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A Good Kicker Analyzing Script and Screen with Adolescent Boys in Jamaica

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Movies are reality and reality is a nightmare
Don Letts (2002)

Abstract

This paper takes as its starting point a conversation with a group of upper-primary youth in rural Jamaica as they discuss the highlights of Dance Hall Queen, one of many movies they would categorise as “a Good Kicker”. This movie is unique in that it is a Jamaican “Kicker” drawn from Jamaican experience, it is used by the youth to reflect on their own experiences and strategies for coping with and celebrating violence. Employing Bakhtin’s understanding of the dynamics in speech communities and the subversive potentials in embodied and carnivalesque humour, the paper seeks to open up a discussion about how these youth conceptualise different forms of violence and negotiate between them.

A Good Kicker

Analyzing Script and Screen with Adolescent Boys in Jamaica

Introduction

I want to share with you today some excerpts from conversations with a group of boys in their final year at primary school in rural Jamaica. I want to look at their words in terms of form in two different ways. The first will be to compare the form of their narration to the scripted linear form of narrative taught at their school. The contrasts between these forms are indicative of larger tensions and a fundamental dilemma that faces Jamaica's educational project about the relevance or practical use education in its present form has for these Jamaican youth.

This first analysis of form is the easier of the two to make and report. The second is more challenging, laced with pitfalls, yet more important to attempt. This is an analysis of the forms of violence within their accounts and how they contrast to other forms of violence these boys know. I want to examine what relationships there may be between violence as play and entertainment, in which violence plays a crucial role in forming normative narratives and strategies within a peer group, and violence as transgressive and destabilising acts, which threaten both sense of self and group identities and strategies. The overlap between the two categories makes analysis difficult yet represents a crucial dynamic that needs to be better understood if some of Jamaica's most pressing social and political problems are to be addressed.

A Consideration of Contexts

Each examination of form requires contextualisation that highlights different elements of contemporary conditions in Jamaica, and which are connected through differing networks that thread back through a series of related historical pre-conditions. It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer a diachronic account. Yet I would ask the reader to be mindful that such an account should be made and to draw on what resources they have to link what is offered to an historical awareness.

The first context to sketch out centres upon language education. Mastery of Standard Jamaican English (SJE) is of central concern because it is the gateway through which all other subjects are accessed and assessed. However, it is the subject that remains the

most intractable to improvement¹ Some thirty years ago Craig outlined why this might be so:

Craig argued that in the creole situation, where there is significant lexical or grammatical relationship between the creole and the standard, in his words, when “they are attempting to learn neither a native language nor a foreign language, but something half-way between the two”, the educational problems tend to be much greater than when the two languages are more distinct. He went on to enumerate several of the problems:

- ◆ the similarities between the dialects create the illusion that the standard language is already known with the result that children fail to obtain the equivalent satisfaction and learning reinforcement of the foreign learner who knows that something new has been learned.
- ◆ children attempting to learn the standard do not see the relevance of the standard language or find any compelling reason for formally learning it.
- ◆ children may actually have a negative attitude to the standard language itself, regarding it as the language of an oppressive elite, for example or (among boys) regard it as a language for ‘sissies’. (1978: 109-110)

Other leading figures in the study of language education in the Caribbean, Alleyne (1988), Carrington (1999), and Bryan (1998, 2000) over the years have also pointed out the need for a wider definition of language and literacy that encompasses both languages and the fraught transitions between them.

(Educators) must draw on what the learners already know. The transition from one form of language to another is easier if the children are made aware of the differences and if they are given the opportunity to manipulate the sounds of the language in real but playful contexts. They need to develop metalinguistical awareness about the rhythm of language, all languages. (Bryan: 1998:62)

Yet, this awareness has largely remained academic, for several reasons. As research by Bailey, Brown and Lofgren (1998: 2) points out, schools in Jamaica are affected by interacting factors, such that traditional instructional practices; content of textbooks; availability of instructional materials; approaches to testing; school climate and pupil background make curricular intentions of any kind difficult to implement.² Another difficulty is that, contrary to Craig’s (1978: 107) recommendation, primary teachers still remain the least trained. Teachers trained for secondary education receive a much more

thorough grounding in linguistics and language development. Pollard (2000) has indicated secondary teachers' expertise comes too late, and puts them in the difficult position of undoing ingrained attitudes and habits of failure. The practice of co-opting high school graduates into classrooms to teach in primary schools persists. Under current conditions, particularly the decline in salary and benefits for teachers in Jamaica and increased recruitment of teacher by other countries, this practice will continue despite policy decisions to phase it out.

