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It's in the Syllabus:

National Narratives and Curricular Politics in Postcolonial Education

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Global and International Studies

by

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September 2016

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May 2016

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National Narratives and Curricular Politics in Postcolonial Education

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Rachael Jordan Drew

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ABSTRACT

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National Narratives and Curricular Politics in Postcolonial Education

by

Rachael Jordan Drew

Reviewing and reiterating the claim that curriculum content is inherently political and never neutral, this thesis explores the legacies of British colonization on Jamaican education by looking at education reforms and curriculum evolution to track the presence of culturally relevant classroom material in the Anglophone Caribbean. Both England and Jamaica have utilized education for re-constructing national identity and priorities as they negotiate historical narratives and canonized curriculum material when presented with the forces and processes of globalization. Syllabi from five secondary schools in Kingston, Jamaica are used for a case study. While the curriculum content in Jamaican secondary schools is now inclusive and culturally relevant, the education structure itself is a colonial vestige, in terms of the excessive standardized testing that tracks students into each grade level. While the canonization of previously excluded Caribbean authors into the curriculum by the Caribbean Examinations Council has effectively introduced culturally relevant course material, additional recommendations include cultivating a meta-curriculum, whereby teachers and students engage in classroom discussion about why and how the required curriculum material was selected, in order to better understand the political nature of curriculum choice and the ramifications it can have in terms of indoctrinating ideas about nationality, historical narratives, and identity.

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I. Introduction

According to Hickling (2004), “Schools are powerful instruments for inculcating the different domains of literacy into future citizens: the epistemic domain of academic knowledge, the humanist domain of narratives of cultural and gender identity, the technical domain of procedural skills and the public domain of socio-political knowledge” (p. 4). Acknowledging this, we must be critical about the content and expected returns for the types of knowledge that schools are providing and promoting. This thesis uses postcolonial education as a framework to examine how culture and history are engrained and narrated in a national context, specifically looking at curriculum and structure in secondary education. This thesis will focus on the different ways that education is both imposed by the state to intentionally create a certain kind of national citizen, and subverted by historically marginalized groups who use education to incorporate and remember cultural histories often omitted or glossed over by standardized education initiatives. The guiding research questions for this thesis are as follows: (1) What are the legacies of British colonization on the Anglophone Caribbean education system? (2) What is the narrative this curriculum is attempting to promote? (3) What narratives, qualities, characteristics, and actors does this curriculum emphasize or omit?

Postcolonial nations like Jamaica negotiate their own education systems, content, and curriculum in the midst of the vestiges of the education system implemented during colonization as well as growing standardized global education trends. The Caribbean region is a particularly interesting case study for postcolonial education, as it provides a microcosm of intersectionalities between a postcolonial, global south colonized by multiple global north countries with different cultural and linguistic legacies. The Anglophone Caribbean, specifically Jamaica, was chosen as an ideal microcosm to

observe a postcolonial education system because document analysis in the time frame of this thesis necessitated an English-speaking country. Jamaica is home to one of the Caribbean Examination Council offices as well as the University of the West Indies Mona campus in Jamaica. These attributes designate Jamaica, and specifically the city of Kingston, as a site of education conversation and decision-making. These factors situate Jamaica as a nation with a complex array of continued postcolonial influences that play out in its national, regional, and international negotiations surrounding its education system.

This thesis will focus primarily on history and literature education curriculum content in Jamaica. However, England's national education system in the 1960s-1980s will be used as a reference point in Chapter IV, in terms of how the British education system (specifically England) has grappled with including migrant populations from former Anglophone Caribbean colonies in the framework of a national curriculum intended to promote a certain kind of British culture. Additionally, education in post-imperial Britain will be examined as an arena in which England negotiates its national and cultural status, in the context of the growing diversity of student populations due to migration from former colonies in the early 1960s.

The postcolonial relationship between the Anglophone Caribbean and England continues to be relevant and can be viewed through the lens of national education contexts and policies. Research will also touch on the advantages and disadvantages of constructing a postcolonial education plan in a country like Jamaica that must take into account colonial history, funding issues, postcolonial economic dependence, and IMF-imposed austerity measures. Drawing largely from theory and scholars in global studies, postcolonial studies, and comparative education studies, specifically Michael W. Apple

(1977, 1993), Raymond Williams (1977), Benedict Anderson (2006), Anne Hickling-Hudson (2003, 2004), Trica Keaton (2006), Yatta Kanu (2006), and Jennifer Lavia and Sechaba Maholmaholo (2012), I will address themes of identity, imagination, racism, culture, curricular politics, national pride, regionalism, and nationhood throughout this thesis.

Within the global/local contexts that are of particular importance to global studies, I work under the assumption that the importance of education will only increase in a globalizing world, as a means of self-determination, development, stability, small state advantage, economic growth, and production of competitive knowledge economies. The issues involved in this project will include education reform policies, education as a form of state control, education as a means of historical remembrance, education as cultural practice, and education as a transmitter of national narratives and identity (Kanu, 2006).

My case study will be conducted through document analysis of syllabi and curricula from five selected secondary schools in Kingston, Jamaica. Curriculum content will be analyzed for history and literature courses, particularly noting the inclusion or exclusion of historical events like slavery and colonialism, as well as the ratios of Caribbean and British authors assigned for English Literature courses. I focus on education in terms of the physical classroom space where teacher-student interactions take place, and as an ideological space where authority, national consensus, “cultural positioning, and multiple discourses of power” play out (Griffiths and Troyna, 1995, p. 93). K-12 education is targeted in agreement with Griffiths and Troyna’s (1995) idea that “Children are active makers of social reality,” and as such, grades K-12 are important educational time frames to look at when considering how children are educationally conditioned with narratives about national history, identity, and belonging (p. 99).

A. Research/Guiding Questions

Drawing largely from Lavia and Maholmaholo (2012), guiding questions for this research are influenced by the following questions that framed their work: “What would it be like if a curriculum were to draw on the strengths of impoverished communities, rather than remaining mired in the neocolonial perspectives of Europeanized dominant cultures?” and “Can education contribute to cultural confidences of peoples and communities who have endured centuries of oppression and marginalization?” (p. x, 255). Importantly, the essence of this question has merit in the findings of this thesis; i.e. ‘can education contribute to cultural self-consciousness of postcolonial students?’ Khawlah Ahmed’s (2010) inquiry is also illuminating and speaks to the core knot of difficulties and decisions that present themselves in the wake of the intersection between globalization and education: “how far can states promote ‘national culture’ through education and what forms should these take in pluralistic societies”? (p. 197). The main research question for this thesis, as previously mentioned, is as follows: What are the legacies of British colonization on the Anglophone Caribbean education system?

B. Curriculum Controversies

Education continues to be a politically charged public sphere. In the recently elevated public awareness and discussion of globalization, the institution of education, particularly education curricula, has become a way to engage with what Benedict Anderson (2006) terms “imagined communities,” attempting to make nation states more concrete and tangible by instilling national curriculums that identify, by careful selection, what content and which authors are most important. Situating curriculum material as an inherently political decision, I consider this to be an overwhelmingly global phenomenon, especially seen in the light of recent curriculum protests worldwide, which will be discussed shortly.

Re-claiming education as a tool for constructing national stability is happening around the world, and because of the political nature of such education reforms, controversy unsurprisingly follows. Below, examples from various countries and US states highlight this situation, and are included to showcase curricular politics as global phenomenon that play out in different local and regional contexts.

1. France

In February 2005, France passed a law stipulating that any reference of France's colonizing history had to be presented in a positive light by teachers in public schools.¹ In this instance, we see France struggling to assert a national narrative of its past through public education by omitting historical references that paint French imperialism in a negative manner. This initiative can be considered a continuation of France's "common culture" curriculum, which allegedly seeks to create a sense of citizenship and belonging by instilling a common historical narrative as a reference point for French national identity formation (Keaton, 2006, p. 105). However, this selective curriculum fails to incorporate both the multiethnic and multicultural realities of current French demographics, particularly in urban areas, and the multiethnic influences on French history and development.

Keaton's research (2006), although specific to France and not England, is worth noting because it exemplifies how other European post-imperial nations construct their national narratives and cultural identity expectations. France's "common culture" national curriculum promotes a monoculture narrative and omits historical and literary narratives that feature black contributions to France's history. Keaton (2006) explores the tensions

¹ This law was later repealed by Jacques Chirac in 2006 after major public criticisms

that arise in a French society that, on the one hand, promotes cultural assimilation and unity through its national public education system, and yet socially excludes its Arab and African youth populations.

2. England

Similarly, England's national curriculum has been carefully constructed as a nationalist, positive narrative of British history. This creates tension within British multicultural society. "Discrimination by proxy" is a category used by Troyna and Williams (2012) to highlight the ineffective policy responses to the black community's demands for education equality. Instead of directly addressing institutional racism itself, proxies for race that are addressed include culture and language, and thus responses to discrimination are 'deracialized.' Hence, we need a nuanced consideration of the "contrast between racially explicit policies, everyday practices, and ideological assumptions, on the one hand, and the supposed inexplicitness of 'race' in educational orientations" (p. 11).

3. Hong Kong/Taiwan

The Moral and National Education (MNE) curriculum put forth by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong incited protests in 2011 and 2012. Protesters included members of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, The Alliance Against Moral & National Education, and the National Education Parents' Concern Group, who argued that the curriculum was politically biased towards China's communist and nationalist ideology. This Hong Kong case is especially interesting juxtaposed with this thesis topic, as Hong Kong has gone from a British- to Chinese- introduced colonial education system:

The debate over Hong Kong's education really took shape as the 1997 handover from British to Chinese rule approached. Liberals fought to promote civic values, and bring up a young generation able to take an interest in running the territory;

conservatives, keen to please their future masters in Beijing, promoted a ‘patriotic’ reading of China and its relationship with Hong Kong (Denyer, 2014).²

Here, we see nationalist tensions and historical narratives playing out in curriculum content, as far as who has the monopoly on determining what gets encoded as official or legitimate knowledge. Similarly, in Taiwan, high school students recently led protests against the new history textbooks, which insinuate that China has a historical claim on Taiwan (Marquand, 2015).

4. Idaho, USA

In the United States, Ogawa (2001) correctly states, “school history has been historically regarded as the primary place in the school curriculum for students to cultivate a sense of national identity, common values, and heritage” (p. 3). Using an analysis of middle school students’ receptiveness to and acquisition of multiple historical perspectives of World War II, the author concludes students’ knowledge and understanding about WWII drastically increased when taught with textbooks from multiple perspectives. Ogawa (2001) concludes that teaching history through the use of multiple perspectives increases students’ mastery of the topics, based on a comparative textbook analysis activity in which students were presented with material from both US and Japanese textbooks covering WWII.

Ogawa’s study (2004) examining the revised history textbooks used in Idaho from 2002-2007 found that four of the six textbooks “limit the discussion of possible reasons for internment to the issues of fear and the need for national security,” referring to the treatment of Japanese Americans during WWII. I attended high school in Idaho when these textbooks were in use, and this example has personal ramifications for critically

² For more on the controversy over the national education curriculum in Hong Kong, see Curriculum Development (2013), Denyer (2014), and Liu (2012).

reflecting on the content of my own educational experience in a conservative state. Ogawa (2004) concludes that the textbooks studied “seem to justify internment based solely upon fear and military necessity” (p. 3). Additionally, only two textbooks “contained maps in reference to the Japanese-American internment camps,” which is especially interesting in the Idaho context, seeing as two camps were located in Idaho (Camp Minidoka and the recently-discovered Kooskia camp: see Margolis, 2013 and Druckenbrod, 2012). Ogawa (2004) further concludes that while these textbooks have improved since Romanowski (1995)’s earlier study of US textbooks, most of the textbooks don’t fully assist students in obtaining the judgment, perspectives, and knowledge that are important to the study of society. These findings also suggest that several textbooks fail to develop students’ critical-thinking skills and critical knowledge about citizenship by presenting a mystified representation of American history.

Textbook failings listed include lack of discussion about early Japanese immigration, reasons for internment, differences between Japanese Americans living in the mainland vs. Hawaii, and omissions of camp conditions (Ogawa, 2004).

5. Texas, USA

In the conservative state of Texas, criticisms over Texas school curriculums regarding the minimization of slavery and the omission of the KKK and Jim Crow laws from social studies textbooks have become rampant (Brown, 2015). The Texas school board recently made headlines because of the outrage, sparked by a black mother of a Texas student, over a Texas world geography textbook in which slaves were called ‘workers,’ implying that they were paid. Publisher McGraw-Hill announced that it would revise and reprint the ‘mistake’ in the textbook, which currently is being used by a quarter of the 1,200 Texas school districts. White social conservatives notoriously dominate the Texas school board.

This example from the US speaks to the larger issue of what happens when the principal actors creating a curriculum do not reflect the diversity of those actually participating in the school systems, and it is concerning that a small body of people with certain viewpoints are thus able to disseminate those viewpoints through textbook material and curricula guides (“Publisher,” 2015).

6. Colorado, USA

A final example in the US exemplifying curricular politics is the recent polarizing school board vote in the swing state of Colorado, where conservative groups support the current school board, including the Koch-sponsored Americans for Prosperity. With an almost even divide of Democrat, Republican, and independent voters in Colorado, this politically charged issue grew in September 2014, when thousands of high school students staged a school walk-out protesting a conservative school board member’s proposal to “shift the focus of the Advanced Placement United States history course toward patriotism and away from ‘civil disorder’ and ‘social strife’” (Healy, 2015). This is noteworthy in the wider conversation about education politics, especially since Colorado is considered a purple state and not a traditionally conservative state, like Texas. The original draft of the proposal to change the curriculum suggested that new AP History curriculum material “should not encourage or condone civil disorder, social strife or disregard of the law. Instructional materials should present positive aspects of the United States and its heritage” (Brundin, 2014). Critics of the proposal vehemently argued that to decrease emphasis on slavery and women’s rights in US history is a form of conservative censorship that would be detrimental to the kind of critical thinking currently demanded of students.

