane, the length of time I lived there, the physical and social landscape, the availability of land, the numbers of *IandI* resident there, and employment opportunities.

Rasta speech and *the word*

As Rex Nettleford has noted, “dread talk” exemplifies one significant “organic” expression of the oral and aural sphere of West Indian Rastafari *consciousness* (Pollard 2000:19; Nettleford 1978). In its expression, standard English speech patterns are inverted and reinterpreted according to Rastafari beliefs. Edmonds presents a clearer picture of this process in terms of “deconstruction and reconstruction:”

The deconstruction part of the exercise attacks the integrity of the English language and the society that values it. The reconstruction employs various stylistic and lexical innovations to create a linguistic medium that will express the philosophical concepts and outlook of

Rastafari. Peculiarities include changing sounds, forms and meanings of words to reflect the Rastafarian outlook...The same process is at work in the change of *dedicate* to *livicate*. The first syllable, *ded*, sounds like “dead” to Rastas. Since “dead” signifies something negative and the word *dedicate* is really positive, it has to be changed to *livicate* (2003:63).

This kind of “linguistic activism” (Price 2009) is a key expression of Rasta cosmology because *the word*, hearing, and enacting Rastafari beliefs are all expressions of an alternative mode of conceptualising the person and the world. Chevannes additionally explains that “undoubtedly the most offensive word-weapon in Rastafari assault on the social order was its legitimization of the *badword*, the vulgar expletive” (2006:98). The most well known examples of these are the Jamaican words “raas klaat” and “bombo klaat.” Militant reggae singer of the 1970s, Peter Tosh, exemplified this in action when he recorded a song with these highly offensive and thus provocative expletives. As Tosh pointedly explained in an interview discussing the limited release of one of his albums: “when I get upset I don’t bother to talk any bumberclaat English bumberclaat grammar” (<http://www.youtube.com> “Peter Tosh interview – 1986”). Rastafari speech therefore “became a weapon in the Rastafarian ideological and symbolic war against Babylon...The Rastafarian argot is an attempt to put distance between Rastas and Babylon” (Edmonds 2003:62).

As I have indicated, these speech forms must be considered in the context of notions of good and evil. The word is “always a two-edged force” (Homiak 1999:117) that can be co-opted to encourage both good and evil, the connotations of which frequently pervade Rastafari oral expressions. As Price notes,

when a Rastafari shouts, “Brimstone!” or “Fire bu’n!” at someone it could have been an effort to intimidate, insult, condemn, suggest control of the natural elements, or all of these. They understood that their words when associated with a Rastafari identity could make people recoil. Word, sound,

and power celebrated stigmatization, which Rastafari used against their stigmatizers...This symbolic swagger offered Rastafari a method to confront the people and institutions they held culpable in perpetuating oppression and miseducation (2009:71-72).

This duality of good and evil and life and death is embodied in God, and consequently also present in human beings. Homiak expounds that words “carry the uplifting force of “life” and “love” as well as the purifying but potentially destructive force of ‘fire’ ” (1999: 96). Charles Price adds that “Rastafari single out fire as a powerful symbol in their discourse and rituals. Fire cleanses, destroys, promotes new growth, and signals eternity, redemption and salvation” (2009: 208). In Ethiopia, this symbolism is also evoked in the song “Bob Marley” recorded by two singers of local Ethiopian, and not *repatriate* parents, who use Rasta imagery in their music sung in Amharic and English through the lyrics “we chant Rasta...we say fyah, we don’t need no water” (2005/6). Rasta speech in Shashamane has become a distinctly *Jamaican* cultural form. Additionally Zips suggests, “when Rastafari reggae artists such as Sizzla, Capleton or Anthony B call for ‘fire’ and threaten to burn the Babylon system, they actually rally for moral repentance, legal acknowledgment for the injustice committed and economic restitutions” (2006: 132-133).

Another facet of the good and evil paradigm are the themes of judgement and salvation that are embedded in the concepts of *babylon* and *zion*. Judgement and salvation are prevalent themes in Rastafari worldview and therefore within its sphere of orality. Rasta speech acts as contrapuntal since it has emerged out of standard English as a distinct form that co-exists with normative expressions which accrue respectable status in Creole society. The contrapuntal emerges and exists as a style of speech performance alongside the use of standard English and people often switch

between the two depending on situation so the “underlying [linguistic] duality is denied and covered by what is both a historical process and an ongoing symbolic technique of ‘taking on’ dominant cultural forms and ‘remodelling’ them so that the two cultural strands are woven into a complex garment of cultural and linguistic expression” (Reisman 1989: 116-117).

In terms of practical uses, Rasta speech in the Caribbean “soon became a concerted effort to conceal the meaning of their conversations from the uninitiated, particularly from Babylon’s agents and informers” (Edmonds 2003:62). In Shashamane as well, local Ethiopians outside the *safar* cannot comprehend Rasta talk or Jamaican patois since it is distinct from English, a fact which can be used advantageously at times. For instance, when I travelled on a public minibuss with other young *Jamaicans* from Shashamane who could understand and speak Amharic fluently, if we wished to converse about private matters in the crowded minibuss we could speak in patois and no one would be able to understand us.

Chanting the word

John Pulis notes that “citing-up” not only refers to the content of speech which often combines Biblical verse and political commentary, but “a way of reading” (Pulis 1999:357) that includes “changes in tonality” (1999: 368). These changes are also indicative of the emphasis that the speaker places on certain aspects of his or her words. This occurs in Brother Nelson’s experience at his first TTI meeting. As he went on to explain, it was not only the content of the Prophet’s speech that made him fearful, but the Prophet’s delivery. Gadman’s passion, which conveyed a staunch belief in his own words, his intonation while delivering this guidance, and the varied

cadence of his voice all converged to create the formidable persona of the *heartical* elder Prophet Gad as “the first man that made me afraid when he was talking” Brother Nelson expounds. This is one reason that he does not feel that it is necessary to explicitly quote the Prophet or even relate the gist of his words.

Another form of oral expression is *chanting*, an activity that took place on a Sunday afternoon in a *repatriate yard* during a small gathering. As Pulis remarks, “talk-singing known as “chanting”...is not a passive, contemplative, or solitary ritual performed in silence, but an aural and a multi-vocal event” (1999:359). On this occasion, it involved musical expression in the form of drumming with a few Nyahbinghi *repatriates* residing in Shashamane from Europe and two or three Brothers from French Guiana who were visiting from Paris. A few Brothers who had been invited brought their taller and short drums to the *yard*.⁸⁴ While other adults and children talked, laughed and the children played, suddenly yet naturally, I heard the slow, steady beat of the drum.

One Brother who had been sitting, jumped up and began to move, shifting his weight from one foot to the other with his long *dreads* swaying in the wind as he moved to the beat. He raised his head and lowered it while other adults chanted “JaAahhHHHh,” “RAStaFARRRRRII” and “SelAASSSIEEEE EYEE” in tandem with the falling and steady and changing tempo of the drum. A few children moved imitating the other Brothers and Sisters who had gotten up, influenced by the music, while other children continued their small football match on the other side of the yard.

⁸⁴ There were three drums, two of which were tall and thin and the third a smaller drum held between the drummer’s knees which was probably a gumbé. All three are popular in the Caribbean. Chevannes describes the instruments commonly used in Nyahbinghi sessions as “the bass, struck on the first of four beats and muffled on the third; the *funde*, which plays a steady one-to beat; and the repeater or *akete* (*kete* for short), which plays the improvised syncopation” (1998: 18).

These extended syllables of powerful words, *chanted* from the booming voices of Brothers and Sisters with an emphasis on the first or last syllables, evoked feelings of strength and enthusiasm in time with the beat of the drums and the cadence of their voices. As Goffman notes,

performances of everyday life are not ‘acted’ or ‘put on’ in the sense that the performer knows in advance just what he is going to do, and does this solely because of the effect it is likely to have...the incapacity of the ordinary individual to formulate in advance the movements of his eyes and body does not mean that he will not express himself through these devices in a way that is dramatized and pre-formed in his repertoire of actions (1969:80).

Chanting also extends to musical composition and the more formal performance of singing. Other important facets of *chanting*, such as the changes within the genres of ska, dancehall and reggae have been thoroughly researched (Cooper 2004; Stanley Niaah 2010). However, I mention music as *chanting* here primarily in its capacity to formulate “conscious vibes” as a creative expression and extension of *consciousness*, and hence its usefulness in spreading the *word*. As Brother Benedict elaborated in chapter one after he quoted the song “War” based on His Majesty’s speech to the League of Nations, “music is how we spread the message.” Horace Campbell reiterates that for Rastafari “song – reggae – was the highest form of self-expression, an expression which was simultaneously an act of social commentary and a manifestation of deep racial memory” (2007: 6).

This method of “chanting down babylon” (see Murrell et al 1998) is connected to the words, their rhythms and meanings that are expressed “lyrically” through the more formal medium of music. I often ignorantly dismissed references to music since peoples I met in many countries of the global north who are not Rastafari generally associated the Caribbean, my home region, with the music of Bob Marley and then

linked this solely with self-indulgent decadence and marijuana consumption. Reggae music is a form of *chanting* that has become commercialised and well known to non-Rastafari in a similar way that Pollard notes “dread talk” has been popularised in the West Indies outside its Rastafari origins. Based on my observations, the songs that are less overtly political and more about enjoyment such as “Lively up yourself” or “Could this be love” are usually given more air time on radio stations in western countries, and on Hollywood film soundtracks, and are therefore publicised to a greater extent than overtly political ones such as “Zimbabwe” or “Jah live.” In these instances, music which for Rastafari aims at ideological struggle is used in the west to establish a comforting ethnocentric, albeit neocolonial image of the West Indies.⁸⁵

Yet, it is this wide distribution of Rastafari-inspired reggae music that also fosters a Rastafari consciousness (and not only the aesthetic side of Rasta like *dreads*) outside Jamaica. As a young white Sister from Germany who repatriated to Shashamane explained, “I came to consciousness by listening to the music of Alpha Blondy, Peter Tosh and Bob Marley.” John Homiak points out that there is a recent generation of Rastafari of various races and religious backgrounds outside the Caribbean who have gained knowledge of Rastafari almost exclusively through the lyrics of Rasta musicians. “The tours of musicians such as Marley, Burning Spear, and others were critical to the spread of the message, along with travel by traditional Elders...[for

⁸⁵ Patricia Mohammed connects this image to the modern realities that were carved out by colonial elites: “A set of coconut trees, trunks elegantly curved by the wind, swaying palm leaves, on a beach...in Trinidad is something which one expects to see in the Caribbean. But string a hammock across two coconut trunks, place a, usually, young white female in scanty beachwear, heighten the colours of the sea to a sparkling ultramarine and put this on a cable television advertisement to the strains of Bob Marley’s ‘One Love’ and it transports an iconic message of the Caribbean as a place of sun, sand, sea and, of course, the unstated hedonistic sensuality which all the visual messages convey. It is not that some of these images are untrue of course, but layered under this image are the icons of a once-leisured colonial existence, the presumed early heathenism/hedonism of the Region, the obvious attractions of sun over snow, heat over cold, and the transportation of the idea of heaven through a reflected blue of a clear sky” (2009:10).

Rasta to] “burst” [this is a reference to bursting or loosing the seals in Revelation] the confines of its Jamaican Babylon via reggae” (Homiak 1999:105). One notable example is the Rasta reference to Bob Marley who was purposely promoted by *IandI* to spread the message as a “messenJah” (see Yawney 1999). This is one reason that Pollard calls musicians “message-bearers” (2000:35).⁸⁶ These lyrics are imbued with political meanings and serve political purposes, to highlight Tosh’s comments.

Zips also discusses the role of music in influencing the attitude toward “(re)migration” to West Africa, and as a potential basis for positive social relations between “re-migrants” and local residents. He argues that this genre is able to “create a positive sentiment towards national (African) policies to close the historical gap between Africa and her Diaspora. It is therefore no coincidence that reggae is considered as a local ‘true’ African music by many Ghanaians” (2006:134). However, Homiak cautions against conflating internationally disseminated reggae with typical Nyahbinghi Rastafari reasoning sessions, even though both are characteristic Rasta oral and aural expressions: “the message of racial protest...is organically linked to the rhythms of resistance found in reggae – the popular expression of Rasta, which has been critical in its globalization. Understand, however, that there is no facile correspondence between this public and internationalized aspect...and the “roots” culture from which it was birthed” (1999:99).

It was only during my residence in Shashamane through conversations with elder and younger *repatriates*, and their children that I began to comprehend the role of music

⁸⁶ Songs such as Bob Marley’s “Africa Unite” (1980) composed for the independence of Zimbabwe or “Buffalo Soldier,” Dennis Brown’s “The Promised Land” (circa 1977) and Peter Tosh’s “Wanted Dread or Alive” (circa 1981) are examples of the words of *IandI* with varied yet core messages that have all formed the basis for *reasonings* among Rastafari internationally.

in “spreading the message” of Rastafari. As a young Brother who is an amateur musician clearly yet casually stated during our conversation, “music is essential to writing about Rasta because it is how people express themselves.” In this comment he echoed Peter Tosh during an interview at the end of the 1970s when Tosh’s frank response to an interviewer’s question, “would reggae take over the world?” was, “that’s what reggae supposed to be, seen? If reggae is not accepted universally...then what’s the use of the music? The music was made for people...” (Reggae Sunsplash interview 1979). Prior to this Tosh explains that,

“if the music does not penetrate the heart, the soul and the mind and the body then you ain’t goin to see it because reggae music...is something you feel, seen? And if you don’t feel it, you can’t know it, seen? It is a spiritual music with spiritual ingredients, for spiritual purposes, seen” (ibid)?⁸⁷

Ennis Edmonds summarises the role of reggae in the Rastafari project of “chanting down babylon”:

First, reggae is the medium through which the people are restored to self-awareness...Second, reggae is the medium through which the people learn the truth about the system under which they live. The reggae lyricists constantly portray the oppressive, deceptive, and divisive nature of Babylon. Third, reggae is the medium through which the poor express their frustrations with and grievances against the political and cultural guardians of Jamaican society and through which they express their demand for change...Reggae therefore sets the stage for a departure from the Babylonian lifestyle and the eventual demolition of the Babylonian system (2003:51).

Singing is additionally one way of earning a living that is popular with male Rasta youths since it allows them to “spread the message,” work for themselves thereby maintaining their autonomy, and “make a good living.” While musicians who I met,

⁸⁷ It is increasingly popular to include a discography or some bibliographic reference to oral and aesthetic expressions including music, poetry, and painting in publications and written works by Rasta and non-Rasta authors (see Zips 2006; Bonnaci 2008). In so doing non-Rastafari scholars acknowledge that this domain is an important component in analysing cosmology and its expression.

of varying degrees of income and fame, were aware of their goal of promoting music as a popular medium through which they could spread “the truth,” they were also cognisant that the music had to be popular in order to achieve this goal. Most musicians thus accepted, to an extent, changes to lyrics or locations of performances without believing that these changes in any way diminished their role as “message-bearers,” a role that they explicitly embraced.

The division between the producers and the consumers of music in terms of their positionalities vis-à-vis power and capital must also be noted. Music that is produced and recorded in the west, usually in the United States or Canada with collaboration between West Indian artistes based in those countries and North Americans, is usually brought by *IandI* visitors to Shashamane. The musicians whose songs are on these compact discs tend to reside in the global north, *chant* about repatriation, and occasionally visit Ethiopia and Shashamane to perform, but do not reside or own property there (to my knowledge). One day I noticed the signed poster of reggae artiste Luciano on the wall of a *repatriate* owned-business, and asked a young Sister about it. She replied that he performed in Shashamane a few years ago and gave the poster to *the community* to commemorate the concert. Then she bluntly added, rhetorically, that these musicians like to sing “about repatriation but which part them live? Inna de west.”⁸⁸ Musicians who are not as regionally or internationally well-known as Luciano, but who live permanently or seasonally in Shashamane and who

⁸⁸ Werner Zips indirectly addresses one aspect of this young woman’s criticism by noting that some Rastafari musicians have agreed to donate a percentage of their record profits to certain Houses: “Sizzla, Capleton, Anthony B, and Junior Reid, as well as other Bobo Ashanti performers, are expected to donate at least one tenth of their revenues gained in the (comparatively still) rich Western music industry to the EABIC [Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress]. These monies are used for preparatory steps towards mass repatriation and the building of EABIC branches in Africa” (2006:157). Rastafari academic Charles Price notes in the acknowledgements of his 2009 publication that he does the same for the Rastafari Centralization Organization (2009: xx).

travel frequently, like Brother Lester mentioned in chapter one, often record their music in locations in the global north such as Los Angeles or London. To a lesser extent they also produce records in Ethiopia, mainly in Addis Ababa. These records would circulate more widely and sell in greater numbers abroad than in Ethiopia or in East Africa, which is important if this is a Rastaman's or Rastawoman's primary means of earning a living. All these "message bearers" utilise different means of adhering to Rasta ideals while following their own creative initiatives and plans that enable them to *make a living*.