The politicians, with parents no doubt in mind, remain unconvinced that Standard Jamaican English and Patwa can complement learners' overall language understanding. Rather, these languages remain symbolic of entrenched class differences and the protracted sense of competition enacted over centuries³ The divide between what is known at an academic level, and what is known and practised at school level parallels the societal divisions at large in Jamaica. Parents and teachers are suspicious that any further acceptance or inclusion of Patwa will mean a slackening of standards, an attempt to deliberately withhold from children the tools of success⁴ The fundamental understanding of education as harsh competition or even a lottery reinforces a counterproductive pedagogy that focuses on delivering content with connotations of high status, rather than developing concepts and conceptual ability. Bernstein asserts that just such a content oriented pedagogy is more prevalent in disadvantaged communities and tends to reproduce that disadvantage whereas conceptually oriented education reproduces advantage. His argument is all the more pertinent given the new slate of competencies required of a globally competitive workforce.

In the course of fieldwork it became apparent that even when teachers wished to foster conceptual thinking in the classroom, the insistence on SJE as a medium for doing so discouraged student's conceptual engagement, as I have detailed elsewhere (Cross, in print). Moments when these boys did engage in conceptual thinking were triggered by engagement with popular culture, both folk tales and the movies they had watched.

Let me relate now, how the fieldwork exemplified these dynamics at work. The excerpts from discussion came in the midst of a six-month field work study done in a rural Jamaican community that lies along a commuter route into Spanish Town and Kingston. The main focus of the study was to examine the language transitions children made between school, community and home. I observed classroom activities, children's more informal activity around the school yard, as well as their interaction in other community

settings and at home. In addition, what could loosely be called a focus group of boys took time out from class to engage with me particularly on this topic of language and to explain to me more about their lives, their activities and preferred means of expression.

At this point I would like to be able to present to you a one-page transcript that neatly exemplifies the points I would like to make. But the crucial differences that the form of their narration takes from the linear expository one taught in school emerge over a much longer flow of discourse. The transcript and the recording both fail to pick up crucial components of that discourse, namely the prevalence of simultaneous speech. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the transcript extract hints at this enough for one to get a sense of what was not picked up by the microphone.

This excerpt is the boys' rendition of Dance Hall Queen, produced by Chris Blackwell, directed by Don Letts. It was the first movie in over twenty years that depicted Jamaican reality with the Jamaican audience in mind. Significantly much of the dialogue is in Kingston Patwa with very few concessions made to the non-Patwa speaker. Its themes deal with the fundamental issues at play in gender relations, drawing on the dichotomy of women's respectability and men's reputation, which academics have claimed characterise Caribbean gender relations and which have become common currency in a variety of public arenas. Through the course of the film the terms of this dichotomy are contrasted and, in the end, inverted. To put it mildly, the movie made a big impression in Jamaica, but I do not want to get caught up in the controversies that played themselves out in the opinion pages of *The Gleaner*. The focus needs to remain upon what the boys made of the film.