The examples presented above are intended to situate the Jamaican education system and the negotiations surrounding it in terms of curriculum content and structure within a larger global narrative of how nations are responding to both colonial histories and present-day forces of globalization through education reforms and debates. In the case study chapter VI of this thesis, analyses of secondary school literature, history, and social sciences curriculum highlight the melding of both British and Caribbean curriculum content, on which students are tested via the regional Caribbean Examinations Council. However, all examinations and most classroom materials are in Jamaican Standard English as opposed to Jamaican Creole, setting the stage for language and identity negotiations that become political, further addressed below

C. Significance/Relevance

Education is fundamentally important to the success of both individuals and nation states. In an increasingly globalized world, tailored and localized education policies are more appropriate to accommodate migration flows and promote self-aware world citizens. Education has the potential to influence and transmit positive or negative national narratives of past historical events and cultures, which affect the identity formation and identity positioning of youth. This is relevant for postcolonial states like Jamaica as well as former colonizer states like England as they negotiate their postcolonial national identities, re-creating their “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006).

Education models are generally constructed based on nation-state parameters; however, this project seeks to understand both how colonial histories shape national education systems in Jamaica, and how national education systems can be uniquely crafted through dialogue, convergence, and divergence from regional, international and global education standards and reforms in a postcolonial context. Within the transnational

context, local, regional, and global contexts are all relevant to education curricula and the politics and decisions surrounding it. For example, in 1989, the First Regional Consultation on Education occurred in Kingston, Jamaica, which established the significance of Caribbean regionalism in educational objectives and curricula. The first regionally integrated education plan for the Caribbean was later drafted in 1993 as The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Policy on Education, which emphasizes using regionalism as both an ideal and a resource (Carrington, 1993). According to Jules (2006), who exemplifies the tensions between national, regional, and global politics in education, “It takes an exceptionally strong political will at the national level to establish an educational agenda that does not converge with or replicate the dominant paradigm and an even greater strength to say no to funding that would result in a deviation from the national agenda. Moreover, because of the hegemony exerted by the multi-laterals, conformity to international prescriptions can serve as a powerful symbolic statement of a regime’s ‘modernizing’ intent” (p. 18). Bray (1991) echoes this sentiment: “The style of educational development . . . is too frequently modeled on what is appropriate and fashionable in large states. Small countries are not simply a scaled-down version of large countries. They have an ecology of their own” (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1986 as cited in Bray, 1991). There is an opportunity for small states to acquire a successful education niche because “Small states may be more responsive to reform because a single actor can have a greater proportionate influence than would be the case in a larger state. . . .” (Crossley, Bray and Packer, 2009, p. 732).

As Aimé Césaire (1955) has argued, “it is equally necessary to decolonize our minds, our inner life, at the same time that we decolonize society” (p. 94). Building on this, Nederveen Pieterse (1995; 2013) reaffirms that global studies entails the “decolonization

of the imagination.” Thus, this project focuses on how education as an institution can contribute to a national imagination, and how education can function as a tool of both historical remembrance and future imaginations about how a postcolonial nation will enter into the global education dialogue. Looking at this topic through a global studies framework allows for an interdisciplinary approach that accounts for local and global actors, dominant and subaltern narratives, and global north and global south dynamics in education

This study is both relevant and timely because it confirms the current understanding of education by organizations such as UNESCO and UNDP as a fundamental building block of development for individual/social/national progress, participatory politics, stability, economic growth, and as a protected human right.

It is important here to address the exact purpose of education. In the field of international development, education is contextualized as a means to a more developed end, and it is rightly correlated with increases in personal income, lower infant mortality rates, higher literacy rates, and other indicators of human development that result in higher quality of life and giving people options and additional functionings (Sen, 1999).

Education is something that most people in the international community are on board with; no one disagrees with the importance of education. However, funding and targeted initiatives have to pick and choose what to focus on in the realm of education. Should education prepare students for a globalized world? Should it strive to make students more competitive? Should it focus on career preparation? Should it focus on practical skills? Should it teach students how to critically think? Should the school system itself be competitive? Should it be exam-based? Is it more of a priority for curriculum to be culturally relevant in literature and history or for student test scores to go up in math and

science? All of these considerations are factors in education debates worldwide, and they play out in the Jamaican context examined here. I would argue that while education is generally viewed as a ‘magic bullet’ for problems ranging from youth crime to teenage pregnancy to low GDP, education cannot be applied as a magic bullet solution for all of the questions and concerns listed above. It is clearly more complicated than that. For example, if students do not see themselves in the curriculum, in terms of racial, national, and linguistic representation, and feel alienated or disillusioned with their education because of this, it does no good to talk about making them competitive members of the global economy. If students don’t understand teachers who speak Jamaican Standard English and are shamed when Jamaican Creole rolls off their tongue in the middle of class, student interest and progress in all courses will be negatively impacted. Thus, culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum content must be prioritized early in education grade levels.

Smaller states like Jamaica can be vulnerable for various reasons to hegemonic education standards that are becoming popularized and disseminated by the United States and for-profit educational institutions. Thus, the creation and maintenance of education systems that are localized and have curriculum material specific to national histories and narratives is ever more important. This project emphasizes the role of teachers in disseminating historical and literary narratives through education, and the importance of teachers recognizing the education system that has taught and conditioned them, in order to position themselves in a place to converge or diverge with these conditionings.

D. Jamaica’s Debt History

Many factors affect the Caribbean’s regional education policies as well as Jamaica’s national education system, including a colonial history and an indebted economy. Jamaica

is classified as a developing country, one of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and is also a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) regional integration bloc. It is in a country's best interests to have an educated population in order to be competitive globally, yet Jamaica's financial constraints present a catch-22: they cannot invest in education because they are indebted to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but because of this, unemployment has increased and economic growth rates have plummeted, forcing the country to continually re-finance IMF loans. Jamaica's long history of debt and IMF/World Bank interventions, structural adjustment policies, and austerity measures contradict the general western public's knowledge of Jamaica as simply a tourist paradise. Austerity measures have affected funding for social programs and have prevented development, opposing IMF predictions for economic growth. Cuts in education have negatively affected the youth population, education institutional quality, and employment.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (2008), the Jamaican government has articulated a National Development Plan, which aims to move the country towards a developed country status by the year 2030. However, being a small, open economy with debt-induced austerity measures limits government options for social spending. According to Johnston and Montecinco (2011), "This exceedingly large debt burden has effectively crowded out most other public expenditure, especially public investment in education and infrastructure" (p. 1).

Jamaica is one of the most highly indebted countries in the world, with the highest debt interest burden (Johnston, 2013). According to the *Life and Debt* documentary, "In Jamaica, only 5 percent of total money borrowed since 1977 has been able to stay inside the country" (2001). Additionally, Dear and Jones (2013) point out that "Jamaica spends more than twice as much on debt payments as it spends on education and health

combined” (italics in original).

Jamaica’s economy largely relies on natural resources such as bauxite and alumina and tourism, and has not fully succeeded in diversifying its economy from its 400 year colonial legacy (Spanish and British) of a sugar cane, coffee, and cocoa plantation economy. The autonomy that Jamaica sought after acquiring their independence in 1962 contradicts the poverty trap stemming from the intentionally undiversified economies resulting from left over colonial-created single crop economies. Jamaica had a window of just under a decade of autonomous self-governance between gaining independence and when the IMF loan cycle started. Tying IMF policies specifically to education, “of particular concern for education advocates, the IMF loan program places a particular emphasis on containing the public sector wage bill, which can undermine the ability of the Education Ministry to increase wages for teachers or higher additional teachers” (Rowden, 2011). This not only affects the education system in Jamaica, but also disincentives the teaching profession in a country where the teaching profession already struggles from a lack of respect and decent compensation.

E. Education and Development

A number of education and development experts (Sen, 1999) have posited that what creates peace is not increased military regimes and hard power strategies, but the alleviation of poverty and civic discontent through non-military avenues such as education. According to Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002), rates of return for education are highest for Latin America/Caribbean countries. The *UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report 2012: Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security* references the importance of education for decreasing high unemployment rates and decreasing crime rates, especially among men. Youth education is listed as one of the five

core prevention areas for public safety objectives in the Caribbean (HDR 2012, p. 166). Among the many social and economic issues that the Caribbean region is dealing with, the UNDP and the World Bank (2008) peg school dropout rates, especially high among boys, as indicators of a gap between school curriculum and skills employers are looking for. Carrington (1993) addresses the “need to stem the wastage of talent among school dropouts. Many of these students feel alienated because of the failure of the school system to provide them with the survival skills that they need” (Carrington, 1993).

In 1996, a UNESCO conference specific to Latin America and the Caribbean focused on the theme “Education for development and peace” (Williams, 2000). This language choice shows that the UN frames education as an avenue for peace. Williams (2000) further explains that “The seeds of global security can be planted through how we teach, which must reflect international difference. The pressing role for International Education is to understand national/regional difference in the context of human universals.” Equating education with peace is useful when thinking about reducing inequality in the Caribbean. A striking statistic highlights the extreme inequality within the Jamaican education system: “In Jamaica, 77 percent of all post-secondary students come from the richest quintile of the population” (Blom and Hobbs, 2008). Experts in the Caribbean also warn that the national returns to investments in tertiary education are affected by the amount of citizens that leave the region to be educated and/or employed elsewhere (‘brain drain’), further exacerbating the dichotomy in the Caribbean between those who are educated and employed and those who are not.

F. Key Terms

1. Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)

The examining body that provides syllabus and curriculum development as well as examinations development and production for the Anglophone Caribbean. Its mission is “To provide the region with: syllabuses of the highest quality; [and] valid and reliable examinations and certificates of international repute for students of all ages” (CXC, 2016).

2. Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person

A segment of the 1997 CARICOM Conference session on Education and Human Resource Development: Strategies for Building a Creative and Productive Workforce that has been incorporated into education conversations and planning visions. See appendix 2 for full description.

3. Postcolonial

While I acknowledge that the term postcolonial normatively refers to both the time period and state of autonomy after colonized states are granted independence, this thesis does not concede that ‘the postcolonial’ implies colonization and imperialism are things of the past. Instead, concepts of the postcolonial are broadened in this thesis, as Kanu (2006) writes, “it is the ‘postcolonial’ as a stance against Eurocentrism, as evidenced by the dominance of Western knowledge/cultural production and dissemination, that is important here” (p. 68). Kanu (2006) also defines the postcolonial as a “position against imperialism,” a site where assumptions are called into question, and “independent colonies that now contend with neocolonial forms of subjugation through expanding forms of capitalism and globalization” (p. 68).

This project also considers the postcolonial definition given by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2003) to be relevant, in terms of considering as the postcolonial “all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (p. 2).

4. *Neocolonial*

Neocolonialism refers to forms of control, domination, coercion, power, and influence that result in a marginalized group of people. More specifically, the term “suggests an indirect form of control through economic and cultural dependence” (Yew, 2002).

5. *Identity*

Stuart Hall’s conception of identity will be used throughout this thesis in the sense that identity is always both a *production* and a *position*, as well as Hall’s argument that cultural identity is not a fixed entity, but instead is informed by both the past and the future imaginations and acknowledges the different histories and experiences that shape the identities of those who are sometimes constructed to have the same origins (1990).

Hall (1990) writes, “Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being.’ It belongs to the future as much as to the past” (p. 225).

I also acknowledge Judith Butler’s caution to avoid essentializing categories in politics of representation and the question she poses about identity, which relates to the Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person: “To what extent is ‘identity’ a normative ideal rather than a descriptive feature of experience?” (1990, p. 16).³

6. *Imagination*

Imagination is a central component of identity formation and reflection, as considerations of identity do not necessarily stem only from the past, but must also be constructed in terms of what Benedict Anderson (2006) calls “an imagined community” and a future. An imagined community is an important concept to draw on in order to situate one’s identity in relation to others in the past, present, and future. This imagination

³ Butler also poses the question, “Does ‘unity’ set up an exclusionary norm of solidarity at the level of identity that rules out the possibility of a set of actions which disrupt the very borders of identity concepts, or which seek to accomplish precisely that disruption as an explicit political aim?” (15). This complicates

is fundamentally important for negotiating postcolonial states that must balance their national identities not simply on past histories but also on future imagining of what an autonomous and independent cultural identity could look like, how it will be produced, and what it will be positioned against.⁴

7. *Hegemony*

According to Stuart Hall (1993), “Cultural hegemony is never about pure victory or pure domination (that's not what the term means); it is never a zero-sum cultural game; it is always about shifting the balance of power in the relations of culture; it is always about changing the dispositions and the configurations of cultural power.” According to Gramsci, social hegemony is produced through apparatuses of state coercive power, which have the authority to enforce discipline without explicit consent from the public. Education and schools are one instance of a state apparatus through which this can occur (1988, p. 307). Additionally, as Gramsci writes, “every relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily an educational relationship” (1988). Raymond Williams also addresses the concept of hegemony in his critique and expansion of Marxist thought, unpacking the Marxist notion of culture as a reflection of the economic superstructure. Williams (1997) writes “A lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure...it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified” (p. 112). This theoretical framework is useful in understanding that although some define hegemonic forces as constantly dominant, the renewal and defense of hegemonic ideals is played out in the political discussions surrounding curriculum content.

concepts like the Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person as well as education strategies that seek to construct national and regional identities through alternative narratives and histories.

⁴ Additionally, see Appadurai (1996) and Geertz (1997).

G. Methods

The methodology for this study will rely primarily on qualitative document analysis. My data collection procedure will also include researching the history, context, and current education system in the Anglophone Caribbean. Case study research will further focus on the particularities of education content and curriculum in Jamaica and England post-1960s. Both exploratory and explanatory methods of research will be used: exploring what factors affect, improve, and inhibit sound educational policies, initiatives, content, expectations, how they are funded, and what the purpose of education content reflects.