A clear example of the contrapuntal speech that constitutes Creole social relations and worldviews is the Rasta re-orientation of worldview around the Bible which is used in turn to test peoples' *consciousness*. Rastafari speech activity becomes meaningful in everyday and ritual behaviour through words (spoken in *reasonings* or *chanted* in music) and through the transmission of these ideas to fellow Rastafari, their Ethiopian-born children, and Rasta and non-Rasta visitors. In this way, fundamental cosmological elements are reinforced, altered and shaped through the oral and aural expressions and actions of individual Rastamen and Rastawomen who enact this Rastafari ethos in Shashamane.

Chapter 4

Jamaican yards: family, household and ‘ethnicity’

In this chapter I will examine household and family practices and patterns among *repatriates* based on the 71 households whose members I knew by name and socialised with regularly, as well as persons who merely “knew my face.” My relations with older and younger members of these *yards* were thus characterised by varying levels of familiarity and trust. Since these household and family practices are reproduced as social patterns, I will also explore the intersection of gender, ‘ethnicity’ and life stage as these are highlighted in particular situations involving *repatriate* and mixed families.

As noted in the thesis introduction, I define a *repatriate* household as consisting of at least one household head who is an adult male or female *repatriate*. However, since I have included the Ethiopian-born children of *repatriate* and *repatriate*-local parentage who now head their own households, it is more accurate to refer to these households as *Jamaican* rather than *repatriate*. Twenty five of the 71 *Jamaican* households include one head who is not a *repatriate* and children who are of mixed *repatriate* and local parentage. Seventeen of these twenty five are headed jointly by a male repatriated husband and a local Ethiopian wife and eight households are headed singly by either a repatriated Brother or a local Ethiopian woman whose previous or current male partner is *Jamaican*. This means that the children resident in these households have one *repatriate* parent and one local parent who are not co-residing. Many of the local Ethiopian female heads of these households are from Shashamane, but some women have also moved there from other areas of Ethiopia, and they may or may not have manifested Rastafari over time. Both mixed households and households headed

solely by *repatriates* are generally called *Jamaican* (*yards* or houses in English or *beitoch* in Amharic) by local Ethiopians, *repatriates* and their locally-born children. I will focus on the occupants of each *yard* who compose a household.

Mintz's (1974) point that "the yard" in West Indian society is the primary site of cultural and social production is nuanced in the *safar* by the use of the emic term *Jamaican* in relation to Ethiopian or *Habesha*. In Shashamane, then, household organisation does not exist in isolation from social categories and subjective expressions of gender and 'ethnicity.' While *repatriates* and their children generally view themselves as Ethiopian (and African), they also interchangeably refer to themselves as "Jamaicans" or as "Rastas" as they in turn are often referred to by various Ethiopians. The formation and mobilisation of *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian* as social categories and as a means of self-identification are also integral to an examination of household and familial forms in the *safar*. In this context, West Indian household and kinship forms are practised as well as given new meaning. As Mintz argues, "together, house and yard form a nucleus within which the culture expresses itself, perpetuated, changed, and reintegrated" (Mintz 1974: 232).

As in previous research of West Indian families, then, the household rather than the family is taken here as the basic unit of social reproduction (RT Smith 1956; Clarke 1957; Gonzalez 1969; Wilson 1973). RT Smith's definition of the household as "a group of people occupying a single dwelling and sharing a common food supply" (1973:351) recognises that conceptually and in practice the family and the household must be distinguished. What have historically been called "domestic" and thus family activities are not necessarily co-terminous with household activities. This point is

certainly accurate for economic subsistence which usually takes on international dimensions, as shown in chapter two. Household composition and structure must therefore be examined in relation to livelihood and the efforts of *repatriates* and youths in each household to maintain a living and to *better* themselves. Gonzalez argues that “households, in all their varieties, may be best understood in terms of the interrelationships arising between adult men and women, which in themselves seem to be dependent primarily upon the economic situation” (1969: 83). This is evident for the *repatriate* population in the different residence types that emerge out of economic necessity, individual goals and community obligations. In this chapter though, I will focus on the sociological, cultural, and subjective aspects of households and their occupants.

The spatial organisation of the *safar* where *Jamaican yards* and Ethiopian houses have been located adjacent to each other since the initial period of repatriation therefore mirrors and contributes to the major shift in kin relations for *repatriates* from relatives in countries of origin to fellow *repatriates*, local Ethiopians in Shashamane and *IandI* internationally. In terms of *repatriates*’ relations with each other, I frequently heard long-resident Brothers and Sisters explain that *IandI* used to be “closer” in the “early days” when they lived physically closer together, but now they live in individual *yards* that are scattered. This accompanied statements that *IandI* now “pay more attention” to their individual families and they are more “scattered.” These references to proximity reflect the connection between social relations and *repatriates*’ physical location. This is noteworthy because it must be connected here to the key notion and the physical space of the *yard*.

Each *Jamaican yard* consists of the house and the space surrounding it. In Shashamane, each *repatriate yard* is fenced and contains only the house and the kitchen garden, but a few *yards* also have small businesses like a shop. The type of fencing or boundary, the way that the land surrounding the house is maintained, the amount of land itself, the type of flora and the crops in the kitchen garden (if any), and the house itself all contribute to the image of a typical *Jamaican yard*. The material used to build the house is one major indicator of a household's economic status. Combined with the overwhelming local Ethiopian perception is that *Jamaicans* are rich, stereotypically, *Jamaican* houses are envisaged as concrete as opposed to the more common mud (*chika*) house or at least a sizeable *chika* house larger than the average three or four rooms, and located on large plots of land that are fenced off by a concrete wall instead of the usual wooden fence. In reality though, this is not the case and while some *Jamaican yards* adhere to these forms, others do not (see chapter five).

Jamaican yards are nonetheless physically marked to distinguish them from others in the *safar*. For instance, this is done with the planting of fruit trees that are a common part of the landscape in the West Indies like the mango tree, but are less common in Shashamane.⁸⁹ These are visible connections to the Caribbean or more specifically, to *repatriates'* childhood *yards* in the Caribbean. This demarcation of space is also done using the colours and images of Rastafari that are now well-known internationally. As Edmonds argues, "in place of membership cards or confessed commitments to a creedal statement, evocative and provocative symbols, which express a common sense of evil and of identity/solidarity, have become the badge of membership in the

⁸⁹ Although the mango is a tropical fruit and does grow in Ethiopia, it is not grown as widely as other fruits like the orange and banana.

Rastafarian movement” (2003: 74). For example, the Lion of Judah usually figures prominently on a zinc gate or a fence or in a more understated manner, the Star of David is incorporated into ironwork on the outside of house windows. These features depend on residents’ personal tastes as well as artistic proclivity and training.

The gendered division of space generally found in Creole society continues among *Jamaicans* in the *safar* whereby the *yard* tends to be a female sphere and the road a male one. Although the *yard* acts as both private and social space on different occasions, (Mintz 1974; Wilson 1973) it is generally considered a site of domesticity. In contrast, the public space of the road is usually where *liming* (socialising) especially among young men, takes place. (This is one reason that I hardly ever ‘hung out’ with young men on the roadside and only rarely saw young *Jamaican* women from the *safar* doing so). However, this association of the *yard* with women is also slightly altered in *repatriate yards* in Shashamane since both men and women are responsible for household activities and women tend to engage in more regular waged labour outside the *yard* than men do (as noted in chapter two). This practice is also more common in Rastafari households in the Caribbean.

Household composition

While the actual composition of *repatriate* or *Jamaican* households varies, 43 of the 71 *Jamaican* households (including the 17 mixed) of long-standing *repatriates*, recent *repatriates* and of *Jamaican* children born in Ethiopia, are structured on the basis of a conjugal male-female pair. “Conjugal” and “consanguineous” households do, however, co-exist in Shashamane. Gonzalez defines the consanguineous household “as the group of people who live under one roof, who eat and sleep together, and who

cooperate daily for the common benefit of all, and among whom there exist no conjugal pairs” (1980: 45). While this is partly relevant for Shashamane, it is not an accurate depiction of a household pattern. Although older and recent *repatriates* tend to initiate households based on conjugal unions with their repatriated or local spouses, this is not the case for most children born in Shashamane. As the children of *repatriates* themselves have children, the composition appears to change to a more consanguineous form even while the initial conjugal pair remains. These children usually reside in their parents’ *yards* with their children (the second generation born on *the land grant*). While this tends to be the norm for Ethiopian-born children, they also engage in varied residence practices including legal marriage, visiting and co-residence. There was similarly a variety of forms of relationship among recent *repatriates* and their local and foreign spouses.

For example, when Brother Gus moved to Shashamane from Jamaica in the 1970s he met Sister Berhane, who is Ethiopian and had moved to Shashamane from northern Ethiopia for economic reasons. After courting for several months they moved into a small *chika* room that they rented from a local family in the area that came to be known as *Jamaica Safar*. Although Brother Gus had received land from the EWF on which to settle, at that time he was unable to afford the materials to construct a house or to fence it. A few short years later though, he built a wooden fence with the help of other *repatriates* and then gradually constructed his own two-room *chika* house. About ten years later, after they had three children together, Sister Berhane and Brother Gus began to construct a larger concrete house for their growing family. Fifteen years later, when their daughter, Sara (who I will mention in another section), had her own child with her Ethiopian boyfriend, she continued to live in the *yard* with

her child. Household structure consequently changes during the course of a person's life and in each generation. As Gonzalez notes, household membership "fluctuates continually...not only with the birth of children, death of various members, and the loss of young people through marriage, but also through the extremely common practices of...divorce, double residence of members (especially men), absentee labor, and 'visiting' "(1980:67).

It is therefore apropos to mention types of unions, including marriage. Conjugal relations in Shashamane take various popular West Indian forms such as "common law" marriage, legal marriage and "visiting" or "extra-residential" relationships (RT Smith 1956; MG Smith 1965; Clarke 1957). Relationships that have been defined as "common law" in which spouses are not legally married but reside together, and "visiting" in which couples are in a long term relationship but do not live together, are widely practised among male and female *repatriates* and youths with their *Jamaican* or local Ethiopian partners. Many *repatriates* have specifically chosen not to legally marry their partners as a sign of their opposition to the institution of marriage, which is another part of the *shitstem*. Rastafari are usually aware of the internalised colonially-derived ideal of the nuclear family, and of legal marriage as its foundation. For Rastafari, marriage is a powerful mechanism of social control whereby legitimate and illegitimate offspring, and "respectable" men and women are distinguished from their "worthless" counterparts.

Many *repatriates* reject these principles. In the context of individual and familial goals though, certain *repatriates* (recent, seasonal or long-resident in Shashamane) and youths have legally married for various reasons, most of which result from the

institutional significance of marriage in the west and in Ethiopia. One repatriated Brother and Sister from Jamaica who lived in the United States for many years explained that they got married there because they paid less state taxes as a married couple when they jointly filed their annual tax return. A young *Jamaican* Rastaman born in Ethiopia of one *repatriate* and one local parent commented that he and his local Ethiopian wife were legally married in Addis Ababa not only because it was important to her, but also because this entitles him to apply for Ethiopian citizenship. Although he has not pursued this, marriage is theoretically one of two de jure routes to acquiring Ethiopian citizenship (Constitution 1995). I will expand on citizenship in chapter five.

Accordingly, when *IandI* in Shashamane use the term “wife” or “husband” it indicates a monogamous spouse to whom they may or may not be legally married or who may or may not live in Shashamane or reside in the same *yard*. Factors such as the length of time of a relationship, public knowledge, the number of their children, and co-residence determine the definitions of wife or husband outside its legal status, compared to that of a more casual “girlfriend” or “boyfriend” relation. Due to the broad application of the terms “husband” and “wife” I was usually unable to distinguish between legal and social marriages unless individuals directly told me about their status. Other residents may also be unaware of whether fellow *IandI* are legally married or not. I therefore adhere to the emic usage of the words “marriage,” “wife” and “husband.” In addition to the words husband and wife, partners and other persons may simply indicate a relationship between two persons by calling them “his woman” or “her man.” The use of these terms does not indicate the type of relationship that the couple is engaged in. Generally, people use the terms husband

and wife (and “his woman” or “her man”) for a variety of relationships: for younger and older persons who were not legally married but co-residing, for persons who were not residing together but in a long-term relationship, and for those who were legally married and co-residing.

There is nonetheless a common characteristic to these long-term relationships in terms of gender and ‘ethnicity.’ There are substantially more sexual relationships among *Jamaican* men and local Ethiopian women than with *Jamaican* women and local Ethiopian men. This is largely due to the higher numbers of *repatriate* men to *repatriate* women. Brothers tend to repatriate alone or if repatriating with their families, they usually move to Shashamane before their wives and children to “prepare things.” There are correspondingly very few Sisters who have repatriated alone. This trend continues to the present, and I met or knew of at most five Sisters from the Caribbean and the global north who repatriated without male partners. This does not mean that they arrived in Shashamane alone though, since they may have travelled with Brothers and other Sisters. When Sister Carolyn arrived in Shashamane in the 1970s for example, she came with other TTI members but was the only Rastawoman travelling with twelve Brothers.

Marriage and sexual relations are related to concepts of masculinity and femininity as well as to individual views on manhood and womanhood. Although it is not unusual for a married man to engage in occasional or regular sexual relations with women other than his wife, the reverse is uncommon for married women. An unfaithful wife or woman disrupts social concepts of masculinity and femininity. As Kempadoo notes, “female sexuality and labor has historically been controlled and organized to

serve masculine and male interests” (2001:45-46). For women it is highly discouraged through gossip and by a direct expression of disapproval toward those involved. As Wilson notes, gossip serves to maintain equal status and keep peoples’ behaviour in check (1973). A married woman, who may or may not reside with her husband, is considered to have privately and socially agreed to a monogamous relationship with him. Since her husband has also consented to this arrangement, if she chooses to end her marriage for any number of reasons, including her husband’s infidelity, she is in “her right” to do so. Separation and new relationships are usually accepted as normal facets of conjugal relations and often, even if a man and woman part ways, their families maintain kin relations, whether or not the couple had children together (RT Smith 1988).

A moral and social distinction is made between a married *Jamaican* woman and a single *Jamaican* woman. The latter is “free” to engage in more than one casual relationship at the same time (although each male partner may have different reactions to this) or occasional or sequential sexual relations with multiple men of her choice, regardless of whether she has children or not. However, it is a fine line between freedom and labels such as “whore.” I occasionally heard young women use the words “whore” or “loose” while gossiping about other young women in the *safar* or in their circle of friends. In these cases the young woman’s intent, her choice of partner, the length and type of relationship were factors that determined how other people judged her behaviour.

In almost all mixed households children are popularly categorised as *Jamaican*. However, there is a noticeable exception, that of Brother John’s household. This

categorisation seems to depend significantly on socio-spatial factors such as whose *yard* and the area of Shashamane where the children are raised as well as their language abilities and religion. Brother John's household is unusual since he lives in Shashamane town, not in the *safar*, with his local Ethiopian wife and their children in her family's compound. His wife's family is well established in Shashamane, and their children were raised in proximity to their mother's extended family outside the *safar*. These children did not grow up regularly playing with the children of other *repatriates* or Brothers and Sisters due to the distance from the *safar*, and they are "closer" to their mother's family than to other *repatriate* families, although they all know each other.

Unlike *Jamaican* youths who are fluent in Amharic, English and patois, when Brother John's children were younger they did not usually speak patois in their family's house. Instead, they communicated consistently in Amharic at home with a working knowledge of English acquired at school. This continues to the present. Additionally, they are not Rasta but are Christians and members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (as they clearly told me) to which their mother's family also belongs. Brother John's children consequently do not fulfil the criteria for *Jamaican* status, but are socially viewed, and see themselves as *Ethiopian*, though they may or may not be citizens of Ethiopia. This situation can also be examined in terms of class and capital since Sister Adina, Brother John's wife (who also has close relations with *repatriates* as indicated by the fact that she is called "Sister") is a member of a well-established local family.