Narrative Forms

When they retell it to me they resort to a strategy that they used across all their narrations of "shows", their word for films, primarily accessed through video tapes. They do not follow the storyline sequentially. Rather they take one character, issue or image and relate a cluster of scenarios that exemplify the essence of that topic. The story was filled in from several different directions, demanding that the listener open their attention out, instead of focusing it in one direction or on one voice. Neither did they begin at the beginning, but, as it were, cut to the chase, seizing on the most dramatic or larger than life images. There are linear fragments present in their accounts but this is not the overall framework. They have cut the movie up, edited and re-mixed it as

expertly as any Dancehall DJ does his tracks. They first run through the movie highlighting Marcia, the Dance Hall Queen's role, secondly they touch on her younger brother. The focus then moves to recount the character they identify as Capone or Ratty, the hired killer that terrorizes the community and whom Marcia is pitted against. Only then do they bring in the boss pulling the strings who doubles as the sugar daddy menacing Marcia's daughter's future. The excerpt of their account begins here (lines 1-4 in transcript excerpt) and describe the fight that happens backstage (lines 8-30), while Marcia is becoming proclaimed Dance Hall Queen front stage. Finally, with some embarrassed giggles, they describe the deception Marcia carries out (lines 35-49) that enables her to pit the boss against his own hired killer a scene that actually occurs much earlier in the movie than the first scenes they choose to dramatise:

Transcript One

Recorded During National Heroes Week

1. ?:And im own 'otel
2. DANIEL: Yeh
3. And im ave nuff girl! (Third voice adds something about girl)
4. Nuff girl (chorus from 6a classroom comes into background)
5. SAMUEL: Whater er name again?
6. And e a
7. Girl say go im kill
8. Capone
9. And de ah fight and fight
10. Until e a kill im DANIEL: yes and a
11. DANIEL:Capone and im man a fight!
12. and Capone 'ave im one ratchet knife
13. And e man ave a gun
14. Capone, im and a Capone
15. A fight
16. And Capone take im gun from im
17. And den stab im
18. SAMUEL: and steal de knife from im
19. BETH: so who won? Capo
20. DANIEL:ina miss SAMUEL: inna buss, miss naw buss
21. When di girl in a somepin
22. Den de man come to
23. De man did kill Capone

24. SAMUEL: Eh hen
 25. And den de man
 26. ah wash off is hands
 27. And come
 28. SAMUEL: and come
 29. And e say
 30. "You never know oo I am!"
 31. DANIEL: You see di man
 32. De man left ah girl you know
 33. Left e girl a whole heap a (pickney?)
 34. BETH: Oh right
 35. SAMUEL: and im buy
 36. A whole heap a somepin
 37. Buy her a phone fi girls
 38. And den
 39. DANIEL: when de man
 40. When de girl
 41. When de girl got di red dress on
 42. And an an
 43. When de man come der and see girl
 44. Inna some sharp---so
 45. How im say like im gonna take im
 46. Di man say like di girl gonna take im up to heaven— high pitched voice:
 “heaben”
 47. BETH: the girl gonna take im up to? (reluctant sneaky laughter)
 48. DANIEL: Red girl look-- (laughter continues)
 49. Like swanky
 50. And de girl g--- yard with de pickney dem
 51. And den
 52. And den---
 53. Gone
 54. and win de money.

In line 30 the boys repeat word for word the line Marcia delivers at the end of the movie to give it its resolution. They then cut back to describe the scene in which Marcia begins to work her deception, lines 35-49, before they conclude with their paraphrase of her revenge, lines 53-54. Lines 32-33 and 50-52 contextualise this achievement by contrasting the Dance Hall Queen with the single and economically dependent/abandoned mother of many children. I heard this tactic of leaving the key to the story to the last, used quite often in the community to persuasive effect. Whilst each incident related is interesting in its own right they are positioned so as to move around the central tension in the story, closing in on it. Scenarios are unfolded like the meat around the kernel of the fruit, the last scene transforming interpretations. This leads me to suggest their stories have a fractal structure, more complex than previous

categorisation of narratives allows us to understand In listening to their complex performances I realise their stories were a form of argument.⁵ They were arguing by image and instance, instead of making the switch to the generalisations of schooled discourse, which I was more accustomed to and subconsciously privileging.