1. Method 1: Document Analysis

Textbooks and syllabi from five selected secondary education classrooms in the Caribbean, specifically Kingston, Jamaica, will be analyzed, particularly looking at the narratives (or lack thereof) of historical events such as the Age of Exploration, imperialism, colonialism, and slavery. The ratios of British to Caribbean authors of assigned reading texts in English courses as well as the themes and narratives of assigned short stories, poetry, plays, and novels will also be analyzed. Curriculum, syllabi, and reading lists from secondary schools in Kingston, Jamaica will be analyzed, particularly focusing on English Language, English Literature, History, and Social Studies courses. Analysis will look at curriculum material to see what, if any, local culture is being incorporated into school curriculum and how much colonial history plays a role in constructing learning outcomes and curriculum.⁵

⁵ Regarding research ethics, this study will primarily use public, open-access documents, curriculum plans, textbooks, and information from Ministries of Education, universities, schools, think tanks, and government. While I do not intend to cause harm to any people or communities in the process or publication of this research, I am aware that focusing on colonial history and historical narratives taught in literature and history curriculums may prove to be a divisive, personal, and/or political issue.

Because there is an ethical mandate in global studies scholarship to include non-dominant voices, as Eve Darian-Smith (2014) writes, an effort will be made to highlight and engage with scholarship from the global south. Conscious inclusion of female academics from global studies, linguistics, post-colonial studies, and comparative education studies will also appear in this thesis project. Full recognition of my position as a privileged white female

Additional research will be gathered from online databases and government websites (UNDP, UNESCO, World Bank, IMF, Ministries of Education, local Jamaican papers *The Jamaican Observer* and *The Gleaner*) as well as the UC library system. I will be paying particular attention to the policy recommendations/proposals, compulsory education mandates, and national curriculum outlines from research groups, government, and think tanks in the Caribbean as well as more general information about international education trends and postcolonial education theory. Scholarship from theorists who focus on postcolonial contexts, national curriculums, comparative education, hegemony, international education, and state-sponsored institutions will also be utilized.

Analysis of curriculum, syllabi, and textbooks as part of the analysis of national education curriculums in the subjects of literature and history will focus on omission, emphasis, and general content of material dealing with topics of colonialism, imperialism, diaspora, and slavery. Analysis will also focus on the cultural relevance of content material and identification of Eurocentric examples and narratives. Questions that will specifically guide analysis include those previously listed; (2) What is the narrative this curriculum is attempting to promote? and (3) What narratives, qualities, characteristics, and actors does this curriculum emphasize or omit?

from the global north is acknowledged- in no way is this project attempting to speak on behalf of those in the Caribbean region.

II. Literature Review

This literature review discusses how identity is negotiated through both education infrastructures and curriculum content under continued colonial influences. Anderson's previously-mentioned theory of "imagined communities" is particularly useful here, where we see education reforms and debates circling around a larger conversation of creating a postcolonial community and a national identity situated within both a regional and global context (2006).

The first section of this literature review discusses the literature on the politics of official knowledge, reviewing the argument that curriculum content is important *because* it is never neutral; it is an arena where fights and negotiations over identity play out in the classroom. The second section, bringing in Gayatri Spivak, discusses the idea of the subaltern, in terms of if and how alternate voices can assert themselves into education decision-making processes, and the importance of including these voices for postcolonial identity constructions. The third section discusses the specific areas within education that identity plays out, naming language as an outpost for identity, and looking at how CARICOM's description of "The Ideal Caribbean Person" is used as a goal for Jamaica's education system.

Other scholars have readily established the connections between nationality, identity, and schools, and here I position Jamaica as a particularly interesting case in which to look at these connections. Jamaica is a microcosm of colonial and postcolonial influences, and through public negotiations over what is considered official knowledge, we can see the transitions from colony to independence to globalization by looking at the debates and reports on the education system. These phases are not clean and straightforward, but as

each melds into the next, imprints and influences from previous circumstances are left over, and thus contribute to the larger issue of postcolonial identity construction through education. Butler (1990) contributes to this discussion about identity politics, as she argues, “The deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics; rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated” (p. 148). To reiterate, curriculum content is established as political specifically because it seeks to construct national identity.

Antonio Gramsci (1988) has argued that social hegemony is produced through apparatuses of state coercive power that demand consent and internalization of the general population, which thus allows authoritative apparatuses to enforce discipline without explicit consent from the public. Gramsci (1971) writes, "the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership.'" Education is one instance of a state apparatus through which this can occur (p. 307). Gramsci identifies two superstructural levels: civil society and the state; “These two levels correspond on the one hand to the functions of ‘hegemony’ which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of ‘direct domination’ of command exercised through the State and ‘judicial’ government” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). Due to globalization, the insecurity of the traditional nation state, and the transnational characteristics of contemporary national security threats, many governments have responded by tightening the avenues they still have control over, such as education. With national insecurity comes xenophobia, and with globalization-induced anxiety over international power and status, national curriculums become a way for states to re-assert themselves and maintain a controlled youth population infused with particular information about citizenship and national identity.

Focusing on Anglophone countries, Mark Priestley (2002) terms this phenomenon “cultural restorationism through curriculum prescription” (p. 12). Priestley (2002) explains that onslaughts of education reform “can be seen as a *reaction against* globalization, in that they represent a particularism in the face of what is seen in some quarters as the encroachment of global forces. They can also be seen as a *response to* globalization in that they represent attempts by national governments to make themselves more competitive on world markets through the medium of education” (p. 15).

A. Politics of Official Knowledge: Who Decides Legitimacy?

According to Apple and King (1977), “The study of educational knowledge is a study in ideology, the investigation of what is considered *legitimate* knowledge...by specific social groups and classes, in specific institutions, at specific historical moments” (p. 342).

Drawing on Raymond Williams’ (1961) work on “selective traditions” in education, Michael W. Apple (1993), a leading US education theorist, asserts, “The curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation. It is always part of a *selective tradition*, someone’s selection, some group’s vision of legitimate knowledge” (p. 222, italics in original). The phrases “selective tradition,” as well as “legitimate knowledge” are terms to keep in mind throughout this thesis, as a re-orienting reminder that curriculum content is not organic, naturally-occurring, nor spontaneous, but rather is calculated based on intentional selection and omission by a dominant group. This defines what kind of knowledge is deemed legitimate enough to be included in the official curriculum canon.

Apple (1993) states, “whether we like it or not, differential power intrudes into the very heart of curriculum, teaching, and evaluation,” which is exceedingly relevant to the Jamaican case of education in terms of the intense examination-based evaluation system,

reminiscent of the colonial model, that effectively sorts students in a class-based manner, further explored in Case Study Chapter VI (p. 222). Apple (1993) insists there is always “a politics of official knowledge” surrounding education debates (p. 222).

While Apple (1993) targets the education context in the US for his research, specifically discussing what he terms the ‘conservative restoration’ of the education system in terms of “the connections between a national curriculum and national testing and the larger rightist agenda” (p. 226), much of what Apple (1993) says can be applied outside the US. For example, Apple (1993) draws connections to the English national curriculum installed under the Thatcher administration (1979-1990), which will be further explored in Chapter IV. Apple (1993) concedes that the mere idea of a national curriculum, while controversial, could be an opportunity for a more democratic version of school reform and an honest discussion about who decides what curriculum content is considered official knowledge.

Connecting education politics with cultural politics, Apple (1993) states, “A uniform culture never truly existed in the United States, only a selective version, an invented tradition that is reinstalled (though in different forms) in times of economic crisis and a crisis in authority relations, both of which threaten the hegemony of the culturally and economically dominant” (p. 233). Again, building a national curriculum on the idea of a common (monocultural) national culture is not an unbiased mission. Education curriculum, particularly in subjects like English, History, and Social Studies, often has a cultural and national bias designed to uphold the values of and allegiance to the particular nation-state; however, this concept becomes complicated with the reality of heterogeneous

demographic populations within nation-state borders.⁶ Again paralleling the education debate in England, Apple (1993) mentions multicultural and anti-racist education initiatives, further discussed in Chapter IV, which were put forth in the 1970s-1980s in order to counter the conservative national curriculum initiative.

B. Relevance to Jamaica

Apple (1993) encourages his readers to think critically about the implications of a national curriculum paired with standardized testing: “A national curriculum may be seen as a device for accountability, to help us establish benchmarks so that parents can evaluate schools. But it also puts into motion a system in which children themselves will be ranked and ordered as never before” (p. 231). This sentiment is directly relevant to both the English and Jamaican education systems, which are centered around rigorous, high-stakes tests starting in primary school that effectively channel students into corresponding secondary and tertiary schools.

Apple (1993) concludes by stipulating that a common culture, if such a thing actually exists, “requires not the stipulation of the facts, concepts, skills, and values that make us all ‘culturally literate,’ *but the creation of the conditions necessary for all people to participate in the creation and recreation of meanings and values,*” thus positioning a positive concept of a common curriculum as one with democratic formation and access (p. 238, italics in original). This, I think, is emblematic of what Jamaica is trying to do with their Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person that has been incorporated into their education, further explored in Chapter V. The kind of language that Apple uses here is also reminiscent of how the Caribbean Examinations Council markets themselves, as a

⁶ See Foucault (1980) for writings on power and knowledge.

local regional body that produces a culturally relevant curriculum based on the creation and negotiation of local canons of knowledge, although equitable access to education is still problematic in Jamaica.

Priestley (2002) comments that with large waves of education reform, the discourse surrounding education has also changed, becoming a “language of performativity,” or putting the emphasis on performance and regurgitation more so than critical thinking and a passion for knowledge. This is clearly articulated in the Jamaican case with strict adherence to an exam-oriented education structure, where the measure of success in school is fully determined by students’ performance on exams (p. 17).

Weinstein, Freedman, and Hughson (2007) focus their research on the challenges that education systems face after identity-based mass conflicts. They note: “while the international community has devoted funds and lavished concern on issues of retributive or restorative justice and the need to combat impunity, the role of schooling in rebuilding societies has been a side issue” (p. 42). While their work focuses specifically on violence, ethnic cleansing, and genocide in Croatia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Rwanda, I raise Aimé Césaire’s (1955) point that colonization is barbaric, dehumanizing, and never innocent. Thus, colonization and its aftermath can be considered a form of mass conflict and trauma specific to identity. The concept Weinstein, Freedman, and Hughson (2007) address about “the importance of sustained attention to curricular development with significant collaboration with teachers and local school officials around sensitive subject areas such as history and literature” is exceedingly relevant to this thesis, especially in the case study chapter VI that analyzes literature and history curriculum content.

C. Allowing for the Subaltern: Inclusion and Exclusion

At play in curricular politics are dominant groups and power struggles, as globalization-induced national insecurity shakes normative ideas about who gets to decide what should be considered official knowledge. Allowing and encouraging nonwestern and nonwhite voices to be part of this decision-making process is important for establishing what Hickling-Hudson (2006) calls “curricular justice.” Using Australian and Caribbean reference points, Hickling-Hudson (2006) calls on western educators to “face the complexities of challenging the manifestations of continuing racism- discrimination, exclusion, cultural suppression and other forms of injustice” in the classroom (p. 3). Hickling-Hudson, who attended elite schools in Jamaica under British colonialism and later taught at poorer schools in Jamaica, defines racism in education as “a process of cultural, intellectual and physical violence which strips its targets of their dignity and dispossesses them of their culture and resources” (p. 4). I specify that cultural resources include language and literature, positioning curricular material as a potential holder of cultural resources.

While acknowledging that the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) exams (further explored in Chapter V) and curricula have become more inclusive of Caribbean history and culture, Hickling-Hudson maintains that the CXC is still elitist and enlists

aspects of past colonialism in that it excludes ways of knowing other than those based on academic literacies, does not engage with the oralities and folk forms of our region, and acts as a gate barring entry to all but those who can afford an expensive, middle-class high school education and (still) costly exam fees (p. 7).

Hickling-Hudson concludes by stating that “changing education involves striving for curricular justice as much as for institutional and structural justice” (2006, p. 9).

Martinique-born psychiatrist and postcolonial scholar Frantz Fanon writes about the psychological effects of school material in his well-known book *Black Skin White Masks* (1986). Describing a black student in the Antilles consuming lessons written from a colonial perspective, Fanon explains that the student

identifies himself with the explorer, the bringer of civilization, the white man who carries truth to savages- an all-white truth. There is identification- that is, the young Negro subjectively adopts a white man's attitude... Little by little, one can observe in the young Antillean the formation and crystallization of an attitude and a way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white. When in school he has to read stories of savages told by white men, he always thinks of the Senegalese... Because the Antillean does not think of himself as a black man; he thinks of himself as an Antillean. The Negro lives in Africa. Subjectively, intellectually, the Antillean conducts himself like a white man. But he is a Negro. That he will learn once he goes to Europe; and when he hears Negroes mentioned he will recognize that the word includes himself as well as the Senegalese (p. 147-148).

In response to this observation of the psychological identity crisis that comes from the omission of native peoples and stories in education, Fanon states the need for “publication of history texts especially for them [Negro children], at least through the grammar-school grades” to prevent traumatization during early years of development and identity formation (p. 148).

Revising curriculum materials requires conscious decisions about not only what material will benefit students, but also decisions about what national or regional narratives, ideals, and values will be included. By curriculum revisions, I mean changing national, historical, and literary narratives about citizenship, values, belonging, place, and

history that show up in curriculums in which local/subaltern authors and publishers are included and promoted. Drawing upon the work of Antonio Gramsci, British cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1993) has argued, “Cultural hegemony is never about pure victory or pure domination (that's not what the term means); it is never a zero-sum cultural game; it is always about shifting the balance of power in the relations of culture; it is always about changing the dispositions and the configurations of cultural power.” (p. 106-107).