The factors that determine a youth's social affiliation are particularly salient in how mixed children think of themselves. Although Brother John's children do identify

themselves as “Ethiopian” and they are popularly referred to as *Habesha*, they also carry his surname which is a distinctly “foreign-sounding” and not an “Ethiopian-sounding” name which distinguishes them from other Ethiopians. For the children of *Jamaican* parents or an Ethiopian mother and *Jamaican* father, their last names are generally their father’s last name. This remains the practice regardless of whether parents are legally married or co-residing or in a relationship at the time of a child’s birth.⁹⁰ Of the three young *Jamaican* women in their 20s who gave birth during my residence in Shashamane, one father was Ethiopian and the other two fathers were *Jamaican*, and each mother gave her child the father’s surname. There are, of course, exceptions since mothers may choose not to follow this practice depending on their sentiments toward the child’s father or other personal reasons. I knew one young *Jamaican* mother who gave birth a few months prior to my move to Shashamane, and gave her daughter her last name instead of the father’s surname.

Household division of labour and child rearing

As discussed in chapter two, women earn money more consistently than men, but household income comes from many local and foreign sources who are not necessarily family members. In a household, adult children who are employed permanently or occasionally will likewise ensure that they contribute to household expenses as often as they are able to. For example, daughters and sons in their twenties or thirties who live in their family’s *yard* will at least give their mother or their father “change” for basic recurring expenses such as food and electricity bills. Just as the expenses of each household are shared, domestic and child-rearing activities are usually shared between parents and older children in the household.

⁹⁰ The birth certificate is usually completed by the mother since this is done in the hospital following the birth, and the mother typically includes the father’s complete name.

Men and women who co-habit work interchangeably cooking, cleaning and *minding* their children depending on the time they spend working outside the home. There was no clear division of tasks along gendered lines in most households that I visited although each member of the household did specific tasks. For example, in some households where a husband and wife live together, the wife would cook and clean the household, and with her husband “ready” their children for school on weekday mornings. In other households the husband would cook while his wife works outside the home. In this case, a father may pick up his children from school and cook dinner for them at home before their mother returns from work outside the *yard*. As one *repatriate* who lives alone with his children commented to me, “you see how the [typical gender] roles are reversed” since his wife’s earnings from waged labour supported the family, and he cared for their children, not earning money outside the home. In *yards* where a Brother or Sister lives alone with young children then he or she will complete household tasks as well as care for the children.

While it is less common for men to perform domestic activities across classes in the West Indies, in Rasta households, in both the Caribbean and in Shashamane, it is not unusual. As a result, in Shashamane male and female members of households complete activities as needed, and assign tasks to children depending on factors that include what needs to be completed, the children’s age and (perhaps) personality and proclivity, and the number of household members. Girls and boys in a household usually learn to complete the wide-ranging domestic activities of cooking, cleaning, and *minding* any younger siblings.

Raising children in Shashamane is primarily the role of a mother and/or father, and to a lesser degree of older siblings and grandparents if they reside in the same *yard*. The financial support of children, which is one component of *minding* them, is expected of both mothers and fathers. However, since fathers of any age tend not to earn money as regularly as mothers, fathers often default on what is expected of them financially. Correspondingly, many parents encourage their daughters in particular to complete at least a high school level of education with the aim of ensuring the young women's economic self-sufficiency in the event that their husbands and *baby fathers* are unable or unwilling to fulfil paternal responsibilities, as I noted in the second chapter. Although in a few households *Jamaican* fathers *mind* their children alone without their local Ethiopian or *Jamaican* wives, in general, children tend to remain with their mothers, at least if the mothers are *Jamaican* (meaning either a *repatriate* or the child of one *repatriate* parent). Ethiopian mothers with *Jamaican baby fathers* who I met also appear to be primarily responsible for rearing their children and if they did not co-reside with their partners the children lived primarily with their mothers. These households are usually considered to be *Jamaican*.

Young *Jamaican* women who were born and bred in Shashamane with parents or siblings there usually maintain their existing living arrangements after having children, which means that they tend to continue living in their family's *yard*. This depends on their economic situations and individual preferences. For instance, Sara, Kenya, and Joy (all in their 20s) gave birth while I lived in Shashamane and maintained their domestic arrangements, all of which differed, even after they had children. For youths born in Ethiopia, their spouses tend to be overwhelmingly local

Ethiopian men and women, and to a lesser extent other *Jamaicans* born in Ethiopia or Rastas in *foreign* who regularly visit Shashamane.

While these three women are viewed by local Ethiopians as *Jamaican*, their parentage differs. Sara's father repatriated from Jamaica and her mother is Ethiopian, and Kenya's parents are *repatriates* from Jamaica and Britain. Both Kenya and Sara continued living in their families' *yards* in the *safar*. Sara's boyfriend was not from Shashamane, and although they were no longer in a relationship he visited occasionally from Addis Ababa to see their child. Kenya's *baby father*, an Ethiopian-born child of two *repatriate* parents, grew up in the *safar* and lived in his parents' *yard* where Kenya and her child occasionally spent time or the baby stayed for short periods of time with the father and grandparents. Joy, who had not lived in her family's *yard* prior to giving birth, continued to live in her own *yard* with her first child (whose father lived outside Shashamane) in a house that she and her recently repatriated Rasta boyfriend were gradually building. Kenya, Sara and Joy all received some kind of sustained financial help from their parents and older siblings, their *baby fathers*, and occasionally from other *IandI* in Shashamane and in *foreign*.

Motherhood and *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian* womanhood

Procreating is viewed by *repatriates* as a "natural thing" that is encouraged in the Bible (see Genesis 9:1 "go forth and multiply"). The birth of a child is often highly anticipated with pride, whether a pregnancy was planned or unexpected, although it is rarely celebrated formally. Joy, Kenya, and Sara each suddenly announced that they were pregnant, but there was neither consternation nor chastisement from their families and each was engaged in different relationships with their partners, as I

outlined. Having children for women has various advantages including the expectation that children will financially support their parents and care for them in old age, and as Besson notes regarding family land, children ensure the “continuance of [a] land holding family line” (2002: 17). In Shashamane the last is especially significant because the children of *repatriates* will hopefully continue “holding the land” thereby confirming its inalienability. Augmenting the *repatriate* population is framed as one aspect of the “life-long work” of repatriation. Staying in Shashamane, then, and having children there and children who have children ensures the continuation of this lineage. Having children is also an important aspect of the progress of an individual’s life that is, the arrival at womanhood or manhood.

As a young woman I was often privy to conversations among other young women in which ideas about womanhood and manhood converged with perceptions of the categories of *Ethiopian* and *Jamaican*. There were two occasions when these ideas emerged most forcefully to me. The first was a remark made by a young *Jamaican* woman, Rahel, while we were chatting. Rahel said that a middle-aged Brother had “turn fool” after marrying a significantly younger, local Ethiopian woman. The second instance occurred about a month later during a casual conversation with other girls who were 18-25 years of age when I remembered Rahel’s characterisation. The following is an edited passage from my fieldnotes:

This afternoon I went to visit Marion...while we were talking, a couple other young women dropped by. The conversation moved onto the topic of Jamaican men and Ethiopian women. The consensus was that while Jamaican men like to run after Ethiopian women - and they all agreed that this couldn’t be helped because it was just how the men stay - it was to the Brothers’ detriment. These Ethiopian women suck the life out of Jamaican men because they don’t know how to take care of them. Ethiopian women can’t cook the food that the men like, they don’t know how to keep the house clean or how to keep their man looking good. As Hirut bluntly put it, “whenever I see a Jamaican man

who looks dry and stress out then he must have an Ethiopian woman. They just look haggard all the time” she concluded. I was skeptical that this adversity affected every man in this kind of relationship and I called the names of two Ethiopian wives who obviously know how to make popular Jamaican dishes and also keep their houses well. They told me that these two women were exceptions to the rule.

This led to talk about the girls’ husbands and if they would be Ethiopian or Jamaican.⁹¹ Hannah said that she’s not going to be like no Ethiopian woman who loses her freedom after marriage. As Hirut said, “if you bear two children for an Ethiopian man you’ll never see outside again,” implying that the woman gets stuck in the house taking care of the children and the household. In the end they said that they did not want to marry or have children with an Ethiopian man. This conversation was framed in terms of “dirty” Oromo men who take advantage of their women, are intolerably possessive, and have poor hygiene.

In this private conversation among a group of young *Jamaican* women who are friends, each of whom has at least one *repatriate* parent, they discuss the promiscuous nature of *Jamaican* men, *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian* womanhood, and “Oromo” (meaning collectively *Ethiopian*) men. This conversation is framed in terms of the youths’ individual sentiments and future plans for marriage. There is a conflation of *Ethiopian* men’s perceived lack of cleanliness and poor treatment of their wives that vilifies them and indicates their unsuitability as potential spouses. Correspondingly, then, *Jamaican* men are the alternative, but they too have their pitfalls and the most apparent one is promiscuity in a context where monogamy is the ideal for married couples. This can be excused to a certain extent because it is “how them stay” and as such is incorrigible, although this predisposition has adverse consequences for the men themselves. Elisa Sobo’s analysis of bodily metaphors in rural Jamaica reinforces the view, indirectly verbalised by Hirut and Hannah, that men’s “nature runs high” (1993).

⁹¹ These young women all refer to themselves as “Jamaican.” They were born in Shashamane, have lived entirely in Ethiopia, and two young women are of mixed *repatriate*-local parentage.

The harmful consequence of *Jamaican* men's inability to control their sexual desire means that Ethiopian women "suck the life out of" them so that men look "dry." This is a common bodily metaphor in West Indian speech, reproduced here, that distinguishes between peoples' natures. British people in the temperate north, for instance, are often described as "dry" and "cold blooded" compared to "hot blooded" West Indians in the tropical south. This bodily metaphor also draws on the Eurocentric hypersexualisation of black and brown men and women from the tropical south (see Kempadoo 1999; Mohammed 2010) that is also reframed by West Indians as a mark of superior distinction to "dry" white Europeans.⁹²

Ultimately, these young Sisters' characterisations serve to epitomise *Jamaican* womanhood in contrast to *Ethiopian* womanhood. Whereas "Ethiopian" women accept their spouses' control over their behaviour and wives lose their freedom of movement since they are responsible for all 'domestic' activities, Hirut emphasises that she would never accept confinement to the home. "Ethiopian" women also (perhaps contradictorily) simply do not know how to look after their husbands or "keep their houses," which are key expectations of West Indian womanhood (Wilson 1973; Mintz 1974). Even local Ethiopian Sisters (wives of *Jamaican repatriates*), despite their long residence in the community, their Rasta faith, and their knowledge of Jamaican speech and cultural habits, still cannot care for their husbands and households as well as a 'genuine' *Jamaican* woman.

⁹² Denise Brennan notes how metaphors of heat and cold used by female sex workers in the Dominican Republic to favourably describe themselves as "caliente" (hot) and European women as "cold" (fría) at the same time perpetuate racist perceptions of Caribbean women (2004:709). Kempadoo has argued that the well-established ethnocentric trope of the exotic re-surfaces in the post-independent tourist industry in the West Indies (Kempadoo 2001; Mohammed 2009; Alexander 1997).

Sister Carolyn's comments also highlighted this view of an innate distinction between *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian* women. Immediately after telling me that she made a few "good friends" meaning people that she could "really count on," she immediately said that "they" (local *Habesha* women) in general should be "grateful" because "we taught them about basic hygiene and things like that." While acknowledging her friendships with local Ethiopian women, Sister Carolyn also phrased her reply in order to favourably distinguish herself as a *Jamaican* woman from local Ethiopian women in the *safar*. The metaphor of cleanliness serves this purpose. This is evident not only from Sister Carolyn's comments, but also Hirut's later remark (not quoted in my fieldnotes) that "Ethiopian women do not bathe everyday whereas we do." I often heard comments from young women and recent *repatriates* regarding this perceived lack of bathing and lack of hygiene when cooking. Two other middle aged Sisters who are recent *repatriates* both described to me their surprise at the poor levels of "basic hygiene" among local men and women of sporadic bathing, brushing teeth, washing clothes, and washing hands before eating and cooking and after defecating. To a certain extent, this is related to environmental factors such as the poor quality and availability of water in the nearby river, the economic inability to buy jerry cans (gericons according to pronunciation) of cleaner water in poorer households, and the lack of knowledge about the prevention of communicable diseases like cholera.

Donald Donham notes how Oromo peoples come to personify such moral distinctions which are also popularly reinforced by other Ethiopians, and hence by *Jamaican* youths raised in Shashamane. He gives the example of a well-known joke: "Galla-na shinfilla biyatbutim aytera or even if you wash them, stomach lining and a Galla [an insulting term for Oromo] will never come clean" (2002:13). I also heard a joke from

young *Jamaicans* with a similar point framing lack of cleanliness as an innate facet of Ethiopian identity: The Ethiopian Prime Minister and the American President visited each other's countries. While the American President was in Addis Ababa he was amazed at how dirty the streets were, and particularly so when he saw people defecating in public. When the Ethiopian Prime Minister visited Washington DC the streets were clean, but suddenly he saw one man defecating on the road. He could not believe this and walked up to the man and asked him where he was from. The man replied that he was from Ethiopia. Based on the history of an Amhara-constructed image of the morally inferior "Oromo" other (see chapter one), it is not surprising that these perceptions persist, and have been incorporated into *Jamaicans'* ideas of themselves in relation to categorical "Oromo" (meaning Ethiopian). For *the community*, as well, these distinctions are related to the (at times) contested Rastafari claim to *the land grant*, its current use and occupancy by *repatriates*. In Shashamane, then, normative ideas of motherhood are not only connected to the adult status of womanhood, but also the ethnic categories and the stereotypes that emerge, which young people and *repatriates* sometimes utilise to their advantage.

Fatherhood and *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian* manhood

Fatherhood is indicative of a change in status from youth to *Jamaican* manhood, which reflects a distinctly West Indian view that is present even among *repatriates'* children who were born and bred in Shashamane. Since West Indian masculinity is usually assessed by heterosexual prowess one way that a man can demonstrate his masculinity is through his sexual relations with women (Wilson 1973; Chevannes 2001). The resultant "breeding" (impregnating) of women is the visible result of a man's virility. The use of the verb "breed" reflects the gendered aspect of sexual roles

in which the successful breeding of a woman is understood as an active male role. As a teenage girl remarked after we greeted a visibly pregnant young *repatriate* who delivered her first baby only a few short months before this, “him [her husband] breed her again.” The active portrayal of this husband’s actions alongside the passivity of his wife’s womb (“him” as breeder and “her” as object of breeding) reflects the stress on virility and fathering a child that is a key aspect of masculinity.

In accordance with this notion of physical virility as a significant constituent of manhood, an elder Brother remarked that he was celibate for many years to retain his “lifeblood.” During our conversation on dietary practices and spiritual well-being, this Brother explained that sexual intercourse with a woman would result in his loss of “lifeblood” thereby debilitating him physically and spiritually. He explained that “sperm” is unique to men and an essential ingredient to his manhood as it is able to create life with a woman. Retaining it ensures that not only his body is healthy and strong, other characteristics of masculinity, but that his spirit and his mind are fit for *reasoning*. There seems to be an affinity here with the view that relations with Ethiopian women “dry” out men, but I had no further corroboration of this Brother’s view. Regardless, the belief that intercourse with a woman can either purge or debilitate a man depending on the circumstances is a widespread folk one in Jamaica (see Sobo 1993).

This facet of virility and strength is also connected to a specifically *Jamaican* manhood and is reinforced by the comments of young *Jamaican* women. Leah and Candace, for example, expressed this most clearly when they stated that “Ethiopian” men are too “soft” for them in contrast to the “Jamaican” (in this case meaning Rasta)

men who they grew up with in Shashamane and the frequent Rasta visitors there. This use of the colloquial word “soft” to generally describe “Ethiopian” men captures the implicit contrast to tougher *Jamaican* men with its sexual connotation. Sobo notes that “soft” is used as a phallic metaphor referring to an “overripe, inedible banana...“Softness” and “uselessness” connote poverty, passivity, a lack of virility, and the inability to satisfy women” (1993:214). Yet this perception of Ethiopian masculinity is nuanced. This is evident by the common role of local Ethiopian men as *zebeniyas* (watchmen) in *repatriate yards* since *watching the yard* is a male-oriented activity fulfilling the masculine role of protector. For *repatriate* males, being *Jamaican* also means being tough which can be interpreted as unruliness and a lack of manners by other peoples, as a later incident between a *Jamaican* youth and security guard will show. These qualities are juxtaposed against a categorical Ethiopian masculinity that is found lacking.