The analytical tools that have been applied to date to children's narratives require reassessment. Pollard, whose work on language education in the Caribbean is extensive, has used the distinction made between topic centred and topic associative narratives that Michaels developed⁶ Topic centred stories are ones that conform to standard expository prose in which the topic stated in the first statement remains the focus of attention. Topic associative stories have a very different relationship to and definition of "topic". Characteristically, they depend much more on contextual understanding and roam around a scene. Pollard has examined Caribbean children's talk in light of these contrasting terms. She draws a connection between topic associative and the often criticised term "indirect response"⁷ used to characterise student's responses that wander from the standard. "Caribbean teachers label it the "irrelevant response" the "rambling response" in any case the "inaccurate response,"" (Pollard 1996: 87). This transcript could be categorised as topic associative, but that would simplify some of its structural complexity. the discourse does not fit easily into either category. It is topic centred, but not linear.

Pollard also draws on the distinction Bruner (1986) makes between paradigmatic and narrative ways of knowing and argues that Jamaican discourse is often more like narrative than paradigmatic ways of knowing (Pollard 1996: 98). However, I wonder if the more image-based poetic structuring that seems to be in operation in these boys' recollections of movies is paradigmatic, but which paradigm? Their discourse could be seen as more paradigmatic or blueprint oriented. There are sequential steps in their retelling, but the overall organisation is poetic and image rather than process based. Processes are indicated in the images in condensed form. Rather than this being a more rudimentary or simplistic structure, I think, it is, in fact, more complex. These accounts are a complex blend of paradigmatic and narrative knowing that, I would suggest, requires a third category, neither topic centred or topic associative, but topic fractal use of narratives. Topic shifts are not precisely defined as in topic centred discourse, nor as random as topic associative, but have a rough resemblance, and, much as fractal shapes are used to create complex structures by their transposition into differing positions, so,

too, these boys' stories build up a complex landscape of ethical and political reality that surrounds them by their own transpositions of images across story lines. The Jamaican practice bears much more resemblance to the way a DJ will cut one tune into another, blending elements of rhythms from one into the next (Stolzhoff 2000). Their shifts between images and movies are more consensual, each speaker contributing to the image, overlaying details, and through their communal commentary shaping the shift to new images.

The problem the differences in narration styles sets up is this: their engagement with meaning is already complex. Reading is not the window on the world that it once was in this community. The world can be seen vividly through other media In comparison reading is like looking through a glass darkly. As Merleau Ponty pointed out reading is a synaesthetic process, it asks us to combine our senses in complex ways, in which our eyes must at least stand in for our ears, and ultimately, if reading is to re-create a lived experience, means that our eyes must interact with symbols in such a way to recreate what all five sense take in (Abram, 1997: 124). These boys engagement with visual and oral media change the frontier or the playing field over which this synasthetic process takes place. Significantly, it requires they content themselves with a much reduced channel of information. Essentially, these boys have to be convinced that it is worthwhile crawling, when they are already capable of running. The argument that could convince them to do so would need to be powerful indeed. Is it? No. It is understood in terms of negative, to paraphrase one of them, "If one can't read, one can't go nowhere". However, what the present economic reality teaches them is that if you can read, it doesn't necessarily mean that you are going anywhere.

Open to further discussion as this conclusion about the forms of children's communication is, it is not nearly as problematic as drawing some conclusions about the themes of their narratives, the inter-related themes of violence, identity and success⁸.

Forms of Violence

If education is not a means of advancement, what other strategies are available? In the informal economy what kind of informal education is valued? To begin to answer that question is to examine the themes that run through the narratives—themes of loyalty, cunning, justice and power. Violence weaves in and out through all these themes as a definitive force.

Violence can be set into contrasting categories in three different ways. All of these contrasts divide violence in terms of one of the key terms used to define it, harm. The descriptive terms in the first category are used to qualify away the harm of violence, the latter category to emphasise it.