European cultural historian Raymond Williams (1977) coined the term and theory of cultural materialism, used in cultural studies to analyze the ways in which hegemonic powers use important literary and historical texts in order to “validate or inscribe certain values on the cultural imaginary” (New World Encyclopedia, 2013). Williams’ theory of cultural materialism can be used to explore and think differently about the elite monopoly on canonized culture. It is not about one curriculum agenda replacing another, hypocritically omitting and preferencing its own choices of historical events and occurrences, but about weaving a narrative that includes the realistic interactions of different cultures and nations, in a manner that includes previously excluded voices (for example, Caribbean, Afro-Caribbean, Black, postcolonial, female).

Spivak (1988) writes that “to ignore the subaltern today is....to continue the imperialist project,” but she also cautions that inclusion of the subaltern voice can itself be a neoimperial endeavor. If the hegemonic/neoimperial forces are the ones making the decision to include the subaltern, this defeats the purpose and further serves the colonial aspects of academia and its historically western bias (p. 298). Here, freedom cannot be given or granted, but must be taken, otherwise it is a continuation of imperialism. Spivak critiques Gramsci’s notion of the subaltern, which he defines as those who are oppressed or who reside outside the hegemonic power structures. In Gramsci’s work, the subaltern

category revolves around the working class. Spivak points out that subaltern cannot be a blanket term for any group who is oppressed, as some groups can be both oppressed but also within (or allowed to use) the hegemonic discourse. Instead, she reserves the term subaltern for groups who must necessarily adopt and conform to western standards of academia in order for their voices to be heard. Spivak suggests new accounts of “how an explanation and narrative of reality was established as the normative one,” which applies to curriculum content, particularly historical accounts in history classrooms in which the point of view and narrative of past events is inexplicitly important, and has historically been dominated by an elite group (p. 281-283).

Chakrabarty (2009) argues, referencing Spivak, that the “subalternity of non-Western, third-world histories” can be recognized in the fact that “Third-world historians feel a need to refer to works in European history; historians of Europe do not feel any need to reciprocate” (p. 28). A postcolonial education framework, then, allows different narratives to be expressed and alternate forms of knowledge to circulate.

D. Postcolonial Identity

If education systems can be considered, in some cases, neocolonial structures of power and knowledge production through curriculum choices and education structure, they are harming the creation of what Stuart Hall (1990) termed ‘cultural identity,’ both individually and nationally. This has psychological effects, especially on youth who are negotiating identity and oftentimes subconsciously absorbing information through institutions about identity and culture that they will not recognize or process until later in their lives.

According to Bristol (2012), colonialism became “the means through which the colonizer told colonized peoples about themselves.” Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2003)

define 'the postcolonial' as "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day," directly linking culture to the definition. Kanu (2006) adds another relevant definition of the postcolonial:

'postcolonial' sometimes includes independent colonies that now contend with neocolonial forms of subjugation through expanding forms of capitalism and globalization, and minority populations in First and Third World countries experiencing repression and exploitation. What these locations have in common is that they signify a position against imperialism...it is the 'postcolonial' as a stance against Eurocentrism, as evidenced by the dominance of Western knowledge/cultural production and dissemination, that is important here.⁷

Stuart Hall (1990) considers the ways in which identity is always both a *production* and a *position*. Identity here is a production "which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (p. 222). Positioning refers to the idea that identity is always situated within a context, and that the identity we articulate to others comes "from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific" (p. 222).

Hall goes on to discuss two different ways of considering 'cultural identity.' The first is as a fixed entity that offers a shared common history and culture for people to connect through. Hall (1990) writes that "Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people' with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning" (p. 223).

The second way of thinking about cultural identity, however, is the one that Hall

⁷ For further readings of postcolonial theory, see Fanon (1961), Said (1978), and Spivak (1988).

prefers. This way entails looking at the *differences* in origin and experience of historical backgrounds. Hall writes that “Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being.’ It belongs to the future as much as to the past” (1990). Hall’s work on identity, culture, and history thus has implications for curriculum material in the Humanities and Social Sciences, in terms of how national narratives and constructions of cultural legacies are presented to students.

Imagination is central to identity formation and reflection here. Considerations of identity can also be analyzed in terms of Anderson’s (2006) “imagined community.”⁸ This imagination is fundamentally important for negotiating postcolonial and post-imperial nation states that must balance their national identities not simply on past histories but also on normative imaginings of what a future cultural and national identity could and should look like, how it will be produced, and what it will be positioned in reference to. Hall does not discount a shared history as an initial point of reference, but also urges a critical analysis of the ways in which cultural identities are transformed and re-interpreted differently for different groups of people.⁹

Relevant to the further discussion in chapter IV, Hickling-Hudson (2003) calls for a postcolonial approach to multiculturalism in order to improve and broaden the field of multicultural education. In her work, she uses postcolonial as a verb: “Postcolonialising’ involves us in developing identities and strategies that help to leave constricting neo-colonial ideas and practices behind” (p. 2). Although she uses primarily examples from

⁸ Anderson defines the nation as “an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (2006).

⁹ See Gloria Anzaldua (1987) for more on hybrid identities.

Australia, whose official policy for the Commonwealth is multicultural, Hickling-Hudson (2003) connects these examples to the broader problems in all postcolonial contexts.

In her studies of Australian schools, she defines the “*culturally problematic school*” one in which there is a predominance of unexamined practices of ethnocentrism and racism” and the “*interculturally proactive school*...[with] culturally progressive academic and social practices” (p. 2). The latter is comprised of three strategies that the Hickling-Hudson defines as: (1) a strategy of community liaison, (2) a strategy of critical socio-cultural study within the curriculum and (3) a strategy of education in home languages. Referring to the disparities in educational outcomes between indigenous Australian and Anglo-Australian students, Hickling-Hudson (2003) states:

From a postcolonial perspective, the discourses of ethnocentrism and anti-Indigenous hostility in traditional pedagogies, curricula and relationships assault Indigenous students by marginalizing, humiliating and excluding them...An Anglocentric conception of knowledge from Mathematics to Music is likely to perpetuate messages of white supremacy, in that ‘other’ cultural traditions and knowledges are either rendered invisible or distorted...(p. 4).

She astutely gives examples that both include curriculum and go beyond the curriculum when she writes

The racism and ethnocentrism inherited from the colonial period are expressed through the curriculum, the assessment system and the library, in the tolerance of the inappropriate pedagogy and behavior of some teachers, in the limited role given to parent and citizen associations, in the nature of extra-curricular activities, [and] in the fear of many parents to intervene on behalf of their children (p. 5).

This Australian example can be paralleled to the struggles that England has had with their curriculum, further explored in Chapter IV, and her mention of the assessment system is directly relevant to the Jamaican education system's extreme focus on standardized testing.

Essentially, curriculum content in literature, history, and social studies classrooms can have a profound effect on identity, especially in a postcolonial context. This is because the very choices made about what content will be codified as official curriculum content places an importance on certain topics and authors. Children in primary and secondary schools, and thus in their formative years, gain an awareness about themes in national narratives and authors who are given prominence through what is required by syllabi. If children (primarily children of color) do not see themselves and their backgrounds reflected in school materials, this can have negative affects on their identity formation, not to mention that the promulgation of western/white authors, texts, and historical narratives fail to instruct white children in the realities of diversity.

E. The Language Debate: Language as an Outpost of Identity

To narrow in the previous discussions of education and postcolonial identity, this section reviews the current political and identity-driven language debate between Jamaican Creole and Jamaican Standard English that plays out in Jamaican classrooms. When reviewing syllabi documents for the case study chapter VI, language was a common theme that appeared. Language use, particularly indigenous/Creole/patois languages and normatively conditioned 'proper languages' (read: Western) fall under the umbrella of the postcolonial conversation, and this plays out in the education conversations in Jamaica. Gramsci writes about the implications of language:

Every time the question of the language surfaces, in one way or another, it means that a series of other problems are coming to the fore: the formation and enlargement of the governing class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relationships between the governing groups and the national-popular mass, in other words to reorganize the cultural hegemony

In other words, “great importance is assumed by the general question of language, that is, the question of collectively attaining a single cultural ‘climate’” (1988, p. 357).

According to Norton and Nero (1997),

British colonization also left a legacy of socially stratified societies where one’s public identity was marked, among other things, by the degree to which one’s speech approximated or deviated from the acrolect.¹⁰ This phenomenon was reinforced by an educational system whose sole medium of instruction was Standard English and that flatly denied any validity to Creoles. Colonial education, therefore, reflected and reinforced the rigid social stratification of Caribbean societies, and language was its most palpable manifestation (p. 587).

Those unfamiliar with the cultural complexities of Jamaica usually think that Jamaica is an English-speaking nation, as this is what is outwardly projected to capture the international tourism market. While the official language is Jamaican Standard English (JSE), the most widely spoken language is Jamaican Creole (also called Jamaican Patois). The language debate on the island revolves around the credibility and reality of these languages. JSE is widely considered proper, and those raised in JSE-speaking households are usually of a higher SES, making class a part of language distinction. Because Jamaica is not considered a bilingual country, Jamaican Creole is not officially recognized as a

separate language. It is instead relegated to a 'sub-standard' English, causing some to argue for Jamaican Creole to be given recognition and language rights, in terms of dictionaries, bibles, and usage in public schools. Others argue that acceptance of Jamaican Creole into official avenues such as government or schools is akin to admitting failure to teach and learn JSE, and might also place students at a disservice in terms of competitiveness in the global job market (Hill, 2011).

According to Bryan (2004), "A strong case is being made for the central position of language as the conduit for revealing ethnicity/identity, a dialectic role considering the function of ethnic affiliations in communities, to ensure language maintenance" (p. 645). Jamaican Creole, a language that has performed those bonding and affirming functions in diasporic communities, exemplifies this case. Post-modernist theorizing destabilizes much of the traditional thinking on ethnicity, suggesting a more fragmented and unstable concept. This allows for recognition that identity is, first and foremost, socially constructed, and therefore open to interrogation and re-definition. In this line of thinking, Jamaican Creole represents a "language that challenges the standardizing impulses of modernity, resisting homogeneity in a variable and multi-layered process of change" (p. 645). This could be said to be what is happening to the way Jamaican Creole speakers use and construct themselves through their language.

In addition to this theory, some education experts have noted the practical and results-based case for ensuring that early education is carried out in the mother-tongue language, in order to make sure that children are literate in their first language initially before a second language is introduced (Mackenzie and Walker, 2013). This model, where mother-tongue instruction is recommended from kindergarten through the third year of primary

¹⁰ "The variety of speech that is closest to a standard prestige language, especially in an area in which a creole is spoken. For example, Standard Jamaican English is the acrolect where Jamaican Creole is spoken" (The Free

school, is thought to remedy instances where mother-tongue languages are ignored in the early years of formal education, and thus result in unproductive and ineffective classroom time, non-attendance, increased repetition, and low academic achievement levels due to teaching in a language that students do not fully understand (Mackenzie and Walker, 2013). The Jamaican context complicates this idea, because there is no consensus on whether Jamaican Creole is indeed a separate ‘mother-tongue’ language, or whether it should be considered an inferior mutation of Standard English.

Bryan (2004) comments on the role of teachers in negotiating language usage and education discourse: “Jamaican teachers, especially teachers of English, are at the centre of the language debate, as they inhabit spaces where discourses are formed and reformed through classroom interaction” (p. 651). Teachers have an important role here as actors in a postcolonial education system, because “as participants within a post-colonial school system, there is ambivalence about a language, which is owned by the individual, but disowned by the social structures that control and decide the official discourse. What makes the space negotiable in the Jamaican school setting is that both the teachers and students speak Jamaican Creole” (Bryan, 2004).

Annie Paul (2013) discusses the challenges that Jamaica faces being an undeclared bilingual society. She covers the language debate in terms of the outward portrayal of Jamaica as an English-speaking nation for tourism and global credibility purposes.

Creoles, the hybrid languages of the former slave colonies and plantation societies are routinely devalued in comparison to European languages.... This has resulted in the relegation of monolingual Patwa-speakers to second class citizenship, because their language (and by extension their culture) is considered an unsuitable subject for school curricula or for polite or official discourse...(Paul, 2013, para. 2).

This results in a classed education system that benefits middle and upper class students who learned Standard English as their first language in their homes. Paul's vividly written blog post contains metaphors of Jamaica being a tongue-tied nation: "Tongue-tied not in the sense of being speechless but in its inability to fluently articulate its disparate selves. Language and identity are locked in a zero-sum game..." (2013, para. 11).

The tension with the designation of JSE as the official language comes, as UWI Professor Carolyn Cooper, part of the pro-Creole movement, points out, when students and citizens are expected to write flawlessly in JSE, a language they do not speak because they speak Jamaican Creole, an oral language they do not write. In a recent editorial for *The Gleaner*, Cooper (2015) writes in response to the scandal that erupted after Minister of Education Ronald Thwaites commented offensively and later apologized for his comment about unruly children in the Jamaican school system. Thwaites is quoted as saying, "Manage your own children! Do not send leggo beasts to our school and expect us to make the difference!" Thwaites is referencing the expectation that teachers not only teach required material, but also manage behavioral issues, essentially assuming a parenting role. Thwaites called for parents to take more responsibility for their children. Cooper (2015) states that this derogatory faux pas is reminiscent of the familiar juxtaposition of English versus Jamaican Creole, but while she does not specifically take issue with the language choice of 'leggo beasts' (Jamaican slang for a wild or unruly person) that many others criticized as offensive, she does take issue with the way Thwaites dealt with the situation.

Thwaites should have courageously taken the opportunity to reflect on the function of our local language in public conversations about the educational system; and its use in schools! He knows the power of the language. Perhaps, the leggo beasts would be

tamed by seeing themselves in the dictionary and knowing that their home language is on the curriculum.

Here, Cooper is calling for more Jamaican Creole in the classrooms. She highlights the psychological and behavioral effects of the conjunction between language and identity, and the negative repercussions when students do not see their spoken language validated in a formal education setting.