There are other sides to masculinity in the *safar* which again resonate with West Indian themes. Based on ethnographic research in urban Jamaica, Chevannes argues that although virility and physical strength are the dominant features of working class West Indian masculinity, he also found

a majority of [fathers] spending nurturing time with their children on a regular basis. But what was also instructive was the existential meaning they attached to being fathers. When asked how they would feel if they had no children, the men waxed eloquent, using metaphors like birds without wings, trees without leaves, frustration and death (2001:225).

While I did not hear fathers in Shashamane talk about their children in this manner through fathers’ actions of *minding* their children, with or without the mother’s presence, this is clearly another significant aspect of fatherhood that ought to be included in the image of a *Jamaican* father.

In Shashamane as well there is a correlation between these 'ethnic' categories and socio-economic status. The black *Jamaican* male of lighter or darker skin colour becomes associated with wealth as opposed to the real and perceived alignment of dark-skinned men with poverty in the colour-class system of the West Indies (Wilson 1973; Henriques 1953; Brathwaite 1960; MG Smith 1965).⁹³ This contrasts with the association of Oromo men who tend to be dark-skinned as well, yet associated with poverty and historical connotations of slavery in Ethiopia. This image of the *Jamaican* man is constituted in part by their foreign status and reinforced by actions such as going to Western Union to collect funds sent from abroad, as discussed in chapter two.

Yet, wealth is also aligned to foreignness in general so that *farangi* (foreigners) of any skin colour, religion or origin and not Rastafari only, are viewed as affluent. As one *Jamaican* youth noted, "Ethiopians them think that if you have money to fly from *foreign* then you must be rich." The children of *repatriates*, to a certain extent, also similarly view Rastas who live in *foreign* in this way. This is evident by their expectation that each visitor will bring material goods or that items will be mailed or sent in barrels from *foreign*. Rich therefore becomes synonymous with *Jamaican* (Rasta and foreign) and poor with Ethiopian and local.

Jamaican youths also spoke of the annual lottery held in Ethiopia that "nuff Ethiopians" enter to receive a green card (American residence permit), which would enable them to move to America and live there legally. This "diversity immigrant visa

⁹³ This appears to be a recent association since early *repatriates* were usually referred to collectively as *tukul American* (black American) and viewed as no better off than anyone else in the area.

program” or “green card lottery” as it is colloquially called in English, means that applicants who meet specified criteria are randomly selected to receive visas for the USA. This correlation between foreignness and wealth is echoed in state relations since Ethiopia is highly dependent on foreign economic and military aid and “assistance,” particularly from the United States.

Accordingly, marriage to or a sexual relationship with a Rastaman (meaning *farangi*) is generally associated with economic *betterment* for local Ethiopians since it entitles a woman to certain material, domestic and dietary benefits. The advantages around house type have been noted already, but others features of the *yard* include either indoor plumbing or water stored there or the means to buy jerry cans of water regularly. Other advantageous expectations include eating meat (beef) almost daily which is unusual for the average person of any ethnicity in Shashamane (although Orthodox Christians usually fast for two days each week) and demonstrable forms of wealth such as clothing and baby strollers (see chapter two). In most cases, however, all these benefits are not achieved at the same time or consistently so local Ethiopian spouses or *baby mothers* often undertake wage labour of the same intensity that they would if their partners were not *Jamaicans*. In this situation it becomes evident that this perception of *Jamaicans* as wealthy is an exaggerated one. In Sister Adina’s case, as well, residing with Brother John in his house in the *safar* or forming relations with other internationally-connected *Jamaicans* (Rastafari from outside Ethiopia) would not improve her economic standing since she already has access to these material benefits.

Young *Jamaican* men and women: the *yard* and ‘ethnic’ identification

Following Gebre’s high school graduation ceremony we were taking photos of the young graduate in his cap and gown with his family when, suddenly, the school security force started ushering people quite forcefully toward the gates. One guard shoved Gebre’s older brother, Jeremiah, who angrily responded in Amharic. Their father told him to calm down since this altercation was not worth getting *locked up* over as the officers were behaving ignorantly. Jeremiah then became angry with his father as well.

A few days later, when Gebre, the son of *repatriates*, returned to Shashamane I briefly talked to him about that day. He explained that both his brother and his father “embarrassed him in front of everybody” meaning his friends, their families, and his teachers. Now they will think that this is “how Jamaicans stay and that we have no manners” he summarised. When I said that Jeremiah’s confrontational response was understandable since the security guard pushed him twice as though he was “prodding cattle,” Gebre laughed and agreed. But, he clarified, Jeremiah should not have reacted so belligerently in front of all those people.

The different facets of ‘ethnicity’ and masculinity intersect in this incident. Gebre is seen and sees himself as Rasta, *Jamaican*, and *Habesha*. In this public setting his *Jamaican* siblings and Jamaican parents interact with each other and with the Ethiopian representatives of authority, the campus security, in both English and Amharic. An altercation results that from Gebre’s perspective, his Ethiopian peers will interpret as showing how impolite and aggressive *Jamaicans* are (that this is “how Jamaicans stay”). Each *Jamaican* is taken as representative of the categorical

Jamaican. This homogenisation is already obvious with the interchangeable use of “Jamaican” and “Rasta” in Shashamane. It must be emphasised though, that in a similar situation these youths may have different responses, which I will expand on in the next chapter. A similar homogenisation of “Ethiopians” by *Jamaicans* was previously discussed in relation to manhood and womanhood.

Although local Ethiopian youths sometimes refer to *Jamaican* youths as *farangi* (as *repatriates* were initially called), at other times I overheard local youths of Ethiopian-born parents refer to *Jamaican* Ethiopian-born youths as *yengna sow* (“one of us” or “our people”) in Amharic. It was only after I repeatedly heard the phrase in the town when I was in the company of young *Jamaicans* or socialising in the *safar* with mixed groups of young *Ethiopians* and *Jamaicans* speaking in Amharic, and I did not understand, that I finally asked *Jamaican* youths for the meaning of those words.

One basis for this fraternity between *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian* young men from Shashamane is the reputation for being aggressive, defensive and not easily taken advantage of. While one *Jamaican* interpretation of the same qualities is that local Ethiopians are “thieving” people, the same reputation, especially for young men, often becomes a laudatory characteristic of manhood for *Jamaicans* raised in Shashamane. As Malcolm, a *Jamaican* youth born and bred in Shashamane of *repatriate* parents, explained to me, “people them ‘fraid Shashamane youths, even in Addis them know ’bout us.” (This comment was in response to my enquiry about how local Ethiopians tend to interact with Malcolm, as a young man of foreign, Rasta parents raised in the well-known Rasta location of Shashamane). This is one point of commonality between young *Jamaican* and Ethiopian men in the *safar* and the wider Shashamane

town that enables them to build relations around an identification as “Shashamane youths” or *yenga sow* which, depending on context, also means *Habesha*. This exists simultaneously with the categorical distinction between “soft” *Ethiopians* and tough *Jamaicans*.

Other *Jamaican* youths directly discussed with me their feelings and experiences around the categories *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian*. Malcolm explained that people still call him *farangi* and outside of Shashamane, after people hear his “foreign sounding” name, they praise him for speaking Amharic fluently because they assume that he is a foreigner. The following is taken from my recording of Malcolm’s narrative,

When I was working on the bus I had braids which was uncommon for Ethiopian youths, but I spoke the language [Amharic] like a native so some people weren’t sure if I was a foreigner or Ethiopian. But I had a different kind of attitude when I communicated with people on the bus. I’m not sure how to explain it [because] it wasn’t my Amharic, it was my attitude. So then people knew that I wasn’t Ethiopian. Jamaicans are well known in Ethiopia, I learnt that working on the bus, especially through Bob’s [Marley] music and with the increase in technology so more people get exposed to outside things, like music.

...

My classmates were a mixed bunch: Gurage, Tigray, Amhara...They saw me as a foreigner. In Ethiopia people don’t look at you as Ethiopian if you were born here and if you lived here for a long time, there’s no such thing. For example when you’re getting married they look at who your parents are, your grandparents...to find out who they’re marrying into. They look at your background and if you have a foreign connection and foreign blood then you’re not Ethiopian.

Even though he is *Jamaican*, Malcolm clarified that he is confident that Ethiopia is where he wants to spend the rest of his life and he is “comfortable” in Shashamane. (When he said that he feels comfortable “here” I asked him what that meant and he said “here, in Shashamane, in Ethiopia”). Although he has never travelled outside of Ethiopia, he added, there could be other places in the world that he would prefer to live, but he doubts it. At the same time, *Jamaican* youths distinguish themselves

characteristically, as Malcolm does when he refers to his different “attitude.” This is what enabled passengers on the bus to differentiate him from an “Ethiopian” young man, notwithstanding his fluent Amharic. Importantly, as well, Malcolm himself believes that this distinctive attitude must manifest itself in some manner to be visible to strangers, and other *Jamaican* youths like Leah (who I already mentioned) and Eden (see below) likewise pointed out their “difference” from “Ethiopians.”

Malcolm’s reference to his “attitude” is not about ostensible markers of Rasta like *dreads* or clothing or even about his pronunciation of Amharic words, rather it is a way of claiming his affiliation as both *Ethiopian* and *Jamaican*. This awareness of a non-hierarchical difference is also carefully cultivated in youths by elders and parents, as noted by testing knowledge of the Bible (chapter three). In one clear example, a young uncle playfully yet seriously instructed his nephew who was six years old and listening to a CD of American rap music “we are Rasta, we nah gansta. Remember that!”

This idea of a characteristic “vibe” that *Jamaicans* have and *Ethiopians* do not have also arose in my conversations and interviews with young *Jamaican* women. Two young women, Leah and Eden, raised in the *safar* of Jamaican parents spoke to me unreservedly about their childhood in Shashamane as “Jamaicans,” as they called themselves. When I asked them about their experiences growing up in Shashamane as the children of Rasta parents, they had varied responses. As *Jamaican* children raised in Shashamane, they explained that when they were younger some children would “pick on you and others didn’t care; some were friendly and others made fun.” Leah related that she remembers how she “wanted to fit in so badly, but never seemed to be

able to” accomplish this socially. Eden said that she grew up “knowing that I was Jamaican and they were Ethiopian but this did not make me feel out of place.” Eden distinctly remembered when she initially moved to Addis Ababa for school though, because then she began “to feel weird and out of place.” Leah explained that she has “good friends” who are Ethiopian, and she “feels an attachment” to various peoples in Shashamane, from classmates to other *IandI* and local Ethiopian neighbours that she grew up with.

However, each young Sister concurred that while she can and does profess to be Ethiopian, this claim remains a socially and legally contested one. In certain situations, for example during an engagement party in Shashamane that Leah recently attended with friends, they referred to her as *farangi*. Although they attended the same schools, their families know each other, they eat the same food (*injera*) and speak the same language (Amharic), Leah remains *farangi*. As she concisely phrased it, “they never allow you to feel like you’re Ethiopian and that you’re proud of it.” In summary, the youths concluded that they feel “ambivalent” toward Ethiopia and other Ethiopians, and to their childhood home of Shashamane. Both Leah and Eden agreed that they have, to different degrees, a “bond” with the place and its people, with their cliques of close Rasta and *Habesha* neighbours and friends that they could comfortably “vibe” with, and on an abstract level with “the land” as it is the site of *the land grant*. In a phenomenological sense the land also carries meaning in the form of childhood memories (see Feld and Basso 1997).

Malcolm’s example of getting married, based on his own experiences with his local Ethiopian girlfriend’s family, also emphasises this ambivalent position of *Jamaican*

youths born and raised in Ethiopia. It is at rituals like the engagement party that Leah mentioned when chasms occur. In Malcolm's case his girlfriend's family was stringently opposed to their legal marriage, and eventually they did not marry although they already had a child together. Since their child resides with his mother's family, and hardly visits Malcolm's family's *yard* their son is called *Habesha* by local Ethiopians. Other marriages between *Jamaican* male or female youths born and/or bred in Shashamane and local Ethiopian youths, however, have not confronted similar familial opposition.

The feelings of rejection and affective attachment that mixed children feel at some level potentially differ from how their parents feel. While each *repatriate* calls him or herself Ethiopian, for the children born and bred in Shashamane and in Ethiopia this claim has a different affective basis. In Mette Berg's study of Cuban men and women who have moved to Spain in different economic and political periods, she examines "the differences in relative importance they attach to being Cuban" (2009: 271). She notes that "unlike the previous waves, the most recent migrants from Cuba tend to think of their homeland not in terms of nation or territory, but rather as affective relations of kin and friends, their mother's house, or the street they grew up in" (Berg 2009: 269). These different ways of relating to people and places of Cuba may cause "intergenerational incomprehension" yet many people "are likely to refer to the same events or historical processes as important" (Berg 2009: 273). In Shashamane this point of commonality is the grant of land from His Majesty, and the events around this donation are repeated and reiterated by members of *the community*. Yet, children's memories of home are concretely attached to specific people, places and occasions in the *safar* and in other areas of Ethiopia.

While almost every youth born and raised in Shashamane who is Rasta, like their repatriated parents, expressed no desire to leave Ethiopia, the children of recent *repatriates* may feel differently. One teenager, Joseph, whose parents are recent *repatriates* commented, “these Rastas been tricked.” He elaborated, “this is not the promised land. There’s nothing here. I’m planning to go to Miami or somewhere, the music business is big there, anywhere that I can make money.” For this youth, the ideological significance of repatriation, and his status of residing on *the land grant* are of little importance to his self-identity and future goals. This is another view of repatriation cultivated after moving to Ethiopia and living in Shashamane that more directly echoes Sister Angela’s disappointment with her failed efforts to build a life on *the land grant* (see chapter two). This young man expressed a similar disillusionment regarding the physical development, opportunities for earning a living, and social relations in Shashamane. For these youths, as well, who repatriated in their late teenage years, their memories and sentiments of home, like children born in Shashamane, are concentrated on particular peoples, places and events in their countries of origin, and not in Shashamane.

The ongoing and fluid processes of social and subjective claiming of *Ethiopian* and *Jamaican* identities by young *Jamaicans* are exemplified through their use of language. Jamaican and other West Indian speech is usually accompanied by a smattering of Amharic words in mixed and *Jamaican* households, especially when youths born on *the land grant* speak. For young people, English and patois are “inside” languages spoken at the *yard*, and Amharic is an “outside” language spoken

in public places in the *safar*, the town and in other areas of Ethiopia.⁹⁴ In certain situations this is altered. For example when *Jamaican* youths socialise in the *safar* at the shop or in a *repatriate yard* with other youths who are Amharic speakers, everyone speaks Amharic.⁹⁵ This interchangeable use of language not only shows *Jamaican* youths' familiarity and comfort with Amharic and patois, but also reflects the close spatial organisation of *Jamaican yards* and Ethiopian houses in the multi-ethnic *safar*.

Since the Amharic words that punctuate speech revolve mostly around domestic activities, the *yard* language of patois is also altered by the local language of Amharic. These words also include idiomatic expressions and spatial distinctions. Examples of commonly used words in Amharic include *dinesh* (potato), *shuncoot* (onion), *casal* (coal), and employees in the *yard* like *zebeniya* (watchman). Others are *ishi* or *ishee* (ok) and *dummo* (sentence prefix) and *safar* and *catama* (town). For instance it would sound just as familiar for me to say "me just come from catama" or "me a go to town." To a certain extent, local Ethiopians also use "safar" if they speak English, and a young man in town said to me one day, "I see you in Jamaica Safar, where do you live? I live in safar too." Not only did I use these words while speaking in English and patois, but I also noticed that recent *repatriates* tended to do the same. This also shows how quickly these patterns are incorporated into the speech of recent *repatriates* (and temporary residents like myself) and are continuously reproduced.

⁹⁴ Children do make a distinction themselves between English and patois. For example they say that they learn English at school and patois at the *yard*.

⁹⁵ These local Ethiopian youths might also speak other languages in their homes, for example if their parents are native Oromoiffa speakers they may speak Oromoiffa at home and Amharic outside the home.