<u>HARMLESS</u>	<u>HARM FUL</u>
Pretend	Real
Represented	Experienced
Normative	Transgressive

Yet an examination of how violence surfaces in children's lives soon shows just how slippery, to use Tausig's word (Nordstrom and Robben 1995), violence is. Reported violence draws on both experiential and pretend forms of violence. As reported or narrated, violence can perform a different kind of transgression, or exert a different kind of power than enacted violence. Damage to reputation or respectability is not necessarily less than damage bodily inflicted. In fact, Dance Hall Queen portrays just how intricately the two are intertwined and how powerful reported violence can be. Normative or transgressive interpretations of violence can be recast, in the course of a narrative, as the above excerpt illustrates to some extent, and as the one that follows points out even more dramatically. Interpretations of violence as deadly serious, as a joke, as integral to peer solidarity, as an intense source of entertainment follow one upon the other seamlessly within the flow of the conversation these boys have with me. The boundaries between different kinds of violence do not remain in the neat columns above, but have much more in common with the actual geography of the area, which is a porous limestone terrain of cavernous mountain ridges where rivers can disappear, plunge underground, only to emerge unexpectedly elsewhere. The meanings of violence take a similar route through the course of this conversation:

The conversation, which takes place during preparation for National Heroes Week begins with my attempts to understand what meaning the word hero has for them. One who takes decisive action seems to form part of its meaning. So I ask what kind of decisions do the boys take? At first they say they do not make decision, then one bursts in with a slate of anti-establishment decisions he takes or would like to take. One of them is to go down and watch videos at the store, one of the community's more

lucrative businesses. Narrating a movie, in this case Jim Carrey's *The Mask* leads to a more engaged enthusiastic exchange of views and argumentation. It is at this point that the conversation turns back to fighting:

Transcript Two

TAKEN FROM DISCUSSION IN THE FOLLOWING WEEK

B: You trust your friends?

Like your best friend--

DANIEL: His best friend Jerome

an everyday
and one minute after everyting all righhhhhhht!

SAMUEL Jerome fight

B: you ever settle a fight?

SAMUEL: Yes miss.

B: how did you do it?

SAMUEL: Part dem miss.

B: You part them?

how did you keep them from fighting again?

NEHEMIAH: No more fight

SAMUEL: You part dem once, dem naw fight again

NEHEMIAH: Some time

Some ah dem wan make trouble

some people

MICAH: yes miss

SAMUEL: That's when some people when dey a part fight,

dey always end up -----:

NEHEMIAH: That's when people part fight,

DANIEL: people part fight already dem ah dead.

dey a dead.

B: Them dead?

DANIEL: People who part di fight

somebody will

som'--- dey dead—

B: People who part the fight--?

HOSEA: Dead

B: dead

DANIEL: One person who starts de fight

two person (basically it's a set up)

B: Oh dear

B: because the people who were fighting then beat up the person who parted them?

DANIEL: Yes miss,

Various: Yes, NO, that's now what, mmmhm

B:if you part a fight you can end up stabbed?

MICAH: yes miss

B: You know a story about that happening?

MICAH: a big story

Nobody knows

police dem wi' a story

B: Nehemiah, you say it's true, you know about that happening--

NEHEMIAH: and two man a fight

One man part di fight

and im get

and im dead.

One a dem use a knife

DANIEL: One of dem use a knife

and cut out his belly,

Him belly

every ting mus' drop out

B: Have you ever parted a fight?

NEHEMIAH: never part a fight (as if repeating advice)

B: Not here at school?

?like Kung Fu show already

B: What about here at school

what do you do if a fight breaks out here?

NEHEMIAH: watch dem

SAMUEL: part dem

B: You part dem?

So it's safe to part fight here at school?

DANIEL: People naw part Jerome

B: If you and Jerome were fighting does anybody part you?

why not?

DANIEL: they wan see fight

B: Oh it's more fun to watch the fight

than to stop it

DANIEL: Yes

they wanna see

NEHEMIAH: No mi go dead too

B: If it was your friend that was in a fight

and he was getting beaten badly,

what would you do?