Furthermore, most people speak somewhere on the continuum between JSE and Jamaican Creole, with many instances of code switching, especially seen with teachers in classrooms. In many of the high school curricula analyzed for the case study of this thesis, acknowledgement of Jamaican Creole is paired with the academic goal of teaching students whose first language is Creole that Creole does have grammar and structure, as well as teaching them JSE, and the differences between the two languages. While Jamaican Creole is incorporated into the syllabi through select poems and short stories, the syllabi are written in JSE, in keeping with the format of all official documents in Jamaica. Many agree that teachers must be fluent in both JSE and Jamaican Creole in order to be able to negotiate between first and second language acquisition (Hill, 2011). Velma Pollard, another key voice in the language debate, has published an instruction guide for teachers called *From Jamaican Creole to Standard English: A Handbook for Teachers*, which is a useful tool for navigating understandings of Creole and English. Tyson (2013) clarifies the position that many take in the debate on teaching JSE in schools: "...there are many homes where children are not exposed to hearing SJE [JSE] spoken. The schools, therefore, need to provide that immersion situation, along with formal instruction, to make successful acquisition of English aptitude possible." This is considered necessary in order for Jamaica to meet its Vision 2030 target and to improve

Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) English exam results, which test students on JSE mastery. Bringing up the CSEC results is valid for an exam-centered education system, especially when only 46% of students received a passing grade for the CSEC English A Paper in 2012 (Tyson, 2013). An additional argument for omitting Jamaican Creole and promoting JSE as the formal education language medium is that because English is widely considered the language of global commerce and business, it is in Jamaican students' best interests to be instructed in JSE to be competitive in the global marketplace.

A similar situation in the Anglophone Caribbean is English-speaking Guyana. Nero (2015) describes her early language socialization in her Guyanese education experience, “based on a British colonial model, which meant studying a British curriculum, taking British exams, and being taught to privilege all things British, including British English, despite growing up as the first generation in the post-independence (supposedly post-colonial) era” (p. 3).

The topic of official languages can be seen in education reform attempts as well. In 1998, the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) Curriculum Guide was published for grades 7-9 (Government of Jamaica, 1998). While ROSE is further explored in chapter V, under the Curriculum Guide section specific to language arts (“Philosophy of the Language Arts Grades 7-9”), the “Jamaican Language Situation” is addressed. The Curriculum Guide states that

Most children entering school can be seen as partially bilingual. They are usually fluent Creole speakers moving towards Standard English as the target language. The situation was recognized in the primary curriculum, where teachers were encouraged

to accept the child's home language and help them to move gradually towards Standard English (p. 45).

Here, Standard English is explicitly defined as the 'target language.' The main goal of the Language Programme is "to enable students to acquire communicative competence in Standard English" as well as to teach students to "understand that grammar is merely a system of rules about language and to be aware that all languages have rules, including our own Creole" (p. 46). This sentiment implies that awareness of grammar is not present in Creole speakers. Although independence has fueled self-pride and a concomitant validation of Creole as the language of true Caribbean identity, accepted social mobility through education is still largely premised on the mastery of Standard English. "To be sure, Creoles in the Anglophone Caribbean have never enjoyed autonomy as languages in their own right. The history of slavery and British colonization in the Caribbean has forced the continued interaction of standard English and Creoles in a lopsided arrangement that has privileged the standard variety and stigmatized Creoles" (Norton and Nero, 1997, p. 586).

Shondel Nero (2005) astutely asks "how is *English* being defined?" and goes on to argue that the narrow definition of English as academic, standardized American and/or British English therefore excludes other versions of English such as Caribbean Creole English (p. 196, italics in original). Devaluing a language or dialect by default devalues the language speaker, as language and identity are inextricably intertwined. Nero (2005) calls for a pedagogy that "strongly addresses language as form as well as language as constructor of, and constructed by, identities" (202). My appreciation of Nero's work is that she recommends, specifically for ESL classrooms but applicable elsewhere as well, the cultivation of a metalanguage in order to "help students develop the language to talk

about form, functions, domains of use, identity, etc.” of language. Nero proposes having students “examine and deconstruct commonly held beliefs about language” as well as “analyze language attitudes and prejudices” (Nero, 2005, p. 203). This conception of a ‘meta’ pedagogy is extremely useful, and will be further explored in the conclusion in terms of a ‘meta-curriculum’ pedagogy in which the content of the curriculums for literature, history, and social studies courses themselves could be explored in classrooms, to better help students understand how their curriculum content came to be, and the debates and biases surrounding it.

F. Curriculum as Cultural Practice: Teachers and Pedagogy

Kanu (2006) employs the metaphor “curriculum as cultural practice” to discuss how colonizers used this ideology to control and assimilate colonized peoples, and also extends this metaphor to postcolonial contexts. Education in the colonial context is viewed as the state’s vehicle through which power, control, homogenization, and assimilation are employed. According to Gramsci,

every relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilizations (1988, p. 348).

In order to shift the balance of power involved in constructing education curriculums, Kanu argues that curriculum reform does not involve opposing Western culture against the cultures of the non-west, but is instead founded on the principle of the heterogeneous basis of all knowledge and the need to find abiding links that connect groups across ethnic affiliations, geographical origins, and locations (2006, p. 78).

Lezra's (2014) work on a "pedagogy of empathy" is relevant here as well, especially in regards to curriculum material on colonization and slavery. Using a pedagogy of empathy when grappling with these historical events in schools can promote an awareness that "the narratives of humanitarian progress on which our educational systems are often constructed domesticate or even erase knowledge of such events" (Lezra, 2014, p. 348).

Lezra's work deals mainly with incorporating what she terms "acts of atrocity" into a school curriculum, using a pedagogy of empathy. This pedagogy is a model through which "students may empathetically perceive, understand, experience and respond to the representations of violence" (Lezra, 2014, p. 343). The delicate balance is explored between how to commemorate history and construct historical narratives contrary to the dominant narratives without creating a culture and curriculum of shame, victimhood, or determinism based on past events. Like Lezra (2014) writes, "not to inquire, investigate, and teach these pressing questions is in itself an act of denial and erasure.... it is necessary to struggle through the intellectual and pedagogical paralysis that can result from the understanding of atrocity" (p. 348).

Griffiths and Troyna (1995) touch on this in their interviews with Black teachers in South England secondary schools. One such interview contained discussion about teaching white children about oppression

On the one hand they have to understand how they themselves can be oppressive to others.... There are certain kinds of tools that you can give them...for them not to go away with guilt, but to go away feeling that they have a contribution to make in changing things (p. 87).

Challenging the established norms of Western knowledge production requires recognizing that education systems are structures that transmit not only educational skills, but also social and cultural awareness and knowledge. The standard economic notion of education as a ‘production factory’ of employable citizens is abandoned here, and instead education as a cultural practice is emphasized, although caution is advised to consciously complicate notions of culture and recognize that people experience culture and identity differently and often paradoxically.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970) differentiates between two models of education: banking education and problem-posing or liberating education. Simplified, “Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality” (p. 83). In the problem-posing education model that Freire presents, “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students” (p. 80). Freire proposes this kind of pedagogy as a platform for resistance against cultural and educational oppression. Freire intertwines these concepts when he defines traditional “education as the exercise of domination,” because the oppressors’ “tranquility rests on how well people fit the world the oppressors have created, and how little they question it.... for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated (p. 72-76).

Teachers can also use what Bristol (2012) calls a ‘cultural pedagogy,’ defined as “a method of evaluative teaching about school culture and the way that the practices of the school perpetuate or contest standardized relations of power that support structures of social order” to construct teaching methods in states and communities with histories of oppression (p. 23). Teachers play an important role in analyzing how they have been

culturally conditioned and socialized, and how they now disseminate knowledge, and interpret culture through their own teaching because of this. Their choice of pedagogical tools reflects this understanding. Bristol (2012) thus gives a large degree of autonomy and responsibility to teachers, and calls on them to “recognize teaching as a cultural performance.” Here is a call to action for teachers to address how historical narratives and culture have influenced them, how they are positioned within these narratives, and how they are furthering or deconstructing these narratives and cultural assumptions to their students (p. 27). However, it may or may not be within teachers’ power to deviate from a standardized curriculum devised by the powers-to-be; furthermore, based on how teachers are evaluated, teaching to national standards and tests may place teachers in a tough position. For example, Keaton (2006) explores this tension between teacher agency and standardized national curriculum in France. The baccalauréat (le bac or BAC) requires teachers to rigidly adhere to only material that will be tested in the BAC examinations at the end of high school. To deviate from this curriculum by adding relevant cultural and ethnic material to literature and history classes places students at risk of not passing. Consequently, it also places the schools and teachers at risk because the school’s reputation and ranking are largely based on bac scores.

III. Reframing Historical Imaginations

A. The British Empire

During its greatest point of expansion in the early 1920s, the British Empire was one of the largest in the world, encompassing approximately 25% of the earth's land surface and roughly 1/5 of the world's population (British Empire, 2015). According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2016), British colonization arguably began in the late 16th to early 17th century, with the formal colonization of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. In 1620 the British began to colonize the Caribbean islands, which were subsequently re-named the British West Indies and divided into eight colonies: the Bahamas, Barbados, British Guiana, British Honduras, Jamaica, Turks and Caicos, Cayman Islands, and Trinidad and Tobago.

At the risk of being simplistic, the British Empire can be classified as having roughly two eras. The first was from the 17th century to the late 18th century, which ended with the loss of the American colonies following the American Revolution in 1783.

The second stage in British empire-building occurred roughly between 1881 and 1914 and included the "Scramble for Africa" from about 1881-1919, in which the European countries of Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and Spain raced to claim African territories. British colonies included Egypt, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Rhodesia, and Swaziland. However, weakened from the World War I, it was harder for Britain to keep hold of all of its empire, and World War II further weakened Britain economically. The British lost control of colonies including the loss of India in 1947 and Kenya and Uganda in 1959. When the British Empire ended, it was replaced by the British Commonwealth, made up of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, and Newfoundland. A total of 53 voluntary Commonwealth of Nations

members now include Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, as well as other former British colonies or dependencies. Irish and Indian independence followed, and the majority of the Anglophone Caribbean states gained their independence in the 1960s. As late as 1997, Hong Kong was relinquished from Britain to China (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016, and New World Encyclopedia, 2014).

An unintended effect of a massive British empire was the influx of migrants from former British colonies, dependencies, and territories. Although emancipation in the Caribbean was fully recognized in 1838, Jamaican independence and British Commonwealth membership was not granted until August 6, 1962 (“Emancipation,” 2016).

B. Historical Imagination

The importance of “the historical imagination” is relevant to discussion about education and curriculum, because as “the past is never an account to begin with,” historians and literary authors are consequently the agents of history and are assigned the task of recounting, interpreting, and ordering historical events (Wilson-Tagoe, 1998, p. 8). The 19th century “ascribed creativity to European colonists and projected them as the creators of history in the region” (p. 16). The age of European colonialism (beginning roughly in the 15th century and continuing through World War II in the early 1940s) coupled with the European Enlightenment (roughly 1650-1800) poses a contradiction. Western historians and literary authors produced narratives embedded within the Enlightenment ideals of freedom and humanism, but used imperial narratives to justify slavery and colonization at the same time. This was not viewed as a contradiction because history was seen as linear fact written by the ‘winners,’ or those who had the most power and influence to be able to disseminate their version of what had happened. “The idea that

modern history was a gradual progress in the direction of organized freedom and that British history itself had followed this path of development became a major theme in the writing of British historians” (Wilson-Tagoe, 1998, p. 22).

However, this contradicts the lived reality of historical events, which are not one continual development governed by evolutionary law, but instead are continually interrupted and dislocated with migrations, displacement, and revolutions (Wilson-Tagoe, 1998). History is notoriously written ‘by the winners’; however, history, far from being factual, is better characterized as a perspective or analytical frame. It is written for a specific purpose and audience. These culturally engrained histories present themselves as neutral facts and become official accounts in history textbooks. According to Chakrabarty (2009), “insofar as the academic discourse of history- that is, ‘history’ as a discourse produced at the institutional site of the university- is concerned, ‘Europe’ remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories” (p. 27).

C. Implications for History Education

Particularly noted in Osler and Starkey (2001) is the ineptitude of the English national history curriculum at including contributions of colonial populations to British history and development. There are concerns about “whether teachers can indeed use the current History framework to promote inclusive notions of what it means to be English or British or to promote these learning outcomes for Citizenship [sic]” (p. 294).

Referring to the UNESCO International Bureau of Education’s “Assessing Curriculum Policy for Social and Civic Reconstruction” in 2004 that emphasizes the school as a site of collective memory and national identity formation, Weinstein, Freedman, and Hughson (2007) find that post-conflict curriculum development needs to acknowledge histories and not erase them. This proves to be a difficult negotiation,

however, as “some argue for history to be taught to secure a public memory of the violence in order to prevent its recurrence, others want simply to forget and move on. They see danger in teaching about the past and in the likely manipulation of the ‘truth’ (p. 62).

Taking Rwanda as an example from their study, Weinstein, Freedman, and Hughson (2007) acknowledge that while Hutu and Tutsi children attend school together, history has not been taught in classrooms since 1994. Ethnic and cultural identities are diminished, and instead the notion that all students are Rwandan is promoted as a new national identity that schools hope to instill in order to avoid any further conflicts or tensions. The authors’ solutions for societal repair include peace education pedagogy and textbook reform.

Hickling-Hudson (2006) points out that:

When a Caribbean History curriculum was first introduced in the region, in the 1960s, the textbooks and examination questions reflected a colonial interpretation that continued through the 1970s and beyond. They were prepared by a combination of UK and Caribbean scholars thoroughly socialized in imperial history (p. 6).

Weinstein, Freedman, and Hughson (2007) point out the challenge of looking at “historical events from multiple points of view while not devolving into moral relativism” (p. 66). Their study concludes that while people in post-conflict regions “all subscribe to a notion that history must be taught, the overriding concern is that history must not reflect the views of any one group nor of the victor” (p. 66). This complicates curriculum and textbook reform, as educators and policy-makers must grapple with questions like “How open can schools be in confronting the events of the past?” (p. 67).