In this chapter I have shown that typical working-class West Indian patterns of conjugal relations and household composition are reproduced inter-generationally in Shashamane among *repatriates* and their mixed children in the *Jamaican* space of the *yard* and the multi-ethnic *safar*. These are related to the main categories of *Jamaican* and *Ethiopian* which are polysemic terms with varied referents in Shashamane that are defined partly as a result of the location of the *yard*. For the generation born on *the land grant*, these two categories are constantly shaped and mobilised according to context. This determines not only the social identification of children, but also impacts on their self-identification and cultural practices. These categories create a matrix of identifiers with gender, adulthood, sexuality, and wealth that function as hyperbolic as well as normative contrasts that *Jamaican* youths both re-affirm and re-shape.

Chapter 5

Ethiopian-ness and citizenship

“I am Ethiopian just like my neighbour who was born and grew here” Brother David remarked as we sat in his *yard* on *the land grant*. Brother David, a Jamaican-born *repatriate* who had lived in Shashamane for most of his adult life, proceeded to relate his spiritual and physical journey to Rastafari and to Shashamane. Brother David’s self-designation of himself as Ethiopian, and as Ethiopian as his locally born neighbour, both of whom raised their children in the *safar*, is unaffected by his foreign birth or move to Ethiopia. Yet these two factors legally position him as a “foreign national” in Ethiopia (see Constitution 1995). Brother David’s refusal to distinguish between himself and his neighbour reiterates the Rastafari re-imagining of himself as an individual African (Ethiopian) man, as a Rastafarian, and as a human being fashioned in the image of the Ethiopian Creator that I outlined in chapter one.⁹⁶

Brother David’s calm and resolute claiming of Ethiopia prompts an exploration of how these ideas are constituted in relation to the paramount concerns around legality and land shared by permanent *repatriates* and their children in Shashamane. Although early, recent and seasonal *repatriates* have different legal positions in Ethiopia, this is a general concern since *repatriates*’ legal status as foreign nationals is a formidable obstacle to ‘ownership’ of land which impacts on their possibilities for *betterment*. (As previously noted, land in Ethiopia is owned by the federal government and

⁹⁶ *Repatriates* and youths frequently use the terms “image” and “likeness” in daily speech with each other and with Rasta and non-Rasta visitors quoting Biblical verses about creation. Genesis 1:26-27 reads, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Holy Bible).

thereby leased. It is the structure on the land, whether a house or a shop, that is owned by persons). At present, land in Shashamane is ‘owned’ by specific families, which is a tenuous kind of ownership that is striking when compared to the staunch Rastafari assertion of the inalienability of the land (see chapter one).

The main concerns that *repatriates* and Ethiopian-born youths expressed to me⁹⁷ were acquiring *papers*, meaning title deeds to family houses, gaining legal citizenship or residency in order to be eligible for an Ethiopian passport, and to a lesser extent the return of land that was initially granted. Many long-resident *repatriates* focused more on the first since these family houses are envisioned as a physical legacy. Some *repatriates* built these houses and they hope to remain there until death when the houses will be inherited by their children. The adult children of *repatriates* highlighted their lack of residency rights or citizenship since these are potential barriers to legally earning a good living to support their own families (children, spouses, younger siblings) and eventually their parents in old age. They also spoke of their hope that their parents’ would eventually receive *papers* for each family yard. These discussions of belonging in terms of citizenship thus revolved around the legal and accompanying socio-economic concerns felt by *repatriates* and their children, but these issues cannot be reduced solely to questions of legality, as Brother David’s steadfast adherence to his Ethiopian-ness demonstrates.

In this chapter I will examine how *repatriates* and their families claim the varied people and places of Ethiopia as their own (the equivalent sentiments to *anta innay* and *yenga sow* in Amharic noted in chapter one and chapter four) in the varied legal

⁹⁷ As a well-educated though ‘unconnected’ and unemployed student who could still potentially “assist.”

and social contexts of the *safar*, Shashamane town, and the Ethiopian state. I will focus on everyday interactions and specific events between *Jamaicans* and persons in differing positions of power and authority in local and state institutions. This will further nuance the complex conceptual framework of Rastafari worldview and personhood and its expression among the inhabitants of *the land grant* that I outlined in chapter one.

The idea of belonging, which is certainly foundational to citizenship, is nonetheless constituted differently by *repatriates* and by youths born and raised in Ethiopia. At the same time, *repatriates* and their children share a common legal position as de jure illegal residents which impacts on their attempts to live well and to live equitably in the *promised land* and according to their goals. As one long-resident Brother who repatriated from Jamaica and whose children were born and bred in Shashamane explained, since he is neither a legal resident nor a citizen of Ethiopia he is unable to apply for a business loan from any bank or financial institution to expand his small business. Since this business is also located on the *front page*, if he is unable to expand the structure in accordance with government regulations he will presumably have to forfeit the land on which it stands. (I will discuss the top down development plans for Shashamane later in the chapter).⁹⁸

The issue of (il)legality for *repatriates* and locally-born children emerged in various situations. One instance was the delayed university placements for “Jamaican” high school graduates compared to the timely assignments of “Ethiopian” classmates. It also came via the comments among *repatriates* of many ages regarding the recurrent

⁹⁸ The *front page* refers only to the strip of land facing the old road and the new road that is visible from the road, as noted in the introduction.

demand of “immigration” for the names of foreigners residing in Shashamane. In this case *repatriates* were referring to the well-known requests made by the Immigration Office in Awassa, the neighbouring town in Oromiyya Region, to the JRDC. These diverse yet related situations are merely two examples of common predicaments that *repatriates* and youths deal with as a consequence of their illegal residence in Ethiopia.

The patent and sustained concern regarding legal citizenship coalesced for me when a long-resident Brother suddenly stopped me on the road in the *safar* in the searing midday sun. Instead of exchanging our usual greetings he spontaneously launched into an invective about the need for proper and effective diplomatic representation for “the community.” I found this outburst surprising and assumed that Brother Peter must have recently had an incident or discussion about legality with an official or a lay person. He expounded, “we Rasta people need some kind of legal or diplomatic representation to get papers for the land,” referring to the *yards* that *repatriates* and their families currently live on where “the pickney them a grow so them could become legal.”⁹⁹ This would ensure that *repatriates* and youths have some measure of “protection,” Brother Peter continued. In this way the children of *repatriates*, especially those “who don’t know babylon” in his words (here referring to Jamaica and the west) would be able to inherit the houses that they grew up in, and continue to live on *the land grant* without the ever-present possibility of eviction or imprisonment (as I will explain).

⁹⁹ In pursuance of this goal *repatriates* and youths tend to take a favourable attitude toward the African Union as opposed to local and federal institutions of the Ethiopia (see conclusion).

In this moment Brother Peter spoke as a father who had achieved his goal of repatriating to Ethiopia but who, like other parents, wanted to ensure that posthumously his children would be materially and spiritually better off than himself. Not only would he like to see a continued Rasta presence on *the land grant*, but also create a legacy on the land for his children and collectively for the children of all *repatriates*. These goals hinge on gaining legal residency or citizenship in the state of Ethiopia or at least documentation of land ‘ownership,’ such as a title deed.

In this context, then, Micheline Crichlow’s concept of citizenness can be useful in bridging the gap between what is ideologically true for *IandI* compared to the legal reality. “Citizenness refers to the struggle for humanity, dignity, economic survival, a place in and through the world economy, in short, all the interrelated processes that implicate the “flight to modernity,” a rehomings of place, and the development of a creole identity... within and across power relations” (2009:77-78). One component of “citizenness” in other words includes “the right to have rights,” to use Arendt’s well-known phrase, and “to be recognized as full persons...and hence as full citizens” (Kabeer 2005:4) in political terminology. Citizenness therefore encompasses a range of criteria for the formation of political rights, civic participation, and conceptual belonging to the nation - a nation composed of members in a shared, (un)equally constituted ‘community.’ Yet for *repatriates* and their Ethiopian-born children, becoming a citizen incorporates more than these criteria, from the conceptual belonging to the nation (of Ethiopia) to claims to belong to local places as well as the expectation of social (and at times legal) acceptance even while Rastafari maintain their difference as *Jamaicans*.

I will therefore focus on *repatriates*' everyday attempts to enact "citizenness" which occur as part of a sustained *repatriate* commitment to remain in *Itiopia* (Ethiopia-Africa) and, how in their actions toward this goal, Rastafari adhere to a defining yet flexibly enacted personhood. Brother David's claim to Ethiopian-ness already provides a starting point for examining a mode of "citizenness" that is not based on his birth or continuous residence in Ethiopia, which are modern criteria for citizenship. Although all repatriated Brothers and Sisters may not need or wish legal and social recognition of themselves as Ethiopians, for children born on *the land grant* who contextually define themselves as *Ethiopian*, *Jamaican*, and *Rasta* gaining this recognition is often important, for various reasons. For these Ethiopian-born youths there is a profound emotional connection to Shashamane and often an accompanying resentment that they are not socially or legally acknowledged as Ethiopian, and hence unequivocally recognised as such (see chapter four). A brief review of concepts around citizenship is therefore relevant before I delve into ethnographic examples of "citizenness" in Shashamane.

Citizenship as concept

As researchers have thoroughly discussed, citizenship entails substantially more than the issuing and carrying of identification documents recognised by international authorities (Ong 1999; Fox 2005; Kabeer 2005). The citizen is not only a member of the state but also a nation, which are construed as coterminous (see Anderson 1983). Naila Kabeer adds, "although the idea of citizenship is nearly universal today, what it means and how it is experienced are not. Nor have they ever been...the history of citizenship in both North and South has been a history of struggle over how it is to be defined and who it is to include" (2005:1). At the core of citizenship, then, are

conceptual and legal parameters of inclusion and exclusion to politically defined territories. *Repatriates*, and more generally Rastafari, question the conceptual foundation of these boundaries of place through their worldview and their everyday actions, as I have discussed in previous chapters. Yet, legal citizenship (or the lack thereof) remains a burdensome concern for long-standing *repatriates*, their mixed and locally-born children and the adult children of recent *repatriates*.

Analyses of citizenship have often been framed in terms of its ethical basis whereby arguments focus on national, legal and subjective distinctions between “good” and “bad” citizens. These divisions are continuously enforced by state institutions alongside what are framed as the corresponding rights and duties of citizens that is, ideal citizens. Migrants, those with the potential to be molded into ideal citizens and members of the nation, are also positioned within these discourses. Aihwa Ong (2003) notes in her discussion of Cambodian refugees in the United States that as “refugees” they are portrayed as troublesome, helpless and chaotic in contrast to their ideal Asian counterparts of skilled migrants from the ‘emerging economy’ of China. As women (signifying meek and exploited) they are likewise juxtaposed against their American (signifying white, outspoken and independent) counterparts following the myth of a bold, independent American national subject. Mary Waters (1999) has examined how these images can also be advantageous to migrants themselves. She notes how first generation West Indian immigrants can benefit, in comparison to African Americans, from a stereotype that they are well-educated, but that their American-born children tend to subsequently lose this advantage.

Citizenship therefore entails membership in a political, civic, social, and moral “community,” fellow citizens’ recognition (or denial) of this membership, and the corresponding legal and civic rights. Studies that continue to measure the ideals of citizenship against these legal forms and ethical bases often fail to account for alternative conceptualisations of membership which also entail the recognition of “equality (sameness) and equity (difference)” (Kabeer 2005: 10) that Brother David takes to be self-evident.

Recently, though, “scholars have moved inevitably beyond a narrow focus on citizenship as a set of legal rights - either you have it or you don’t - to a consideration of group membership that includes a variety of citizens and noncitizens” (Ong 2003:2). Ong’s ethnography of elite Chinese entrepreneurs similarly demonstrates how citizenship is conceived and enacted beyond its strictly legal parameters through “flexible citizenship” (1999). Interrogating “human practices and cultural logics,” she considers the impact of class and its convergence with migrations in the current period of intensified technological change (Ong 1999:4). Ong examines how obligations to and concern for relatives as well as individual and familial goals for increased capital, social capital, and power (which in turn ensure greater flexibility in decision making) are examples of “personal costs” and “imaginings” involved in citizenship. This argument contributes to a cultural understanding of citizenship that moves beyond the legal definition of membership in a geographically bounded community.

While Rastafari *repatriates* cannot similarly be referred to as “diasporic jetsetters” (Ong 1999), one aim of this chapter is to examine expressions of flexible citizenship in this cultural context through the efforts of Rastafari to work toward varying degrees

of “citenness.” When *repatriates* and their locally-born Rastafari children “rehome” Ethiopia, Shashamane and the *safar* this takes place alongside encounters that become confrontational in terms of the legality of claims to civic status, and the consequences of this for the legal implementation of citizenship. Jonathan Fox points to Bruno Frey’s (2003) “dramatically different approach to “flexible citizenship” ” in which Frey develops “the concept of “organizational and marginal” citizenship, in an effort to account for multiple and partial kinds of rights and obligation-based participation in a wide range of formal institutions” (Fox 2005:190). In this chapter though, I will also examine the affective side to this kind of citizenship and the struggle for citenness in Shashamane.

Legal citizenship: implications for residence and *betterment*

In an interview with Sister Anna who fully repatriated to Shashamane three years ago after “visiting” regularly over ten years, I enquired into her citizenship and residency status in Ethiopia and in *foreign*. She replied, “I’m an American citizen...but I’m still a citizen of Jamaica because my country gives dual citizenship. In Africa I’m from Jamaica. When trouble hits I’m an American” she responded with a slight laugh. Sister Anna explained that her business permit in Ethiopia entitles her to a conditionally-issued annual residence permit. Provided that officials at the Investment Bureau in Addis Ababa are satisfied with the revenue of her business, their counterparts at Immigration will renew her residence permit “without a hassle,” she continued. Thus far, she has not had any problems with this process because the government is trying to encourage “foreign investment,” she clarified. However, for *IandI* who are economically unable to demonstrate access to approximately

US\$200,000 start-up capital for a business, there is no alternative route to attaining legal residency.

Sister Anna's concise, clearly articulated responses above (and in chapter two) capture her practical approach to living in Ethiopia. This strategy combines her desire and determination to make a life for herself in Shashamane, and to "build up" the community as well as addressing her concerns about safety since she is highly cognisant of the Ethiopian political milieu. The decision to retain her American citizenship ensures that she can move relatively unrestrictedly between Ethiopia and the United States, where she lived for most of her adult life, and to Jamaica and Britain where her mother and other relatives reside. She uses citizenship in the 'developed' wealthy state of the USA to circumvent restrictions on the movement of citizens and foreigners across borders. This enables her to travel frequently across the global north and south. Sister Anna's legal citizenship additionally provides some measure of reassurance if there is an unfortunate escalation of internal conflict. Although she has arrived in the promised land of Ethiopia and on *the land grant* in Shashamane, she is nonetheless aware of the potential for clashes amongst armed groups in Ethiopia with the current government, elected for a fourth term in 2010.¹⁰⁰

Researchers have emphasised that national subjects may use state issued identification documents or other state devices of surveillance in ways that challenge their purpose of inscription. The passport itself, widely associated with statehood after the post-World War II reshuffling of territory, has become one of the most effective methods of controlling peoples' "means of movement" and a method of surveillance (Torpey

¹⁰⁰ National elections were held in 1995, 2000, 2005 and then 2010. In 1992 local and regional elections were held following the ruling EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) overthrow of the *Derg* government in 1991.

2000). Torpey argues that “states’ monopolization of the right to authorize and regulate movement has been intrinsic to the very construction of states” (2000:6). Neofotistos expands on this point based on her work with young “ethnic Macedonians” who applied for Bulgarian citizenship after Bulgaria’s inclusion in the European Union. She suggests,

by issuing ID papers...the state determines citizen-subjects whose activities and whereabouts it can then trace and observe closely...[but] the case of Macedonia helps us to understand the ways in which social actors use forms of personal documentation to challenge the state’s production of determined identities and its grip on citizens’ daily lives (2009:19).

Sister Anna, who is not a citizen of Ethiopia, and is a contested Ethiopian national subject, uses the codified icons of belonging (her Jamaican and American passports and her conditionally-issued Ethiopian residence) to navigate her way through her obligations, responsibilities, and goals. These include building a business in Shashamane with the long term goal of bettering herself and *the community* while actively maintaining relations with relatives and other *IandI* outside Ethiopia. The new residence types of seasonal repatriation and post-repatriation migration that *repatriates* engage in are examples of similar strategies to use their citizenship advantageously (see chapter two). In this way Sister Anna, who lives in the state of Ethiopia, and views herself as both Ethiopian (African) and as a West Indian Rastawoman, persistently carves out a life for herself and her family in Shashamane.

