

Uptown-Downtown Kingston: The Embodiment of Class in Jamaican Dancehall

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The Uptown (upper-class) and Downtown (lower-class) divide is reified in Jamaica in a myriad of ways. Class inequalities, shaped by colonial legacies, pervade myriad aspects of Jamaica's political and cultural life. Dancehall is a crucial way through which these colonial inequalities can be understood due to the tensions, divisions and inherent contradictions present within the contemporary dancehall space. Dancehall, known for its inherent lewdness, is at the center of Kingston's urban sociocultural life. However, the appeal of dancehall and its romantic, exoticized and commodified nature fails to exist in the very spaces from which it originates – Kingston's inner city. In Uptown Jamaica, dancehall has taken on a different form, emerging as a stylized element of embodying "the other." Though inherently characterized by 'downtown~ i\$ ncehall space. , la' i lnhd byb