IV. Reciprocal Tensions 1960s-1980s: England's Post-Imperial National Identity Construction and the Multicultural Initiatives that Followed

A. Introduction

This chapter provides a necessary background of postcolonial education structures by highlighting the racial and inclusionary tensions that played out in England's education system after World War II. Although this thesis focuses on Jamaica as its primary case study, it is pertinent to dedicate the following pages to the negotiations in the English education system after the immigration influx from former colonies after WWII (1960s-1980s), in order to show the politics that play out in classrooms on both sides of this colonial relationship. This chapter considers two questions that mirror the overall guiding research question for this thesis: 1) How has Britain negotiated their post-imperial status through their national education system? And 2), how does the education system in England address race, colonization, and legacies of slavery? More specifically, how did Britain construct national narratives through their education systems?

I employ the concept of 'education as cultural practice' as a framework to examine the above questions, in the sense that I write under the assumption that education is a creator of culture (Kanu, 2006).

Education has been viewed as a hegemonic avenue through which cultural knowledge production is navigated, decided, and disseminated. Henry Giroux (1981), for example, influenced by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, argues that

the dominant culture is mediated in schools through textbooks, through the assumptions that teachers use to guide their work, through the meanings that

students use to negotiate their classroom experiences, and through the form and content of school subjects themselves.

Giroux's work on critical education and pedagogy also focuses on the political nature of legitimate knowledge.¹¹

In order to challenge the hegemonic curriculum, one has to be knowledgeable about the power systems that control it. For example, parents, educators, and policy makers have to be critically aware of curriculum goals and narratives in order to revise them. A rationale must be developed to justify how educational material from different cultures can and should be in dialogue with one another, both in the sense of anti-racist or multicultural education initiatives that are further addressed below, as well as inserting alternative national narratives and perspectives into curriculum and textbooks. In this sense, being able to navigate the hegemonic national and educational discourse becomes a kind of social capital that can be valuable when promoting a multiethnic or diversified curriculum.

B. England's Educational Policy Responses to Post-Imperial West Indie Migration

As previously mentioned, an unintended effect of the massive British Empire was the flood of migrants from former British colonies after independence. Specific to this chapter, England faced the consequences of colonization and the insecurity of globalization in terms of the black migration from the Anglophone Caribbean colonies, specifically Jamaica.

Unlike some countries in Europe, like France, England currently embraces the label

¹¹ Questions that Giroux raises include: “(1) What counts as social studies knowledge? (2) How is this knowledge produced and legitimized? (3) Whose interests does this knowledge serve? (4) Who has access to this knowledge? (5) How is this knowledge distributed and reproduced in the classroom? (6) What kinds of classroom social relationships serve to parallel and reproduce the social relations of production in the wider society? (7) How do the prevailing methods of evaluation serve to legitimize existing forms of knowledge? (8) What are the contradictions that exist between the ideology embodied in existing forms of social studies knowledge and the objective social reality?” Giroux, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling*, 59.

of being a multicultural society. This can be seen with things that are normally thought of as ‘quintessentially British,’ many of which are remnants of the interactions between Britain and its former colonies (e.g. tea originating from India, and the renowned Indian curry cuisine in London). However, England has not always self-identified as a multicultural nation, and it is important to examine how exactly England became a self-proclaimed multicultural society by looking at the political, social, and cultural negotiations that played out in the English school system.

Troyna and Williams (2012) provide an overview of the intersections of race, education policy, and the state throughout the 1960s-1980s in the United Kingdom. The early 1960s witnessed a rise in the number of black students entering educational facilities in large cities in the UK, mostly children of black migrants from the Caribbean and South Asia who were part of the wave of post-WWII immigration from former colonies. This altered the demographic composition of students in British schools. Between 1948 and 1970, approximately half a million West Indie nationals immigrated to Britain (National Archives, n.d.). Immigration policy during this time period, including the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, reflects the UK’s desire to limit the entry of black populations in response to this migration wave. The national education system was selected as the avenue through which the state could regulate their multicultural population and alleviate racial tensions¹² without changing or rectifying the institutional systems of racial inequality that contributed to and produced these tensions in the first place. The ideology that supported this position assumed that ‘differences were deficits,’ and identified black culture as the reason behind student difficulties, as black students

¹² This refers to the race riots in England, notably the 1958 ‘Notting Hill riots’ between whites and West Indian blacks. Racial violence during this time is said to stem from resentment against police and the “sus” laws, and riots continued through the mid-1980s.

statistically performed worse in school. Policy makers essentially blamed black families for black students performing poorly in school. Here, the public school curriculum was not publicly acknowledged as an institution through which British/white culture is normalized.

The Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council report of 1964, referring to the national system of education, notes, “a national system cannot be expected to perpetuate the different values of immigrant groups” (as cited in Troyna and Williams, 2012, p. 12). In other words, “The official agenda was framed so that ‘the problem’ of black students and not the problems confronted *by* black students became the rationale for policy intervention” (p. 24, italics added). Official reports and task forces did not address any of the root causes for black students’ poor academic performance, and instead engaged in a kind of victim-blaming methodology.

Troyna and Williams (2012) clarify that while policy responses facilitated and reinforced racism, they were not the only racist elements in education. Instead, racism was also presented as the absence of policy, which can be classified as a positive response to racially explicit situations. Troyna and Williams (2012) focus on Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in England, specifically Inner London (ILEA) and Manchester (which has a ‘New Commonwealth-born’ black population, mainly Jamaican), as fairly autonomous¹³ avenues through which education policies revolving around racism, anti-racism, monoculture curriculum, hidden curriculum, and multicultural agendas were enacted. Here, the ideologies between anti-racism and pro-multiculturalism are differentiated; the later will be further explored below. Anti-racism ideologies focus on

¹³ The UK education system was largely decentralized until the 1990s, but this became the rationale of the central government for not implementing anti-racist policy in schools because of a lack of power and authority over LEAs. It is worth noting that “Until the 1988 Education Reform Act and the introduction of a national curriculum in the 1990s, the British government had no direct control over the content of the curriculum in English schools,” as Local Education Authorities held much of the local education jurisdiction (Osler and Starkey, 2001).

the equality of outcomes for changing the patterns of racial inequality. In terms of education policy, a politicized curriculum is recommended, defined as one that would “discuss the origins and manifestations of racism and would be directed as much to white as black students” (p. 47).

C. Multicultural Education

Juxtaposed with anti-racism, multiculturalism readily acknowledges cultural diversity (unlike French society, for example), but is criticized for focusing on cultural deprivation. Troyna and Williams (2012) label multicultural education policies as ‘compensatory,’ or striving to make up for cultural differences, which are labeled as deficits. Multiculturalism is also critiqued as “the state’s attempt to maintain social stability and defuse racial conflict rather than a challenge to institutional racism” (p. 47) (see Stanley Fish¹⁴ and Clyve Harris¹⁵ for further discussion on multiculturalism). Thinking about this failure to enact policy directly addressing institutional racism, it is important to note the distinction between the terms *racism* and *discrimination*. The former can be considered an ideology, whereas the latter is a concrete situation that policies can realistically address (Lozès, 2012).

¹⁴ Stanley Fish argues that multiculturalism does not actually exist. He identifies two problematic kinds of multiculturalism: boutique multiculturalism, which allows followers to enjoy aspects of culture only at a superficial level, and strong multiculturalism, which values difference and respect for all cultures, to the point of employing the ethic of tolerance above all else. This, Fish argues, is problematic, because at some point, you may find yourself in the position of tolerating or respecting a cultural practice that is not tolerant in and of itself, forcing a strong multiculturalist to either employ a blanket tolerance of all things, some of which are bound to be conflictually intolerant of others, or to become disrespectful or intolerant of a cultural behavior, negating the core principle of the strong multiculturalist.

¹⁵ Clyve Harris addresses Stanley Fish’s notion of multiculturalism, and unpacks the term he feels is utilized differently by both the left and the right by surveying the debates surrounding the definition of the term multiculturalism, mostly revolving around notions of difference and the public vs. private sphere. Harris concludes that “Once we give up the idea of cultures as sealed entities, and recognize that even within cultural boundaries communication is essentially about difference and requires translation, then the problematic nature of the constituent elements of the concept of ‘multiculturalism’—multi-, -cultural-, -ism—renders the whole concept questionable. The ‘ism’ encourages an unwarranted, dogmatic and unitary mode of thinking that gives the aura of rigorous, social scientific scholarship; the notion of ‘the cultural’, conventionally understood, suggests enduring and distinct cultural identities; and finally, the ‘multi’ frequently implicates the multiple ‘others’ demanding admittance and very rarely the ‘self’ with its omnipresent culture of whiteness...How can we persistently talk about the interaction between cultures in a multicultural arena (majority *vis-à-vis* minority, and minority *vis-à-vis* minority), yet fail miserably to account for how cultures affect, challenge, exploit and affirm each other?”(33).

In the 1970s, British race scholars began to challenge the theory of cultural deprivation. However, educational policy responses that promoted cultural diversity learning paradoxically treated cultural diversity as a means to assimilation. As Troyna and Williams (2012) explain, this strategy was a pre-emptive approach resulting from worry that a disgruntled minority population would increase societal tensions: “Assimilation remained the goal; what differed in this scenario was a recognition that assimilation could only be achieved successfully with the compliance of black students” (p. 22). In other words, the provisions for cultural diversity were ‘throwing a bone of multiculturalism’ in order to achieve compliance from black students and proponents of a diversified, inclusive curriculum.

In their analysis of cities in England, Troyna and Williams (2012) argue that Inner London has a *Benevolent Multiculturalism* educational policy model, whereas Manchester has a *Cultural Understanding* model. Benevolent Multiculturalism is an applicable term, argue Troyna and Williams (2012), when, “by embedding the [education] policy in a conceptual framework informed by cultural pluralism, it distract[s] attention away from racism within the education system” (p. 37). In contrast, but still problematic, the purpose of the Cultural Understanding model used in the 1980s “was to provide all students with more information and insight into these cultures in the expectation that tension and hostility would then be magically undercut” (p. 42). The Cultural Understanding model is criticized for the assumption that changing individual’s minds about discrimination and pre-conceived notions of other cultures can be a stand-in policy response for addressing the institutionalized racism and structural inequality in society.

According to Griffiths and Troyna (1995), the 1980s saw a rise in opposition to antiracist education initiatives. The Conservative Party in England largely led this attack on equal opportunities. In response, a radical teacher culture emerged in the 1990s, which supported an equal opportunities curriculum. However, Griffiths and Troyna (1995) show in teacher interviews that this curriculum was not without its own problems. According to one of the teachers interviewed in K-12 classrooms, "...embedded in this emancipatory curriculum was still a patronizing sense of control. Teaching about the history of slavery, for example, still placed Black pupils as the objects of history- not empowered to construct their own, relevant, lived agenda" (p. 85).

Class-based categorization has also been used as a proxy for racial categorizations when referring to ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction as a policy response to growing black immigrant communities. Afro-Caribbean students were not designated as suitable candidates for ESL language provisions (rather, South Asian students were), because their Anglophone Caribbean dialects were labeled as sub-par English, instead of a separate language. This is an issue that also is debated frequently in Jamaica:

The speech of the children of that Jamaican diaspora, up to the third generation, blends with the local languages of the English working class and newer migrant populations. In numerical terms, Jamaica is the dominant Caribbean group and the language of its people remains the most influential on the British Creole landscape (Bryan, 2004).

Here, cultural hegemony works through state implementation of language and education policy.

Osler and Starkey (2001) conducted comparative research on citizenship education policy documents from France and England to determine the ways in which the

documents encourage inclusive or exclusive concepts of national identity and citizenship. Government education initiatives in both France and England in the late 1990s aimed at “reinforcing democracy in a tolerant society” through education for citizenship.

In England, the authors analyzed the Crick Report proposal for the national programme of citizenship education for English schools in 1998. Interestingly, Osler and Starkey (2001) conclude that these education initiatives hold “the expectation that citizenship education should challenge racism”; however, they argue, “the very premise of the programme may risk defining young people, on flawed evidence, as less good citizens” (p. 289). The tensions around these citizenship education programs come from the difficulties in defining what makes a ‘good citizen’ for nationalist purposes. Although there is a recognition of multiethnic British identities, there is also the expectation that visible ethnic minorities “need somehow to change in order to realize a common citizenship” (p. 293).

This discussion of visibility and invisibility is also reflected in the Liverpool-based ethnography of Brown (2005), pertaining to the absence of Mary Seacole in K-12 education curriculum. Seacole was a Jamaican nurse who aided British soldiers during the Crimean war. However, she is omitted from British national history in textbooks: “Mary Seacole, because she was Black, is completely unrecognized for her selfless heroics for Britain. A White nurse, Florence Nightingale, occupies that role exclusively” (p. 95). Furthermore, Brown (2005) highlights that “Blacks complain of not learning about the slave trade until scandalously late in life,” which is not seen as an unconscious oversight, but as an intentional effort among those who seek to rewrite the narrative of Liverpool’s now-politically-incorrect slave trade history (p. 169).

D. Black Responses to England's Education Policies

Twine's (2010) research and interviews with multiracial English women of Caribbean heritage is illuminating in this context. In one interview particular to school curriculum, an interviewee "identified alternative history lessons and discursive space that her mother offered her at home that enabled her to detect which discussions of racism and colonialism were avoided, and when blacks were absent, in the school curriculum" (p. 124). The absence of Caribbean contributions to British culture and history within the public school curriculum is seen here.