Almost all *repatriates* retain their initial citizenship while living in Ethiopia, either because they wish to or out of necessity. *Repatriates* who moved during the second period of organised repatriation in the 1970s also explained that they wanted their children to inherit their citizenship. This was meant to avoid mandatory drafting of

adult males into the military following the 1974 revolution. Some parents applied for national passports from their countries of citizenship, like Jamaica, for both sons and daughters whereas other parents simply never applied. Although these passports are now expired, parents still maintain the wish that children, especially sons, will retain citizenship in their parents' countries rather than apply for Ethiopian citizenship. Since Ethiopia is "usually at war" either internally or outside its borders there is a solid likelihood of drafting.¹⁰¹ Holding citizenship in foreign countries other than Ethiopia also enables *repatriates* to maintain their distinctiveness as *Jamaicans* and assert the same for their children.

This connection to each *repatriate's* childhood country in the Caribbean is not denied by *repatriates* themselves who recognise philosophically that the homeland could only be identified in exile, and who still have their individual memories of and relations with relatives and other *IandI* there. There are *repatriates* who would like to become citizens of Ethiopia though, but the few who applied were unsuccessful. I did, however, meet one long-resident *repatriate* in Shashamane who successfully applied during the Derg government when he was a farmer. A recently repatriated Sister also explained that to apply for citizenship at present an applicant is required to show proof of employment, a minimum amount of funds, knowledge of Amharic, and possibly knowledge of national history. Even though she had proof that she met these requirements she was unable to speak Amharic at the required level, and therefore did not apply. Nonetheless, actually getting to the point of sitting in a room with an

¹⁰¹ It must be noted that for most, if not all Rastafari, patriotism (allegiance to the state) as with any *babylonian* authority or institution - evidenced through services rendered to the state like army service to ensure the well-being and maintenance of the existence of the state - is not a laudatory quality. As a result, acquiring citizenship is not a matter of accessing the sphere of civic participation to vote in local or national elections, for instance. The government and state institutions, including the defense force, are viewed as part of *the system*.

official and being tested is an obstacle to applying for citizenship. This was most clearly evident in the stories of *Jamaican* youths who were born in Shashamane.

The generation born on *the land grant*: legal and subjective faces of citizenship

The few children of *repatriates* who do hold passports therefore have their foreign parent's citizenship. Most children though, do not have passports and have consequently never travelled outside Ethiopia. As John Torpey states, "the right to a passport from one's own government is virtually synonymous with the right to travel abroad" (2000:161). The Jamaican state's policy of "citizenship via certification" allows persons born of Jamaican parents or grandparents to apply for citizenship without currently residing or previously having resided in the country. The Consulate of Jamaica in Addis Ababa is authorised by the Jamaican government to address new passport applications or renewals which may need to be sent directly to Kingston, Jamaica for processing.¹⁰² *Repatriates* may choose to initiate this process directly through the Passport, Citizenship and Immigration Agency of the Ministry of National Security in Jamaica instead of applying through the Honorary Consul in Addis Ababa.

These foreign passports must be held in conjunction with forms of local identification which are generally quite accessible. Each *repatriate* and youth who I met held an identification card from the *kebele* and a handful of youths had current Ethiopian driver's licenses.¹⁰³ Without such nationally issued identification, the result of the

¹⁰² This was formerly an Embassy of Jamaica that was opened circa 1969-1970. In 1992 it was downgraded to a Consulate headed by a local Ethiopian male Honorary Consul. There are no other diplomatic missions of Anglophone Caribbean countries in Addis Ababa, although there are missions in neighbouring East African countries and Cuba maintains an embassy in Addis Ababa.

¹⁰³ After a person turns 18 then he or she is supposed to apply for residence from the government separately instead of as a "dependent" of a parent. However, parents with investment licenses can claim children over 18 as dependents so their children will also be extended the right to residence in Ethiopia. Recent *repatriates* with investment licenses do this.

state requirement for each person to be documented, *repatriates* and their children would be unable to complete mundane activities like connecting electricity and water services to a house as well as actions that lead to *betterment* such as enrolling in school and registering for national examinations. As Torpey summarises,

in order to monopolize the legitimate means of movement, states and the state system have been compelled to define who belongs and who does not, who may come and go and who not, and to make these distinctions intelligible and enforceable. Documents such as passports and identity cards have been critical to achieving these objectives. Beyond simply enunciating definitions and categories concerning identity, states must *implement* these distinctions, and they require documents in order to do so in individual cases (2000:13).

On a practical level, then, the possession of an Ethiopian passport enables an individual to access jobs or opportunities that lead to betterment which are reserved for or more accessible to Ethiopian citizens. By acquiring foreign citizenship youths become ineligible for jobs in the public sector for example, in government administration or in international organisations such as United Nations agencies that reserve certain administrative and service posts for nationals, in this case Ethiopian citizens. I knew only of one youth born in Shashamane of *repatriate* parents who worked for a government-owned business. Well aware of these limitations, some youths whose parents are legally foreign nationals have attempted to apply for Ethiopian citizenship. They described to me their thwarted experiences when officials at the Office of Immigration “turned them away” refusing to give them the application form. These youths were deemed ineligible to apply for Ethiopian citizenship and most never reached the application stage.

According to officials at the Main Department of Immigration and Nationality Affairs in Addis Ababa only peoples who can be categorised as Ethiopian “by origin” or “by

marriage” can apply for citizenship. “By origin” entails having an ancestor who was born in the territory of Ethiopia, and this biological connection must be proved with a legal document, such as a birth certificate. “By marriage” means that the applicant’s legal spouse must be an Ethiopian citizen, and this must be demonstrated with a legal marriage certificate (pers comm.). This information is contrary to the Constitution though, and Article 6 “Nationality” in its English translation reads: “1. Any person of either sex shall be an Ethiopian national where both or either parent is Ethiopian. 2. Foreign nationals may acquire Ethiopian nationality” (1995:78). A subsequent article, however, states that this must be accomplished by adhering to the law which regulates these provisions. (My later searches and consultation regarding the possible implications of this law proved fruitless).

For Rastafari the office of immigration therefore becomes symbolic of the archetypal oppressing system, *babylon*, or “them at Immigration.” The word “immigration” becomes imbued with resonances of intimidation felt by *IandI* and their resulting derision when they must continuously present themselves at the immigration office or to “face the courts.” The latter occurs when *repatriates* are legally required at the federal level to explain their reasons for lapsing on the annual renewal of the residence permit for themselves or their dependents and when Rastafari visitors to Shashamane overstay their tourist visas.

The presence of Immigration is pervasive; it seeps through stories told and re-told, despite the fact that many *repatriates* and youths do not physically travel to the immigration offices in Addis Ababa or Awassa or travel outside Ethiopia. As a foreigner living in Ethiopia for one year I also had the experience of presenting

myself at Immigration. When my tourist visa was about to expire during my residence in Shashamane *repatriates* and youths encouraged me to apply for a new one rather than allowing it to lapse, as they did, to avoid the possibility of being fined or imprisoned for staying in the country illegally. Illegality is a status that *IandI* are constantly aware of and that must be confronted in terms of its varied economic and psychological implications. These include the direct consequences of imprisonment, fining, and deportation¹⁰⁴ and the more pervasive consequences related to *bettering* oneself.

Since the condition of illegality affects different kinds of everyday situations, its impacts are registered in almost every aspect of peoples' lives. It not only impedes the opportunities for acquiring work in the formal economy, but also has the potential to curtail or hinder other prospects toward *betterment*, as evidenced in the following example regarding education. This is an edited paragraph from my fieldnotes when high school students and their families heard through word of mouth that examination results and government-assigned university placements were released:

Mariah and Thomas went to school to find out their university assignments, but when they came back in the afternoon Mariah said that their names were not on the list. She thinks the computer did not register their names since they are not Ethiopian names because none of their Jamaican friends' names were on the list either. Trisha also told me the same thing, that "none of the Jamaicans" showed up on the list.

I was struck by how blasé these young people were when they appeared at the *yard* without their highly anticipated university assignments. Knowing that their local Ethiopian friends had received this information, I was concerned and even asked one

¹⁰⁴ No one who I knew was deported since the Ethiopian government would have to pay the cost of deportation. Persons found guilty in court of overstaying visas are usually fined and/or imprisoned in Ethiopia. Then they must pay for their own flight from Ethiopia.

Brother who had similar experiences with his older children if they should immediately travel to the Ministry of Education in Addis Ababa the following day, a weekday, with an adult to enquire about their results. He calmly replied that this would be unnecessary since this sort of uncertainty is frequent and, eventually between the school and the government office, this problem would be solved. These kinds of situation often arise with “Jamaican youths,” but it will work out since the students were registered for the exam and the school has proof of this, he reassured me.

Over the next three days, with what I viewed as immense composure, these high school graduates and their parents persistently called the principal of their private high school as well as the Ministry of Education and, speaking interchangeably in Amharic and English with registration cards at hand, received a favourable result. The youths were allocated university places in specific departments that would enable them to study toward a Bachelor’s degree, without paying tuition. Although this situation was resolved to their advantage, there was the potential to hinder their access to government-subsidised tertiary education that would be difficult, though not impossible, to otherwise access with their families’ finances.

Holding an Ethiopian passport alone or in conjunction with a foreign passport for the children who were born and bred in Shashamane though, is not simply a practical means leading toward *betterment*. The passport symbolises, to a certain extent, the holder’s legitimacy within the Ethiopian nation since “the notion of national communities must be codified in documents rather than merely “imagined” as Torpey emphasises with reference to Benedict Anderson’s notion of “imagined communities”

(Torpey 2000:6). Carrying a passport with the words Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia embossed on the cover in English and Amharic has great emotional significance for many, not all, Ethiopian-born children of *repatriates*. As noted in chapter four, this affective meaning is not present in the same form for *repatriates* since their childhood memories are located in the West Indies. In contrast, as indicated in chapter one, their children's memories are situated in particular sites in the *safar*, Shashamane town, and other locations in Ethiopia that become conflated with Ethiopian nationality in the object of the passport.

Yet children and their *repatriate* parents are aware of the different attitudes that each of the ruling bodies in Ethiopia had and have toward the *repatriate* population. Nonetheless, *Jamaicans'* overwhelming perception of the attitude of the federal government toward *repatriates* is that it is a kind of complacent neglect. This has obviously changed since the time of His Majesty and the donation of land. His Majesty's rule is viewed partly as a utopian period or at least an "easier" time because *repatriates* were confident that they would be well-treated by neighbours since they were "invited" to Shashamane, as Brother Nelson reminded me (in chapter one).¹⁰⁵ Long-term residents who repatriated in the 1970s during *Derg* governance tend to describe government policies regarding land distribution and land use as simultaneously harsh, necessary, and fair. These policies were intended to ensure a stable food source for the country and equitable land distribution for its peoples. As one long-resident Brother bluntly phrased it, the principle behind the policies was meant to ensure was that "every man [farmer] who grew food for the country [for the elites and for export] had food to eat too." This *repatriate* attitude to the *Derg*

¹⁰⁵ As Brother Nelson said, "we were invited here, we are not refugees."

contradicts the image propagated by the current Ethiopian government of Derg rule as only tyrannical since it was guided by communist policies.¹⁰⁶ There is an implied affinity in this *repatriate* view between the communalism that has tended to guide Rastafari worldview with the politics of the Derg period, even if the resulting redistribution of land hindered Rastafari aims regarding *the land grant*.

The succeeding and current government, headed by Meles Zenawi, and supported mainly by the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) is predominantly seen and discussed among *repatriates* and Ethiopian-born children with both contempt and ridicule as well as hope. This attitude stems from a distinctly Rastafari perspective on *politricks* but it is also specific to the *repatriate* context. The Rastafari population in Ethiopia and particularly in Shashamane is gradually becoming a tourist attraction. This is apparent from the description of Rastafari *repatriates* in the Lonely Planet guide to Ethiopia and Eritrea (year of publication unknown) that I only become aware of in 2009 when I was sitting in the JRDC office one day. Four or five white European tourists walked into the office and introduced themselves. They explained that they had decided to stay in town for the night en route to the south, and had walked from Shashamane town proper in search of the Black Lion Museum (an EWF initiative run by a long-resident Brother) described in this guidebook. Surprised at this inclusion of a numerically minute people, I asked to see their guidebook, read its deprecating description of Shashamane town and its Rastafari inhabitants, and passed it to the secretary since she was also unaware of the reference. Evidently, these

¹⁰⁶ The website of the Embassy of Ethiopia in London under the section "Constitution" reads: "In May 1991, the military Derg regime was overthrown. After seventeen years of civil war, the people of Ethiopia saw the dawn of a new era; Ethiopians for the first time in history were members of one community with the same destiny" (<http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk>).

tourists had decided to overnight in Shashamane intrigued by the possibility of interacting with Rastafarians in Ethiopia.

Tourists such as these therefore spend money in Shashamane supporting local businesses, a few of which may be Rasta owned, and thereby provide income for *repatriates* (as discussed in chapter two). In this practical way, the mere presence of Rastafari *repatriates* bolsters the local economy to a small extent, and also raises international popular knowledge of the diverse locations of Rastafari outside of Jamaica.¹⁰⁷ Well aware of this, one elder Brother, while *reasoning* with other *IandI* around the time of the Ethiopian New Year, noted that during a television address a few years ago “Meles [Zenawi] thanked Rasta people for making the colours of the Ethiopian flag known worldwide” since Rastas adopted the colours red, gold, and green to signify *the promised land* of Africa (Ethiopia).¹⁰⁸

As a result of ambivalent relations with state officials though, *repatriates* and youths constantly use the Prime Minister’s first name, Meles, in a disparaging manner, as the Brother’s comment above exemplifies.¹⁰⁹ Regardless of the accuracy of the Brother’s statement, remarks such as these serve to downgrade Prime Minister Meles Zenawi from the head of state to the common man.¹¹⁰ The government and Zenawi, as the

¹⁰⁷ The multitude of video clips on youtube and blogs about “the Rastafarians” in Shashamane also attests to this and further increases tourist interest in the population. A few of these clips are made by Rastafari youths in Shashamane of at least one *repatriate* parent, and not only by outsiders.

¹⁰⁸ The flag of Ethiopia is green, yellow and red from the top with a light blue circle in the middle around a white outlined Star of David.

¹⁰⁹ Although it is an Ethiopian custom to address people respectfully by their first name and title, for example *Ato* Meles (Mr. Meles) for Prime Minister Zenawi, *repatriates*, however, call him “Meles” without the title *Ato*.

¹¹⁰ This tactic is similar to the constant use by Euro-American media of particular leaders’ first names such as “Fidel” for Commandante Fidel Castro, the President of Cuba, and “Saddam” for former Iraqi Prime Minister Saddam Hussein as a psychological manoeuvre to manipulate popular opinions of such leaders. These leaders are designated as “enemies” of the state, and moral opponents of what are

head of state, are therefore viewed as exploitative and hypocritical to a certain degree, in as much as they publicly emphasise the attributes and existence of the Rastafari *repatriate* population, while daily belittling and harassing its peoples. While Ethiopia continues to retain its principle place within Rastafari worldview as home and homeland, then, its state organs like immigration and the police become representative of a system that also “keeps *IandI* down.” Nonetheless, it is also the federal government that has the authority to extend citizenship and/or residency to *repatriates* and their children, as the Derg did in the 1970s. *Repatriates* and youths are thus cognisant of the need to engage with *babylonian* institutions.

Local development and planning: land use and ‘ownership’

One clear example of this ambivalent relation is the government’s plans for the development of Shashamane town and the local initiatives for Oromiyya Region, where Shashamane is located. These plans, especially the “building up of the front page,” include encouraging foreign and local investment. This forms part of a wider project of attracting foreign investment to Ethiopia, and the Embassy in London identifies the following areas for investment in Ethiopia: agriculture, food crops, beverage crops (like coffee), cotton, horticulture, livestock, fishery, agricultural services, manufacturing, mining, tourism and infrastructure. In Shashamane these plans have been implemented in the areas of telecommunications and agriculture. New fiber optic cables for wireless internet were recently installed by a Chinese firm and it is well-known that there are hundreds of acres of land available for lease in the nearby areas of Bale Goba and Wondo Genet for large-scale agricultural investment. Resulting from these changes are alterations to the architecture that transform the

presented as distinctly ‘western values’ of “democracy” and “freedom” embodied in certain western heads of state in contrast to ‘the rest’ (see Herman and Chomsky 1997).

landscape of Shashamane. For example, all residential and commercial buildings on *the front page* must now be at least two stories high. Sister Anna told me that the building plans for her business had to show that it would be at least two stories in order to get planning permission when she started four years ago. These plans affect all inhabitants of Shashamane, and not only *Iandl*.