SAMUEL: Pull one of dem off

DANIEL: "Beat em Beat em" (demonstrating how he would yell encouragement)_

SAMUEL:Pull one of dem off. (laughter other fight reaction sounds)

DANIEL: Jerry ready for slice!--

Although the boys do not explicitly refer to Dance Hall Queen, what they narrate describes the scene in which a friend of Marcia's steps into a fight, only to find "Fi you, me ah come" as he is stabbed in the belly. In their incorporation of this scene into their commentary of their own predicaments we can glimpse what Don Letts may be referring to when he describes the intricate interaction between "show" and reality: "Movies are reality and reality is a nightmare" In this instance the movie Dance Hall Queen serves as

a reflection point through which imagined violence is used in an open public debate in which they boys work out key issues about their own identity and agency.

Throughout the conversation I am trying to draw distinctions, trying to find categories to contain the different meanings violence may have, but they are elusive. Throughout their responses can be interpreted as trying to dissuade me from doing so, arguing through narration of the futility of the exercise. What becomes apparent is that how their identities are maintained and negotiated weaves between different forms and understandings of violence. What is important is not the concepts of violence, but the ability to move flexibly, and adroitly amongst them to maintain one's place in the group. This task is at a more complex level than the one I am attempting. Yet the complexity I am drawing attention to is not to be confused with a celebration of obfuscation that post structuralists might read into the situation. The structural constraints and life and death consequences at stake do not afford an endless play between sign, signified and signifier.

A great deal of analysis about children and violence concentrates on whether or not children can distinguish between reality and pretense, the fear being they will perpetrate on real people the extreme acts of violence that technology has intensified their play experiences of. The research is not conclusive, but the one salient point made, is that children's ability to interpret media representation or simulation of violence is very much dependent on children's contextual experience of violence with which they compare it. i.e. what their lived experience of violence is in homes, in the community, in school, with family, peers, and adults (McLaren and Morris 1998: 118). Their comparative understanding of violence may be more important than any set definition of the term they could give. How children play with violence in both embodied and narrative ways develops their comparative understanding of violence. Through these strategies the terror or trauma of violence is made manageable in different ways. These strategies involve the inversion of violence through carnivalesque play (Bakhtin 1984), the imitation or practice of violence, and the ritualisation of violence. Limón argues that those at a disadvantage in society, through play fighting verbally and physically carnivalise the meaning of violence, transposing its connotations from ones of oppression and harm into expressions of empowerment.

Although there is an interesting reassessment of the role of play and humour in children's lives (Goldman 1998) and a substantial reappraisal of children's agency (James and Prout 1997, Prout 2000), there persists a disturbing gap in available

literature on children's violence. Nowhere perhaps are binary oppositions more unhelpful than those which are constructed between violence and non-violence, as many of the contributions in Howell and Willis (1989) point out⁹. A much more nuanced depiction of agency, competition, and cooperation is needed to talk about children's experience, understanding and use of force. The study of violence has concentrated on its extremes and most problematic manifestations. Given funding rationales, this is not surprising. The study of violence in relation to children or youth is particularly crisis-led. The focus bypasses middle childhood (Lawrence, Steed, Young, 1984, Corsaro, 1997) to concentrate on older adolescents, thereby missing out a crucial moment in children's development of identities, strategies and attitudes towards violence.

This absence reflects one in the wider research on violence. Whilst Schmidt and Schröeder's (2001) anthology acknowledges that the role of imagined and performed violence is important to consider, the role these activities might play in the escalation of violence from normative to transgressive is not explored. Nordstrom and Robben's collection provides further insight, stating from the outset, "that violence is a dimension of people's existence, not something external to society and culture that 'happens to people'" (1995: 2). Yet, the focus gravitates, again, to the extremes rather than a working through of the more integral role violence may play more broadly within people's lives. The same can be said of works that focus specifically on violence in children's lives, such as Berman (2000) and Scheper-Hughes and Sargent (1998). Perhaps the extremes of violence are difficult to understand, so quickly seem to be "senseless", because the more ingrained presence of violence as a force constructive of identity and community is so poorly understood¹⁰.