To counter this Anglo-British hegemony, the Afro-Caribbean community, through the African Caribbean Education Group, launched a Saturday school in the 1970s in Leicester, England as a part of the wider "black voluntary" school movement. These alternative school movements, positioned as addition to and outside of compulsory public school education, recognize the absence of relevant cultural information in official school settings, and thus provide an avenue and space for cultural, ethnic, and racial education specific to black Afro-Caribbeans (Twine, 2010, p. 131). Regarding the concept of racial literacy, which is critical for negotiating a multiethnic diasporic identity as well as negotiating parental roles in a multiracial family, Twine (2010) argues that one dimension of racial literacy involves teaching children "to critically evaluate the absence of black characters in their school books and formal school curriculum" (p. 129).¹⁶

Claudette William's "How Black Children Might Survive Education" in Griffiths and Troyna's *Antiracism, Culture and Social Justice in Education* places importance on black

¹⁶ A growing US trend in African-American home-schooling is on the rise. Whereas reasons for white families choosing to homeschool are often religious, for African-American families, the choice is largely due to racism and treatment of students in classrooms run by white teachers. A black mother who homeschools her children interviewed in an NPR special says "she was particularly excited because she could teach her kids a version of history that features their own ancestors." Gabrielle Emanuel (2016), "Concerns about racism help drive more African-Americans to home school," Michigan Radio, NPR, All Things Considered. <http://michiganradio.org/post/concerns-about-racism-help-drive-more-african-americans-home-school#stream/0>

parents, specifically mothers, and their awareness of the racist incidents that their children experience in the English education system (Chapter 9). In a survey attempting to understand how black parents prepare their black children for the English school system, the qualitative survey results gathered from London, Manchester, Birmingham, and Nottingham included tactics such as ‘actively promoting cultural distinctiveness’ by providing books and visuals in the home with positive black images, as well as additional effort outside the classroom and monitoring children’s progress in schools (Brown, 2005).

Outside the classroom, supplementary/Saturday schools provide additional educational support and attempt to counteract the upsetting trend that black children, especially noted in the 1970s, were more likely to be designated to special education units and removed from mainstream classrooms. These supplementary schools are a space where parent-educator collaboration is especially necessary. Griffiths and Troyna (1995) note that “Parents were sensitized to recognizing stereotypes in books, materials and activities identified as carriers of racist ideas,” exhibiting what Twine calls “racial literacy,” discussed above (p. 157). This awareness is then used to communicate with children about what they experience at school. Thus, the conclusion of this research is that “parents can help children to promote cultural distinctiveness which... can afford some protection from the hurt of racism. Questionnaire respondents emphasized the need for cultural reinforcement through talking to children about racism, and about colour and race related issues” (Griffiths and Troyna, 1995, p. 158). In addition to parental support, teacher quality is instrumentally important for establishing equitable and cognizant classroom discussion. Griffiths and Troyna (1995) state in their study, which emphasizes the concept of “emancipatory learning,” the need for teachers who “are willing to make themselves vulnerable and to constantly problematize the processes of teaching and learning,

particularly in relation to controversial and political issues” (p. 88).

E. Conclusion

The collapse of the British Empire can be framed through the significant role that the national educational system played in creating England’s national narrative and identity. In the 19th century, British colonial models of education systems were imposed on Caribbean colonies. In the 1960s, after independence in the Anglophone Caribbean colonies, England experienced increased immigration from former Caribbean colonies like Jamaica, in addition to former colonies like India and Pakistan. This influx, combined with the response from Conservative Party ideologies, provides the context in which I analyzed England negotiating its post-imperial identity through its national education system, by deciding who and what is included in the national curriculum, what ideas education curriculum normalizes, and what kind of citizens the K-12 education system attempts to produce. Responses and resistance to this conservative education model include supplementary schools, increased parental involvement, and alternative teaching pedagogies.

This chapter sought to provide more information and explanation for how two countries, inextricably intertwined because of a colonial history, dealt with independence in the 1960s. While England was reeling from the loss of colonies and imperial power and was presented with an influx of immigration from former colonies, it sought to negotiate its post-imperial national identity through its education system, seen in themes of multicultural initiatives and proxies for racial discrimination. On the other hand, when Jamaica gained independence, the immediate conversation afterwards from policy-makers revolved around education as a means of economic security and development. Part of this

differentiation is surely the difference between a developed and developing country, but an important note is that while initially the conversation about Jamaican education was about development and debt, it later became about national identity and postcolonial identity through national narratives and curriculum content.

V. Evolution of Curriculum Content and Education Reform in

Jamaica

A. Introduction

In the Anglophone Caribbean, Jamaica faces a colonial history compiled with a history of national debt and interference from the World Bank and the IMF. As Jamaica attempts to meet their goal of achieving a developed nation status by 2030 under the Vision 2030 Plan (2009), education has been a central focus as a means to elevate Jamaica's international status, produce competitive students who can contribute to the national economy, and to create a regional curriculum to ensure students are grounded in Caribbean history and values. The Vision 2030 Plan states that Jamaica is committed to “ensure equitable access to modern education” through a National Outcome of world-class education and training (Vision 2030, 2009, vi-xvi). The target set for education by 2030 is to have over 98% of the Jamaican population 15 years and older fully literate (xxvi). While universal primary education targets have more-or-less been met as one of the UN Millennium Development Goals, there is still a gap at the secondary and tertiary levels. The Vision 2030 report clearly identifies poor education performance as one of the major economic development challenges for Jamaica (p. 26).

In light of the global postcolonial education conversations, the Caribbean has undergone numerous education reforms. In 2007, The Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CaPRI) published education reform recommendations for Jamaica from Ireland, Finland, and Singapore. The recommendations directly advise Jamaica to “move away from the traditional examination-based assessment and advancement model” of education, where students sit for examinations that are the basis for getting accepted (or not) into the secondary school of their choice. The publication also advises Jamaica to “shift towards a

location-based model of assigning schools,” as opposed to the current situation where parents and students are able to rank their top secondary school choices that are then granted based on exam scores (Knight and Rapley, 2007, p. 4). The report highlights contradictions within the Jamaican education system, as “Jamaica spends a greater proportion of its GDP on education than most other Caribbean islands, however this does not necessarily translate into superior quality” (p. 16). Referring to the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) attempts to produce a common curriculum in grades 7-9, Knight and Rapley (2007) agree that a core curriculum is important to have; however, the authors also point out that “globally, countries are moving away from a rigid common curriculum. The goal should be flexibility of learning (like in Ireland) rather than attempting to fit all into one” (p. 19). Final recommendations include transferring more funds from tertiary to primary/secondary education and investigating the possibility of introducing formalized patois into schools by professional linguists, a reference to the larger language debate in Jamaica over Jamaican Standard English and Jamaican Creole (Knight and Rapley, 2007).

Finland, a country with one of the highest-ranked education systems in the world, has also laid out education recommendations for Jamaica. In 2015, the Finnish counselor for education, Armi Mikkola, called on the Jamaican Government to improve teacher salaries and working conditions in order to elevate the status of teaching to a highly valued profession, something with which Jamaica has struggled and Finland has been highly successful.

B. History of Education in the Caribbean

The British government largely implemented education curriculum in the Anglophone Caribbean during the late 19th and early 20th century via colonial education officers. Based

on his personal experience as a student in the Caribbean colonial education system, Mervyn Morris (2013) writes that:

since the books with which we became familiar were always about some place other than where we lived, and often recorded social idioms which were not ours- or not exactly ours- they often seemed to imply that how we spoke and what we did were not entirely correct (p. 6).

This disjuncture between lived reality and the assigned curriculum in the Anglophone Caribbean colonies that focused on British people and British places created a conflict of identity and understanding. While this benefited the British state by promoting British culture and values, it subverted true educational purpose. John Dewey (2007), an influential American education theorist and reformist, argued for education as a place of social change, where students can interact with their curriculum and be agents of their own education. Dewey claims that there should be “an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education” (p. 20).

Howard Fergus (2003) reviews the history of education in then-named British Leeward Islands (now Antigua, Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla, and Dominica). While not addressing the Jamaican context specifically, there are many similarities of British colonial education systems worth noting. Post-emancipation, the Leeward Islands struggled with the paradox of independence and reliance on the insufficient stipends for social services and development that trickled in from the British government. Members of the post-emancipation generation saw education as a way to elevate themselves and future generations. However, the road to formulating comprehensive, compulsory, and available education opportunities that were also locally-oriented and culturally relevant was a long process.

The mandate for compulsory education came in 1890, but the government did not carry this out because they lacked resources. After emancipation, the locals in power (the ‘plantocracy’) were comprised of the privileged few whites who continued to profit from the plantation economy Britain set up in the islands for sugar manufacturing. The British government did not have an incentive to provide funding for education to the islands, as the link between education and the economy was not yet prominently established, and the plantocracy elite did not have an incentive to agree to have their wealth taxed for social service provisions for former slaves. Fergus (2003) writes, “the British policy was to have the colonies generate enough revenue to finance all their social services, although it had done very little to help the islands to develop the kind of post-emancipation economy that would allow them to do this” (p. 8).

C. Education and Religion

Thus began the development of education’s marriage with the island churches, specifically the Anglican Church and Moravian church, as well as Roman Catholic, Methodist, and other humanitarian and charity-based organizations. Education in this context was seen as a charitable opportunity, and the churches in the area capitalized on this. The relationship between the church and the government was a mutual one, both benefiting from the inferior education unequally provided to the children in the islands. The government approved education provided by the church because the content was religious-based, focusing not on quality education but on rote memorization of the Bible and “teaching doctrines that propped up the social order rather than subverted it, a policy that earned the acceptance of the administrative authorities” (Fergus, 2003, p. 10). Additionally, teacher qualifications were also not based on experience or quality, but on “dedication to Christ and the church” (p. 13). The island churches used their provision of

education services to recruit more church membership. In this sense, the denominational rivalry between the church congregations was the incentive for providing the charitable education. To keep with the religious indoctrination of the times as well as government approval, any kind of independent thinking or social aspirations were effectively eliminated from the educational discourse.

Sunday schools were specifically prioritized because of the lack of interference with labor on the plantation estates, and while day schools were later introduced, the schedule was manipulated to prioritize labor on the plantations. Success in the church-sponsored schools was “judged by increased church membership and ultimately salvation” (Morris, 2013). It is important to note that at this time and in these instances, education was not seen as a right, or even as a service that should be open to all. Because of financial constraints and the lack of government funding, school opportunities were based on charity, racist selection, and those who could afford to pay. Education was presented largely as a “charitable” cause in which the curriculum content that was disseminated was carefully constructed to produce docility and loyalty to the British state and existing class hierarchy.

D. Higher Education

Morris (2013) tracks the evolution of curriculum content at the University of the West Indies Mona campus in Kingston, Jamaica. It was not until 1969, seven years after independence, that the first course in West Indian Literature was officially established. This course has subsequently become a required course for students majoring in English. Within the course, there has been a broadening of what material counts as ‘West Indian Literature,’ as the canon for this area of study is relatively new. Material such as non-fiction, plays, ‘dub poetry,’ and works written in Creole have been added to the course

since its establishment, deviating from traditional (read: Western/European) literature canons based on English and Latin classics. While this material has been introduced in higher education and somewhat in secondary education classrooms, it is worth reiterating, and will be further explored in case study chapter IV, that emphasis is largely placed on the mastery of Jamaican Standard English for all official examinations in secondary schools.

Also under consideration in the West Indie literature canon are songs and spoken word. Rohlehr (2012) analyzes calypsos (West Indie songs that focus on improvisation about relevant issues) that focus on education topics to illustrate the response that Caribbean society members have about the Caribbean educational reforms proposed by Eric Williams, the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, 1962-1981.¹⁷ A historian by training and a student of C.L.R. James, the noted author of the seminal work *The Black Jacobins*, Williams called for decolonization through national education initiatives emphasizing local culture and curriculum instead of education systems leftover from colonial rule. Rohlehr (2012) explains Williams' concern about cultivating a culture in the West Indies that is not merely "a West Indian version of Europe." While Williams did not accomplish all that he set out to do in education, his administration succeeded in creating the Ministry of Education and Culture, independence and decentralization of the University of the West Indies in 1962, the establishment of Liberal Arts Colleges in Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados, and mandatory college classes in West Indian History and Society (Williams, 1967). It is noteworthy that Williams modeled his ideal education system after Mexico's (and not England's), which focused on practical skills relevant to

¹⁷ Williams is the author of *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) and *From Columbus to Castro* (1970).

agricultural work and rural life, something that Fergus (2003) criticizes as missing from the Caribbean education system. According to Rohlehr (2012), Williams had

a mission to fill the gaping void in colonial education, which had left the colonized subject/object disconnected from his/her past, and hence, incapacitated as a potential citizen of the yet nonexistent new nation. Williams believed that relevant education would instill in the colonized the sense of confidence they needed in order to build a nation.

Here, one of the functions of education is explicitly to instill a sense of national confidence, a notion on which Bray (1991) builds when he highlights that establishing local and/or regional institutions of higher education can be a source of national pride, contributing to post-colonial nation building.

Within this conversation about higher education as a source of national pride and identity in a postcolonial era is the tension between the global and the local, in which small, postcolonial states have the opportunity to express their local culture and identity through their higher education institutions, but must also negotiate competing against, partnering with, and attracting global students in the neoliberal education market. This sentiment is further exemplified here:

Our universities must be Caribbean but think International. Offering programmes developed in the Caribbean to Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America and Australia, must become commonplace in the twenty-first century. This is imperative, not only if our universities are to serve as centres of excellence comparable to any university in any part of the globe, but if Caribbean culture is to hold its own in a world that will become increasingly

competitive in the area of international transfer of knowledge (Background Paper No. 3 as cited in Carrington, 1993, p. 21).

E. Cost of Education

A local *Jamaica Observer* article in 2014 discussed the opposition Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) official position regarding the removal of tuition fees at the secondary level. Leader of the JLP Andrew Holness said the party is "committing to the removal of all obligatory fees at the secondary level." Compulsory secondary level fees were removed the last time the JLP was in power from 2007-2011, but this policy was reversed when the People's National Party took power in 2012. The JLP also laid out their considerations about financing tertiary education ("JLP commits," 2014).