These top-down changes in Shashamane town have impacted on how people make a living, their ability to hold onto land, and the location and size of each *yard*. In a direct example of these impacts, while I lived in Shashamane, *kebele* officials came around to each *yard* on the front page explaining that this new regulation had to be followed or the land would be forcibly taken without compensation to owners. In response to the potential threat of losing the land on which he built his simple *chika* (mud) home for himself and his family, Brother Peter told me that he would prefer someone to purchase his house since it is on *the front page* and he cannot afford to extend the structure vertically. He would rather receive money by selling that would enable him to rebuild somewhere else in the *safar*, than have the government confiscate his land without compensation.

Six months after I left Shashamane, I learnt from *repatriates* that officials from the *kebele* made another announcement. This time it was about the construction of a new road that would cut through six adjoining plots of land so that each fence would need to be “licked down.” In the face of potentially losing the land on which their family houses sit, these families complied. Most *repatriate* houses are included in the Shashamane “master plan” which provides a measure of security. “Master plan” is the local term in English for the city plan that denotes agricultural, residential and

commercial areas of Shashamane. This suggests that, on some level, *repatriate* ‘ownership’ of their houses is acknowledged by each *kebele*. Despite this, in *Kebele* 01 their concrete and barbed wire fences were demolished and rebuilt in accordance with changing local government specifications.

Repatriates of varying ages also espouse “development” that both overlaps and diverges from the government rhetoric. When *repatriates* speak of development this may refer to the physical improvement of infrastructure like roads and commercial buildings, their businesses and houses as well as opportunities specifically in *the community* such as improving and expanding the JRDC school. Often the last takes precedence in light of the long-term goal for maintaining a Rastafari presence on *the land grant* and providing young people with a solid educational foundation.

“Community development,” as *repatriates* phrased it, usually takes the form of donations sent from individuals and persons to the JRDC, the School, and each Mansion in Shashamane. In terms of Houses, the TTI Houses around the world generally send funds to the Mansion in Shashamane whereas the Nyahbinghi and Boboshanti Houses receive funds less frequently. When I asked about two unfinished concrete buildings close to the JRDC school that were walled, gated and locked, *repatriates* said they were TTI-subsidised projects that were currently inactive. One building was supposed to be a communal health centre and the other a guesthouse, but construction had to be suspended because funds stopped coming from TTI Houses worldwide for the projects. Fundraising for the JRDC School to cover teachers’ salaries, operational expenses and school supplies seems to take place mainly in the United States along with the efforts of the locally-based JRDC school board in

Shashamane. Community activities to raise funds have also taken place in the form of major celebrations such as July 23rd, and JRDC clothing sales (one of which was mentioned in chapter two).

The potential implications of government initiatives also emerged clearly in a meeting that the new *kebele* chairman convened especially for *Jamaicans* who are not citizens of Ethiopia and who live in *Kebele zero-and*¹¹¹ (District One) that I attended with long-resident and recent *repatriates*. This meeting was inundated with codes regarding relations and attitudes between *repatriates* and local authorities. The following is an edited selection from my fieldnotes:

There was an introductory meeting between “Jamaicans” and the new chairman of the 01 *kebele* who grew up in the *safar* and is well known to Rasta people...Since his English does not seem to be very good the meeting was in Amharic with Brother James translating. There were five *kebele* officials there, including the new chair. He seemed quite sympathetic to Rasta people, and he emphasised the importance of filing official papers with the *kebele* for any reason – a *kebele* identification card, starting a small business, registering residential land in children’s names, and registering children for their ID cards. People’s questions revolved around land since there is a rumour that the government will start taking away residential land in excess of the standard allocation for each house. Questions were asked about the fate of small businesses on residential land, how to ensure that children inherit the land, the allowed size of a residential plot, and if “planting the land” would avoid confiscation.

The chairman said that a certain portion of the front page must be developed measuring from the new road inward, and that it is “mandatory” according to James’ translation. I wonder if this is a directive from the federal government? If anyone living on the front page cannot afford to build up as required at least they could come together and build on one plot, the chair suggested. But, in my opinion, this is problematic for many reasons. It means that people will still lose their individual plots and children of each family would not inherit their own yards...The chairman went on to say that children over 18 can lease land so if the size of a family’s *yard* goes over the allowed 500m² they can put the extra land in their children’s

¹¹¹ As noted in the introduction, *repatriates* are concentrated in this *kebele* and *Kebele 10* (or *asr* in Amharic as everyone regardless of their native languages says).

names...After setting out their plans for increased community involvement in sports activities etc the chairman also expressed the hope that Rastas could become the 81st tribe of Ethiopia. This seems to me to be his own long term goal.

The above excerpt highlights the questions that *repatriates* asked the chairman guided by the central concern to acquire legal ownership of their houses and to retain their existing land. Compared to the chairman's comments which were dominated by grandiose suggestions (though he did not neglect practical matters) *repatriates'* questions revealed their different focus. Each *repatriate* who attended the meeting was concerned about clarifying the government's new initiatives regarding land that had circulated as rumours rather than as official statements, and which might affect each family's occupancy of their home, the size of their *yards* or the small businesses established on their residential land. As I walked home with my neighbours a long-resident elder Rastaman accounted for this emphasis. He explained that officials in these *kebeles* and in the *Microbeit* (Municipal Office) are frequently replaced so the new chairman's future plans would most likely not come to fruition. One outcome of this is a degree of disregard toward state-designated authority figures in the *safar*.

Although *repatriates* at the meeting appeared to dismiss such plans, I later heard two young women (whose parents are *repatriates*) between the ages of 16 to 22, from different households, repeat the chairman's comment that Rastas "should be made into the 81st tribe of Ethiopia" and "should become the 81st tribe of Ethiopia." They said it to other youths, myself included, while we "hung out." At the time I opined that, despite the poor English translation that I (and *repatriates* who were not fully fluent in Amharic had relied on) the chairman himself was not going to advocate for this official recognition from the federal government. The statement seemed to be

more symbolic of his inclusive and flexible attitude toward his Rasta neighbours who were foreign citizens, than suggestive of the beginning of an actual legal-political process.¹¹² Their parents, who had attended the *kebele* meeting, had evidently discussed the content of the meeting and the implications for residents with their older children. This seemingly trivial example also demonstrates the almost instantaneous transmission of information inter-generationally and laterally between youths. Lack of residency status and lack of title deeds are issues that are the foremost concerns not only for *repatriated* Brothers and Sisters, but for their locally-born children as well. Outside of their more confrontational encounters with local officials such as police officers (as I will describe) young people are constantly aware of and keep up to date with *politricking* or with events that impact on their legal status and well-being, along with their everyday preoccupations of schoolwork, personal relationships, and household responsibilities.

Local relations with *babylon*: interactions with police and judiciary

While *repatriates* and their children are generally well-known to older and younger local government officials and police officers as neighbours and classmates for instance, institutions of *the system*, like the police force, also become *downpressers* (in the Rastafari inversion of the word oppressors) in particular contexts, as I previously noted. As I reviewed my fieldnotes I realised that they were peppered with incidents of Brothers and Sisters being fined or *locked up*. This occurred when *repatriates* or visitors who are foreign citizens overstayed their visas and they were caught while travelling within Ethiopia or at the airport when they attempted to travel to *foreign*, as I previously mentioned. Being fined or imprisoned also happens in

¹¹² MacLeod (2009) does, however, note similar discussions among *repatriates* who were encouraged by local officials about petitioning the Ethiopian government for recognition as an “ethnic minority” so they would eventually be recognised as the 81st tribe.

particular for the possession of *herb* (*ganja* or marijuana)¹¹³ which is illegal in Ethiopia. In this section I will isolate particular interactions between *Jamaicans* and the police and the judiciary to show how peoples' actions, especially those of young *Jamaican* men, are culturally re-framed.

One main interaction revolves around the Rasta use and the local Ethiopian cultivation of *ganja* that results in police searches of people and of *yards*. A former Ambassador of Jamaica to Ethiopia explained to me that the *Derg* government (1974-1991) tended to "turn a blind eye" to *repatriate* use of *ganja* and its small scale cultivation. He knew of only one major incident that involved the government and *repatriates*, which his predecessor related to him, when an Ethiopian teacher smoked *ganja* and "went crazy." At that time the government interceded because the use of *herb* adversely affected an unsupervised novice local Ethiopian user, the *safar* was raided and *repatriates* were imprisoned for some months. Yet, when they were released some *repatriates* were issued with residence permits (which have long since expired). This act also shows the *Derg* support of the *repatriate* presence.

Currently, young male Rastafarians as well as residents of *Jamaica Safar* are sometimes searched by the police in Shashamane for the possession of *ganja*. While I lived in Shashamane there were two organised searches specifically in *Jamaica Safar*. Police searches are also undertaken in other *safars* of Shashamane seeking out

¹¹³ "Extremely complex botanically, cannabis yields a variety of products" including textiles and paper as well as used in soap making and in various foods (Rubin and Comitas 1975:9). Rubin and Comitas broadly define the "*ganja*-complex" in Jamaica as consisting of "methods of preparation and use, the role of *ganja* in folk medicine, in divine origin mythology, in pragmatic and ritual uses and the social class framework of use and attitudes toward *ganja*" (1975:16). This "*ganja* complex" is part of a working class lifestyle that incorporates being sociable, working hard and industriously and generally being healthy. *Ganja* is therefore not only smoked but included in other everyday uses in the form of tea and in folk healing practices for illness.

contraband items ranging from arms and ammunition to taxable goods like coffee for example, but it is well known that *ganja* is the most widespread illegal item in *Jamaica Safar*. *Repatriates* were clearly familiar with these hunts and were aware that *babylon* (in this case meaning the police) was looking for *ganja*. As Edmond reiterates, “the police are considered Babylon's agents, because through their use of force, they maintain the pattern of oppression and inequity in the society” (2003: 45).

On at least five occasions I heard of youths or adults that I personally knew who were *locked up* or taken by the police for interrogation on suspicion of having *ganja*. Only one of these was the result of the police discovery of *herb* during a search in the *safar* since residents were usually aware of impending searches via word of mouth warnings and they prepared accordingly. More often, though, youths and other *repatriates* were caught with *herb* while on the road either driving or using public transportation when vehicles were searched as part of the regular checkpoint searches.¹¹⁴ On these occasions state officials attempted to enforce laws through surveillance of ostensible Rastafari by purposely stopping and searching men with *dreadlocks* on public vehicles or at the airport.

However, in these situations *repatriates* and youths not only circumvent the intended surveillance behind such actions but also reframe the consequences of this persecution. Imprisonment is an act of punishment and subordination that is, arguably, intended to produce an ideal national Ethiopian subject who does not smoke *ganja*, the foreign herb, but instead would more likely chew *qat*, a socially and legally

¹¹⁴ There are checkpoints throughout Ethiopia when entering and leaving administrative districts and regions such as Addis Ababa and Harar. For instance, at the Addis Ababa checkpoint when leaving or entering the city, vehicles are regularly searched, depending on type of vehicle, for various illegal items such as drugs, and weapons as well as taxable goods, like electronics.

acceptable plant grown locally.¹¹⁵ “Chewing” is a common practice that is expected of male Ethiopians of any class. *Qat* has a substantially longer history of use in East Africa and neighbouring Yemen than *ganja* and it is a legal drug since its cultivation provides revenue for the Ethiopian state through taxation.¹¹⁶

My understanding of ideas and practices surrounding imprisonment crystallised after living in Shashamane for a few months. One morning I walked by a neighbour’s *yard* with two *Jamaican* girls who were on their way to school. They stopped to greet a young man and as they introduced us I realised that he was standing in front of his family’s *yard*. Whereas I knew this youth’s parents and siblings, and saw them on an almost daily basis, his face was unfamiliar to me. My young companions chatted with him briefly, and we promptly continued walking along the road. Only after we had walked away and I asked for details about him did they explain that he was Brother Peter’s son who was *locked up* and apparently had been just released. I was astonished at this calm explanation of what I would expect to be a psychologically and physically harrowing experience, but their manner indicated a multitude of meanings about imprisonment that I came to recognise the longer that I lived in Shashamane.

The predominant connotation was that of normality, evident when these young women did not express any outcry or surprise upon seeing Malik standing outside. They simply asked if he was “alright” and talked about everyday matters relating to school and the neighbours. About six months later, when other youths were jailed for carrying *herb*, I presumed that they would either be out within a few short days or in a

¹¹⁵ *Qat* supposedly induces a sense of euphoria and curbs the appetite. Chewing in public is increasingly common among young women. Anthropologists have also demonstrated that this is an important method of maintaining and forming social, economic and political relations (see Weir 1985).

¹¹⁶ “Chat” exports earned US\$138.7 million in 2008/9 (Ethiopia Investment Guide 2010).

few months. This would depend on certain factors surrounding the arrest, the amount of *herb* involved, the young man's legal record, and their familiarity with local police officers.

Whereas in other cultural contexts there are various rituals surrounding a young man's release from prison (see Peteet 1994), by contrast in Shashamane there is no ritual acknowledgement of a young man's release and return to his family's *yard*. For *repatriates* and youths the acts of being held, *facing the courts* or being *locked up* by police become normalised through a lack of ritual marking or observation. These occurrences and the resulting behaviour of relatives and friends of the incarcerated young man become incorporated into daily activities that involve going to town from the *safar*. Such actions include visiting youths who are *locked up*, cooking food and taking clean clothing for them. For instance, after Sister Pauletta returned to the *safar* from *catama* (town) to do her regular shopping at the market, she told me that she had also dropped off food for a young man at the jail. Since Sister Pauletta was going to town and the youth's mother was unable to go on that day, his mother sent food with her.

The assimilation of these kinds of tasks into mundane activities and daily schedules is one method of coping that *repatriates* have honed which divests imprisonment of its efficacy either as punishment or as a means to reduce or halt the use of *ganja* and to punish the user. This is another instance of "helping out each other" through local social networks among *IandI* that are essential to both daily life and the long-term maintenance of *the community* (see chapter two).

Socially as well, a young man proves his toughness by adhering to the Rasta practice of smoking *ganja*, and his neglect of state sanctions for the continued use of “the holy herb.” Actions that are meant to terrorise and criminalise individuals such as the searching of young male *Jamaicans* on the streets, their forced hustle into a police vehicle, and subsequent shoving into a jail cell, instead become alternative signifiers of resistance to an unjust authority. Correspondingly, then, the reason for being caught by the police makes a difference to the symbolism of imprisonment. In addition to youths, middle-aged men (40-60 years of age) also engage in various kinds of physical altercations. For example, the clashes between middle-aged *repatriates* and local Ethiopian men are usually ostensibly over women and money and in these cases the people involved are either taken to the police station or the parties involved willingly go to lodge a complaint.

By comparison, when a youth is *locked up* for defending the seizure of an older Rastaman’s land, which is legally defined as violence against the police or for carrying or smoking *ganja* which is illegal he may be tried in court under the criminal code. However, these actions develop entirely different meanings for Rastafari *repatriates* and their children in terms of age and gender; young male *Jamaicans* embody the quintessential Rastafari figure who opposes the unjust agents of *babylon*, another characteristic of the *heartical* Rastaman (see chapter one). This kind of militancy tends to be the domain of the young. Older Rastamen and Rastawomen would remark, “we’re too old for that now” or “that is young people business” while they themselves described incidents of their youthful altercations with police in Kingston, Jamaica. One story that I heard revolved around the basis for The Wailers’ song “3 o’clock roadblock.” A young man of Jamaican parents related that his father

was with Bob Marley and many other *IandI* who accompanied the Wailers to the airport. However, the police blocked the road in the wee morning hours and attempted to search the crowd of Rastas en route, including well-known Bob Marley who later sang about the experience. For this son, the story provided one example in which the qualities of a heartical Rastaman emerged.

Another example of youthful militancy took place during Gebre's graduation ceremony that I described in chapter four. Although I did not discuss this incident with Jeremiah, Gebre's brother, who had a slight altercation with the security guard, Jeremiah may have partly interpreted his father's warning to back down as the "soft" response of an older man who is no longer "militant." I often heard Rasta youths with Jamaican fathers repeating the stories about how in Jamaica and in Shashamane in the "early days" their fathers stood up to the local police, and didn't "take shit from the system."