The basic definition of violence as physical hurt or violation masks the many gradations of violence there can be and the sliding meanings each can have. My observation is that violations are often integral to the games and relationships of children within tacitly agreed boundaries. It is the transgression and negotiations of these boundaries that constitute the mutual identity formation of individual and community. In order for these boys' continued sparring to be maintained there have to be elements of cooperation and consensus about the degree of violence tolerated. The process of and criteria for these negotiations are for the most part tacit, fluid and embodied. They require rapid and complex assessment and analysis. No wonder these activities concentrate boys' minds much more than their math lessons, but one has to wonder just what could be possible if

the complex intelligence evidenced within their debates about violence could actually be incorporated into formal education.

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Endnotes

¹ Press coverage of a near flat-line rate of improvement on test scores features widely in news coverage and commentaries. "Ja hits language barrier", Gleaner, June 7, 1999 reports that for the last 5 years the CXC examining board annual report has concluded, "the greatest weakness of the candidates is their inability to maintain a consistent level of acceptable English." Other articles include, "CXC students struggle to interpret English", Gleaner, Oct 30, 1999, "Grade 4 students fail again" Jamaica Observer, July 11 2000, "Poor Grade 4 Literacy Results", Gleaner, July 27, 2000, "Marginal improvement in some CXC grades", Gleaner, Sept 2, 2000.

² Their findings correspond with Tikly's observation that reforms have to contend with complex obstacles: "the vested interests of local elites, a lack of resources and the hegemony of Western culture and forms of knowledge in an increasingly global world." He goes on to observe: "This hegemony and the subsequent interpretation and hybridisation of cultural forms (processes in which education systems have been so deeply implicated) have made it increasingly difficult to define what a more culturally 'relevant' curriculum might entail" (2001: 255).

³ A new curriculum, which Bryan (2000: 3) describes as, "concentrating on developing literacy with community involvement", being developed in conjunction with a DFID (Department for International Development, UK) funded community education initiative, New Horizon Project, is to replace the curriculum for Grades 1-3. It is being piloted in rural schools, but had not been implemented in the area where research was conducted.

⁴ In this respect Jamaica's situation is similar to the one Delpit (1998) outlines for African Americans.

⁵ As Carranza (1999) has noted the relation between argumentation and narration is relatively unexplored in discourse analysis, an omission, which particularly in the Caribbean context, deserves to be addressed.

⁶ Pollard also makes the important point in the conclusion to her Creole-Standard English handbook that all too often distinctions are not clearly explained to children, leaving them confused about the form their writing should take. The distinction often blurred being that between topic centred narrative form and topic centred expository forms:

Children hear stories from parents, from teachers, and from their peers. They know what constitutes a story. We confuse them when we ask them to write a story when what we expect is a description of something or somebody. Write a story about your dog. Write a story about your family . . . The lack of distinction between story and description plagues them all the way to CXC where they distinction is crucial and might cost them several marks. There are numerous classroom opportunities for clearing up this particular confusion but we hardly use them. (1993: 62)

⁷ Indirectness is a problematic term as it could refer to several distinctly different things, with very different intents.

⁸ Holland and Moser's (1997) study examines the linkages between violence, economic conditions and social capital in a community, stressing the spiralling effects that a sense of vulnerability creates in communities that experience high levels of violence. Although their study concentrates on conditions in urban Jamaica, where 80% of violent crime is committed, the networks between urban and rural communities, make violence of increasing concern in rural areas.

⁹ For instance, Robarchek usefully uncovers the determinism underlying much developmental psychology, for instance Archer (1994), which seeks to locate some reactive mechanism in "human nature ". He goes on to suggest that aggression could be more usefully explored from a perspective "that takes purposeful human actions in service of a variety of culturally defined (and often contradictory) goals as the primary fact of human relations" (1998: 33).

¹⁰ The most cogent, sensitively nuanced analysis of the role of violence and aggression in the formation of male identity is rather difficult to cite. It was an autobiographical performance by a first generation Jamaican American actor performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, entitled *Runt* (2001). As Denzin (1997) has noted the cross-fertilisation between performing arts and anthropology are opening up interesting avenues of examination and dissemination.

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