Many early *repatriates* themselves also stressed that they were the only ones in the past who were brave enough to walk around the town at night since it was so unsafe. Although these young men did not directly contrast their fathers' past actions to their seeming quasi-inaction at present, the implication could be that their fathers no longer act with the same kind of opposition that they did in the past. Now, these elder Rastamen negotiate with, rather than oppose, local government officials over diverse issues including ownership of their houses, residency, security, and police harassment in the *safar*. I never heard of an elder *repatriate* being *locked up* while I was in Shashamane. Imprisonment therefore becomes not a deterrent to certain actions as intended by the police and legal authority, but another method of confronting and

subverting *babylon*, and of reinforcing a predominantly masculine West Indian identity and as metonymic of the *downpressed* Rastaman. As a result, the male *Jamaican* body represents the failure of state disciplinary techniques (that characteristically designate *Jamaicans* as *farangi* criminals in this context), and instead becomes symbolic of the quintessential Rastafari struggle against *babylon*.

Local *Shemagleh*: another judicial route

While this antagonistic attitude toward *babylon* is characteristic of Rasta worldview, *IandI* hold varying opinions of *babylonian* agents and express these views through different responses. This depends on peoples' interactions and is also grounded in a general *community* view of legal authority. Brother Peter adamantly expressed his active adherence to "the law" during a conversation that we had. He explained that he disagrees with Brothers and Sisters who don't "put faith in the law" and who prefer not to go to the police for any reason. How can they live in a country but not by the laws of the country or go to the police for help, he asked rhetorically? He "tested the courts" when he caught a man sneaking around his yard late at night and took him to the police. The intruder was fairly reprimanded and "the system" worked for him in this case.¹¹⁷

Yet, this is the same "system" that *locked up* his son for some months because he was caught with *ganja*. Like many Jamaican parents who were imprisoned or harassed by police in Kingston as youngsters, Brother Peter's son was also jailed for a *ganja* related offence, and served his time in the local jail in Shashamane town. However, Brother Peter chooses not to remove his actions and experiences from the grasp of *the*

¹¹⁷ There may have been other reasons for Brother Peter's decision that were unknown to me and affected his decision to call the police. These range from his relationship with the intruder (if they knew each other) to his experiences with previous intruders to his mood on that night.

system or acknowledge *the system* solely through his resistance to it, as he did as a young Rastaman in Jamaica. Instead, he uses it to punish a thief who was a stranger. Brother Peter's paradoxical comments reiterate his actually existing ambiguous relationship to elements of *the system*, his adherence to just outcomes, his recognition of *ganja* as illegal in Ethiopia, his continued use of *herb* as a Rastaman, and his use of the judicial system as an inhabitant of Shashamane.

On other occasions Brother Peter has chosen not to involve the police in addressing wrongdoings but, like other Brothers and Sisters selected the alternative route of the *shemagleh*. The *shemagleh* (singular) or *shemaglehwoch* (plural) in Amharic is a group of or at least two elder men from a community invested with social authority that is recognised by the Ethiopian state (see Abrahams 1987). *Shemagleh* are often asked to arbitrate among disputing persons that they are, at least, well-acquainted with and who live within proximity to ensure that they can travel to a designated location for the actual arbitration.¹¹⁸ This familiarity is typically an essential consideration when choosing people to act as *shemagleh* because it assumes a level of trust between the *shemaglehwoch* and the disputants. This combination of familiarity and trust will potentially enable these judges to accurately assess the circumstances surrounding an incident. This includes determining whether this is an isolated occurrence or if the individual has previously been involved in similar altercations with different peoples. In this way *shemaglehwoch* are able to deliver a fair and reasonable judgement.

¹¹⁸ In Shashamane, a linguistically diverse town, *shemaglehwoch* usually arbitrate in Amharic which is the national language, and thus it is presumed that almost everyone would speak Amharic. But if contesting parties speak the same language and choose *shemaglehwoch* with similar language proficiency then their discussion will be conducted in Oromiffa or Gurage, for instance.

For example, an alleged incident of theft between two young women in the *safar* was arbitrated by *shemagleh*. After Tanya accused Taitu of stealing her cellular phone and money (that totalled a few thousand Birr) and Taitu denied this, Tanya later found the phone in Taitu's bag (although the money was never recovered). Tanya then reported the theft to the local police and demanded that they question Taitu. Both young women had lived in Shashamane with their families, subsequently moved to Britain and then moved back to Shashamane as young adults. Eventually, this incident was resolved through mediation with *shemaglehwoch* rather than the police to whom Tanya initially complained. Although I am unaware of who mediated the disagreement, each *shemagleh* would have known Tanya and Taitu when they lived in Shashamane as girls or they would be acquainted with the young women's parents and siblings. Consequently, *shemagleh* mediation is often viewed by *repatriates* and youths as a more amenable alternative to the direct state authority of the police and "the courts." This distinctly contrasts the state practice of adjudication that privileges objectivity as a prerequisite to fairness.

An objective of this chapter has been to expand the discussion of citizenship outside the terms of legal rights or the ethical responsibilities of the citizen. As scholars and activists have well documented, citizenship in practice is unequally enacted and experienced (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Basch et al 1994; Kymlicka 1995; Kabeer 2005). In this respect, the struggle for "citizenness" among *repatriates* in the *safar*: to live equitably with dignity, to *better* oneself and the next generation, and to keep the land inalienable, figure prominently in the expressions and actions of *Jamaicans*. Yet these goals are underscored by the legal status of *repatriates* and Ethiopian-born youths as "foreign nationals."

To a certain extent, the claim of being Ethiopian, as evidenced by Brother David's Biblical quote is neither dependent on previous experiences of inhabiting Ethiopia nor on his achievement of legal citizenship, but on a specific worldview and his construction of a life in Shashamane. This assertion is not dependent on or altered by the interactions with state officials that I focused on in this chapter or *repatriates'* exclusion from the codified legal side of this membership in the Ethiopian state, which are also aspects of *repatriates'* and youths' struggle for "citizenness." However, as inhabitants of Shashamane in the state of Ethiopia, *repatriates* and their families must engage with local and federal institutions, as they cogently recognise, employing strategies to shape these interactions and mitigate the impacts on their everyday set-backs and long-term goals.

As such, there is a general reproduction of the duality of Rasta concepts since *the system*, especially Immigration, the police and judiciary, must be opposed by the words and actions of the *heartical* Rastaman. For Ethiopian-born *Jamaicans* especially, their sentiments of belonging to Ethiopia and their attempts to access legal signs of citizenship, like the passport, co-exist with their more confrontational relations with *babylon*. However, these particular antagonistic encounters with *babylon* then become invested with distinct cultural interpretations, in accordance with this duality.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined how Rastafari personhood is enacted, reiterated and shaped by *repatriates*, mainly from the West Indies, following their actual movement or repatriation to *the land grant* in Shashamane and by their locally-born children. While *repatriates* and their children claim themselves as Ethiopian and as Rastafari, and thus as *IandI*, there is a simultaneous West Indian social and cultural inscription onto Shashamane. Consequently, *repatriates* and their Ethiopian-born children both embrace and reject the emic category of *Jamaican* that has emerged in *Jamaica Safar* or *Rasta Safar*. Through their actions and ideas, *repatriates* and *Jamaican* youths blur the categories already existing in the Ethiopian milieu.

Such radical re-invention is another expression of Creole personhood out of which Rastafari was formed, and which *repatriates* extend in Shashamane, while at the same time diverging from. In other words, to claim their Ethiopian-ness through Rastafari, *repatriates* must first claim their upbringing in the West Indies, and their affiliation to the region in which their *consciousness* arose out of centuries of political, ideological, and psychological oppression of the plantation economy. Accordingly, many of the ambiguities in Creole society of the West Indies also emerge in *Jamaica Safar* through daily interactions with local neighbours and state officials. Along with the mixing of worldviews and social and cultural practices that result, the actions of *repatriates* and youths are often underscored by the Rastafari goal of realising the inalienability of the land that was initially granted by His Majesty.

In Shashamane, the constant (re)molding and (re)defining of a Rastafari-conceived fellowship of His Majesty's people by *repatriates* and youths on a daily basis and in specific situations, result in varied expressions of the “friction of engagement” (Tsing 2005). This emerges conceptually in the *repatriate* framing of themselves and their often mixed children, within the national historiography of Ethiopia and in their daily interactions with various persons – other *repatriates*, local neighbours and kin as well as local officials. These children of *repatriates* also embrace creolised ideas and practices of a different kind compared to their parents, if creolisation is used in a broad sense, in this new site outside its origins in the (post)plantation economies of the Americas.

In this conclusion, I focus on the issue of legal citizenship in order to discuss the lessons that could be learnt from this radical Rastafari re-conceptualisation of personhood. If examined through the lens of cosmopolitanism, these ideas could potentially have certain policy implications. In this way, the Rastafari project (of conceptual and cosmological re-invention combined with the actual movement to *the land grant*) can also be examined for its future implications for a “political project toward building transnational institutions” or “a political project for recognizing multiple identities” (Vertovec and Cohen 2002: 9) rather than thinking of the legal and civic status of *repatriates* in terms of existing national immigration policies, for instance. In this conceptual foundation there may lie the potential for political change. For instance, this may be starting; following the 2007 African Diaspora Ministerial conference, the African Union designated the African Diaspora as its 6th Region. This act recognised the potential of peoples outside the continent to strengthening south-south economic, ideological and political relations. In cases such as these

ethnographic, particularly anthropological, analyses of migration across the global south would explore the social and ideological questions that are usually neglected outside the more common quantitative analyses. Additionally, in 2010 the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, partly funded by the European Union, established a South-South Migration Observatory that focuses on gathering quantitative data of migration within regions of the global south. Again, these findings would be strengthened by exploring the social and ideological questions which surround this project's quantitative focus. While these are burgeoning initiatives around the economic aspect of policy formation, the fundamental ideological aspects must not be neglected.

Citizenship

In the last chapter, "Ethiopian-ness and citizenship," I focused on how *repatriates* and their Ethiopian-born children express their sense of belonging to Ethiopia and to Shashamane in light of their long term goals that may hinge on gaining legal citizenship, which most people have been denied so far. This took on revised significance in terms of the new *kebele* chairman's aberrant, yet well-circulated remark that hopefully "Rastas could become the 81st tribe of Ethiopia" that is, be recognised by the state. Although *repatriates* remain citizens of their countries of birth, their lack of legal residence in Ethiopia leaves them susceptible to eviction from their *yards* and to deportation from Ethiopia. However, because they retain this citizenship, and the children with passports hold their foreign parent's citizenship, applying for asylum from the Ethiopian government as refugees, for example, is not an alternative option to gaining citizenship in Ethiopia.

Despite these fears, *repatriates* who have been caught on specific occasions breaking immigration laws have never been deported, but this is largely because the government would have to bear the associated costs. Additionally, although Haile Selassie I was deposed more than thirty five years ago the current government has not evicted *repatriates* or their children from their residential lands in Shashamane. Since *repatriates* are unable to imagine returning to the *babylon* of the West Indies, particularly after undergoing the “trials and tribulation” of *repatriation* and persevering on *the land grant*, they also view this lack of government aggression as a hopeful sign. It may be an indication that they could be left to live in Shashamane without legal consequences.

Nonetheless, the question of legal citizenship is particularly salient for future generations since most *Jamaican* children envisage their futures in Shashamane or in other areas of Ethiopia. Since the children born on *the land grant* have started to have children themselves, the uncertainty of their citizenship is a very real, persistent concern. Children and grandchildren of a Jamaican citizen can apply for and may be granted citizenship without any requirement of residency in Jamaica, as noted in chapter five. For instance, a young woman born in Shashamane of *repatriated* parents from Jamaica who herself is a Jamaican citizen, and whose *baby father* is an Ethiopian citizen, nonetheless spoke about her future plan to apply for her child’s passport from the Jamaican Consulate in Addis Ababa. When another young Sister, Kenya (see chapter four) who grew up in Shashamane with her Jamaican and British parents, had a child with a young *Jamaican* man of Jamaican and Ethiopian parents, she applied for her child’s passport through the British High Commission in Addis Ababa. This document ensures that when the child is older he can travel between

Britain and Ethiopia with his mother. These two examples not only show the diversity of situations, but that each family decides on their own how to deal with common legal issues. Despite this, there remains a greater uncertainty about the legal status of this generation and their children, that is, the second generation born on *the land grant*, which will come to the fore in the next fifteen years.

The potential concern for these young people and subsequent generations that they may be dispossessed of a sort is thus ever present. Although *Jamaican* children constantly evoke their strong emotional adherence to Shashamane and their spiritual attachment to Ethiopia, they do sometimes express an openness to live temporarily in *babylon*. For example, Jonah (in chapter three) and Malcolm (in chapter four) expressed their willingness to travel to *babylon*. This was partly to educate the “sheathens and heathens” about Shashamane, to redress pejorative representations of Ethiopia, and to encourage other *IandI* to return. Other young *Jamaicans* also spoke about their wishes to travel, but to avoid travelling to *baylon* and instead to visit the rest of the African continent to see new places there. Unlike their parents who moved from their countries of birth to Ethiopia, most locally-born youths who I socialised with have not travelled outside Ethiopia. They would, however, like to, provided they are able to return to Ethiopia (practically this would mean they would either have to possess an Ethiopian passport or a residence permit for Ethiopia), live the better part of their lives there, and raise their children in the *promised land*.

This concern around citizenship is slightly modified for recent and seasonal *repatriates* who have Ethiopian residence permits or tourist visas for Ethiopia and who can frequently travel between the global north and Ethiopia. Their children retain

their own passports from countries of birth which are used to enter Ethiopia. These youths usually have a clearer understanding than the children of long-standing *repatriates* about their citizenship and the future citizenship of their own children who may be born in Ethiopia. When a recently repatriated Sister who is a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, for example, needed to apply for a passport for her son she did so through the Consulate in neighbouring Uganda. While this involved considerable expense since she had to travel to Uganda from Ethiopia, with the financial help of family members in *foreign* she was able to accomplish this process. However, when the children of recent *repatriates* can no longer apply for Ethiopian residence permits as dependents of their parents, and they do not have the start up funds to qualify for a business investment license (see chapter five) they face a similar situation that early *repatriates* confronted. It has yet to be seen whether they too will simply continue to live in Shashamane after their residence permits expire.

Further directions for research

There is potential for further research in two distinct, yet related directions. One is the recent movement to West Africa, another repatriation, and the other is following the migration trajectories of Rastafari who live seasonally between Shashamane and *foreign*, and those who migrate to the global north following repatriation to Ethiopia (see chapter two). Rastafari and non-Rastafari African-Americans have recently settled in Ghana and Nigeria (Dakura 2008; Zips 2006). These movements are motivated by a similar goal to the repatriation to Shashamane of achieving spiritual, psychological and economic *betterment*, although this move was not stimulated by the possibility of available land on which to settle (as in Ethiopia). However, in the 1990s, there was a donation of ten acres of land by the local Chief of the “Abuakwa district

of the Eastern Region” area of Ghana where Boboshanti have settled (Zips 2006: 155). Rastafari from the TTI, the Boboshanti and EWF members have settled there and have also incorporated young Ghanians who have “manifested” Rastafari into the Mansions (pers comm.; Minda 1997; Savishinsky 1994). By the beginning of the 20th century, then, Zips notes that the Boboshanti “had built several houses, meeting places for international guests, a reception area, a guest house, a craft shop, a small production for roots juices and most of all, a huge church building” (2006: 156).

Another similar direction might be with *repatriates* who have migrated to the west from Ethiopia (like Sister Bernice and Sister Loretta) and then live between both countries or in other words, “empirically following the thread of cultural process” (Marcus 1998:80) to these multiple locations across the global south and the global north. For Sister Bernice, what began as an ideologically and spiritually-oriented move to Ethiopia from Jamaica, in the current phase takes on a more recognisable move from the global south to north mainly for economic reasons. Unlike many West Indians though, Sister Bernice has experienced moving across countries of the global south. While the search to achieve spiritual *betterment* principally underlies repatriation to Shashamane, and though the word itself is specific to the West Indies, *betterment* is a cross-cultural notion that is honed and expressed idiosyncratically in each cultural locality. Given the aim of all peoples to live equitably in a place where they feel comfortable and that they “rehome,” hopefully this research will have applications outside its immediate geographical focus.

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