In an article for the *Jamaica Observer*, Carter (2015) discusses the exorbitant cost of education in Jamaica, specifically the burden of education costs for parents even within the seemingly 'free education' system in Jamaica. Interviewees in this article include a mother of three students in primary and secondary levels [who] has spent over \$55,000, \$12,00 per year for secondary levels. Reasons given for the high expenses include paying schools to offset payment to teachers who are not paid by the Ministry of Education as well as buying materials for class. "The notion that education is free in Jamaica seems paradoxical to Jamaican parents who have been doling out thousands of dollars to cover the expenses for their children at all levels." Although public education is technically free, the supplementary fees needed to purchase uniforms, textbooks, tutoring, and other materials or extra-curricular activities quickly add up. "Though dependent on the individual's choice between the public and private system, school fees at the early childhood level range between \$8,000 and \$30,000 per term" (Carter, 2015).

Stewart (2015) focuses on the Jamaican secondary education system and the extra tuition parents pay in order to endow their children with an educational advantage within the system. This article uses an anti-colonial discursive framework to look at the “historical pattern of social stratification and the lasting impact of an inherited examination-driven system.” Stewart concludes that, in addition to a capitalist approach to education, ‘extra lessons’ (after-school tutoring paid for by parents) are the result of two conducive factors: unsatisfactory conditions of learning, especially in low-resourced schools, and a parental drive to give an educational advantage to their children, even those in traditionally elite school settings. Stewart (2015) briefly overviews the education structure in Jamaica, and how it has shifted from the UK ‘form’ structure to the current ‘grade’ system, where secondary education begins in grade 7. The Grade Nine Achievement Test (GNAT) determines whether students can go on to upper secondary schools if they are coming from a junior high or all-age school. Stewart (2015) frames the colonial legacy in Jamaica differently than post- or neo- colonial. Rather, she uses the phrase “the Jamaican decolonizing society,” which she states is “still entangled in negative, inherited colonial structures and beliefs about education” (p. 30). Her self-identified anti-colonial discursive approach that she pulls from Dei (2000) “recognizes the importance of culturally responsive and nationalistic-constructed knowledge, inclusive of oral stories, reclamation of native languages and dialects” (p. 30). Discussing the legacy of the examination-based system, Stewart (2015) states that

When the British left, curriculum content was somewhat adapted to Jamaican culture, but the exam system remained. This inherited system was never designed to provide equitable education to all, but rather continued to be a stratification tool with which to differentiate social classes (p. 37).

One of the concluding comments here is that the problems with access to education in Jamaica stem directly from the lack of secondary schools built during the colonial era, and although progress has been made, Stewart (2015) argues that initiatives by the UN and World Bank further hampered this issue by putting their foremost priority on primary education rather than secondary or tertiary.

F. Ministry of Education

Timeline of Important Events and Education Reforms in Jamaica	
<i>Year</i>	<i>Event/Reform</i>
1834-1838	Emancipation
1947	National Plan for Jamaica: provide education for all children
1953	Ministry of Education established
1957	British Common Entrance Examination (CE) introduced
1962	Jamaican independence
1963	Five-Year Independence Plan recommends comprehensive high schools
1966	New Deal for Education, calling for more primary schools
1972	CXC founded
1973	Manley announces 'free education'
1979	Students in the Anglophone Caribbean begin sitting CXC examinations
1993-1998	1 st phase of ROSE: common curriculum for grades 7-9
1998	CE eliminated
1999	CE replaced by CXC's GSAT
2008-2009	Grade 1 Individual Learning Profiles/Grade 4 Literacy and Numeracy Tests introduced
2009	Vision 2030 Plan
2012/2013	Civics curriculum reintroduced in high schools

Table 1 Timeline of Important Events and Education Reforms in Jamaica

In order to better understand curriculum content in Jamaica, a brief history of education in Jamaica is needed, including the establishment of the Ministry of Education and the many education reforms before and after Jamaica's independence in 1962. A concise timeline of education in Jamaica is as follows. In 1947, a National Plan for Jamaica was formed in order to provide primary education for all children. The Ministry

of Education was established officially in 1953, and the Common Entrance Examination (CE), an expansion of the exam used in the UK for admission into secondary schools, was introduced in 1957. The CE was later eliminated in 1998 and replaced by the Caribbean Examinations Council with the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) in 1999, essentially replacing a British-produced test with a Caribbean-produced exam, but keeping the purpose of the exam, to facilitate entrance into secondary schools based on scores, the same.¹⁸ In 1963, the Bustamante administration¹⁹ presented a Five-Year Independence Plan, recommending the establishment of comprehensive high schools, mirroring the introduction of comprehensive schools in England in the mid-1960s. 1966 saw the introduction of the New Deal for Education, calling for more primary schools in order to accommodate every child at the primary education level, as well as expanded and improved curriculum for lower secondary grades. In 1973, Michael Manley²⁰ announced “free education” in Jamaica, including secondary and tertiary education. While many championed Manley’s platform of accessible education, others felt that it devalued the prestige of education and that Jamaica could not afford to provide free education for everyone.

Students in Jamaica and other Anglophone Caribbean countries first began sitting for Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examinations in 1979. Jumping to 1993, the first phase of the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) project initiated a common curriculum for the secondary education system for grades 7-9. Remaining secondary schools were upgraded to comprehensive high schools and were officially termed high

¹⁸ Interestingly, “The CXC method of assessment, which combines school based assessment by classroom teachers with traditional examinations, has now been adopted as a model by other examining bodies, notably in the UK” (“Caribbean Examinations Council,” 2011). The UK formally accepts the CAPE exam as a requirement for entry into a UK higher education institution (Caribbean Examinations Council, 2015).

¹⁹ Alexander Bustamante was the first prime minister of Jamaica, serving from 1962-1967.

²⁰ Former Prime Minister of Jamaica from 1972-1980 and 1989-1992

schools instead of secondary schools in the period from 1999-2000, with all high schools using the same curriculum and books supplied under the National Textbook Programme. The Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT), formerly the British Common Entrance Exam, began in 1999 and is currently used to determine secondary education placement. In 2004, a taskforce was again called for on education reform. From 2008-2009, Grade 1 Individual Learning Profiles (formerly the Grade 1 Readiness Test) and Grade 4 Literacy and Numeracy Tests were introduced (“Ministry of Education Story,” 2015).

1. Structure of Education in Jamaica

After early childhood education, Primary Levels of education in Jamaica are comprised of Grades 1-6. Secondary Levels consist of a first cycle of grades 7-9, and a second cycle of grades 10-11, with grade 11 students sitting the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) exam. Students continuing to grades 12-13 who wish to go on to higher education can sit the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) to qualify for tertiary education (“Ministry of Education Story,” 2015). Formal education is generally provided by the Jamaican government, either solely or in partnerships with churches, trusts, or private institutions, as seen in the case study high schools (Vision 2030, 2009, p. 59). Additionally, Knight and Rapley (2007) have identified seven different types of educational institutions that provide secondary education in Jamaica: all-age, secondary/high, comprehensive high, secondary/traditional high, technical high, agricultural/vocational, and independent high. For grade equivalencies between the US and Jamaica, see Appendix 3.

G. Caribbean Examinations Council

The Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) largely markets itself, and is described by others, as “a catalyst in developing a common ‘Caribbean school system’” (“Caribbean

Examinations Council,” 2011). The organization composes and administers all CXC secondary and post-secondary examinations in the Anglophone- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean region²¹ and is responsible for the prominent Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) exam, the latter for students wishing to pursue tertiary education. CAPE and CSEC examinations are accompanied by specific CAPE and CSEC syllabi produced by the CXC. The Council was founded in 1972 and is made up of representatives from the Caribbean, including the current Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana. The head office of the CXC is currently in Barbados, with the Western office located in Kingston, Jamaica. The CXC’s objectives are to:

provide regionally and internationally recognised secondary school leaving examinations relevant to the needs of the Region; assist in Common Entrance and other types of examinations; produce teaching materials and train teachers to use the CXC syllabi; and advise regional governments on Education matters (“Caribbean Examinations Council,” 2011).

Again, the ideal regional model of Caribbean education is mentioned, for example, in the CXC blog, where regional unity is packaged as the Caribbean’s greatest strength. The CXC blog proclaims, by “working together, leveraging the intellectual capacity of 19 countries we can produce world class certification and a harmonization of upper secondary education that gives us access to the best avenues of higher education anywhere”²² (“Challenges,” 2015). This emphasis on regionalism is very interesting, as

²¹ CXC member countries include Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands.

²² Additionally, this blog post states that “The harder times get internationally, the less we can depend on external Godfathers to provide aid and assistance. The faster we come to the realization that pooling our resources, combining our capabilities and converging our institutions is the only way to survive; the quicker we will begin to thrive. We are far greater than the sum of our fear and our insecurity; we are the aggregation of our potential and our possibility.”

traditional notions of common national curriculums producing nationally loyal citizens is in a sense complicated. Notions of the nation state as well as regionalism are woven together here, as a blog post on the CXC website attempting to associate the CXC with much more than the dreaded exams states that the

process of syllabus development is a very intricate one that must draw on expertise from across that regional footprint, taking into account national nuances and incorporating practices and standards from the national jurisdictions. But above all of this, the process creates and builds a regional framework that forms the basis for a real harmonization of knowledge and standards in the Caribbean (“What does CXC,” 2015).

The language used here to describe an examinations council is remarkable. Standardized state achievement tests in the United States (for example the Idaho State Achievement Tests (ISAT), the SAT, ACT, or GRE examination organizations), do not use this kind of language, and these testing agencies do not go to any great lengths to market themselves as anything other than providers of examinations for middle and high school students or producers of education research. But here, the CXC upholds itself as an integral part of cultural knowledge production in addition to examinations.

According to the CXC website (2015), “CXC syllabuses are used as the main source for curricula at the upper secondary and post-CSEC levels.” One of the main functions of the Council is curriculum and syllabus development, and syllabi are reflections of the Ideal Caribbean Citizen template as well as the UNESCO Pillars of Learning for sustainable development (CXC, 2016). Importantly, the CXC uses language that focuses on the role of common regional curricula in “fostering awareness and understanding among students, of the importance of the Caribbean in the increasing global arena”

(“Caribbean Examinations Council,” 2011). In the case study chapter VI that discusses the content of five high school curricula, it should be noted that many of them directly reference the CXC, either to state that the curriculum complies with CXC guidelines, or to confirm that the purpose of the material included in the curriculum is to directly prepare students for a specific CXC exam.

It is important here to highlight the level of importance and prestige placed on the school rankings, which are directly based on the CXC exam results. Students are not zoned into high schools based on location; instead, they list their top four preferences when applying for secondary education. Schools then take into account students’ GSAT exam results and place students accordingly. Multiple reports are published that rank high schools in Jamaica based on CXC test scores each year, influencing which schools parents and students preference on their applications. An article in the *Jamaica Observer* highlighted the number of attempted transfers to top high schools as soon as the day after the Minott report was published, which ranks 148 high schools in Jamaica based on CXC test scores. The article reports that it is not uncommon to have around 50 transfer requests immediately after exam day, but 2004 saw an increase to around 75 requests. According to the *Observer*,

Parents are required to identify the first to fourth choice of high school while registering their child for the GSAT. But each year following the publication of the GSAT results, schools across the island receive hundreds of transfer requests, particularly those whose children were not given any of their choices (Green-Evans, 2004).

Huge value is placed on the reports that rank schools based on test results, in terms of where parents will send their children to high school. Essentially, highly competitive test

scores are the most important indicator of a high school's value in Jamaica. There is tremendous pressure placed on students to do well enough on their GSAT test to get placed into a top high school, and teachers and parents feel this pressure as well.

Educate Jamaica, a local think tank focused on education services for education stakeholders, recently came out with its high school rankings based on the CSEC 2014 results. The rankings are based on the percentage of students that secondary schools are producing at the end of grade 11 with a minimum of 5 CSEC subjects. Educate Jamaica identifies successful schools as those who are turning out 80% or more students achieving 5 CSEC subjects including math and English; these successful schools are then placed in the category of "CSEC Secondary Ivy League." This rankings report is within the third publication of the Education Matters magazine produced by Educate Jamaica. A cautionary article within this magazine warns against Jamaica adopting the 'catchment' model of education popular in the US and the UK, in which students are zoned for particular schools based on the schools closest to their homes. This article warns that adopting this model will in fact make the Jamaican school system more elitist, not less, as property prices around 'good' schools will skyrocket as people strategize their home purchases and rentals closest to the best ranked schools ("Secondary Ivy League," 2015). It is interesting to note that this sentiment is in direct opposition of the education recommendations published by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (2007), mentioned earlier.

H. Secondary Education Reforms in Jamaica

In 1998, the Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E.) Curriculum Guide Grades 7-9 was published in a joint effort between the government of Jamaica and the World Bank. This curriculum guide can currently be found on the Jamaican Ministry of Education

website.

Due to three major concerns about secondary education in Jamaica (quality of programs, access to programs, and inequities in the education system), the Jamaican government, led by the Minister of Education, Youth, and Culture, in conjunction with the World Bank, enacted the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) in the early 1990s to address these issues. Central to this reform initiative was the creation of a common curriculum. It is important to examine this national curriculum guide document because it outlines the major players involved in creating this reform (education consultants, curriculum developers, teachers, ministry of education officials, the World Bank). Importantly, rationale is provided for each curriculum subject (Career Education, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) about why and how these curriculum changes would be implemented. The foreword by Marguerite Bowie, the former Permanent Secretary, outlines the preparations for secondary education reform beginning in 1991 with pilot programs for a national curriculum in four schools. In subsequent years, more schools were selected or volunteered to join the program. During the five year first phase of the ROSE program (1993-1998), approximately 50 All Age schools and 22 Secondary Schools were selected for entry into the program. Wesley Barrett, former Chief Education Officer, acknowledges in his foreword the need for secondary education reform because of “growing discrepancies in the allocation of resources to the different types of schools” (“Government of Jamaica,” 1998). The common curriculum was primarily prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture.

Under the Curriculum Guide for Social Studies for Grade 7, topics include “Our Heroes,” “Our Ancestors,” and “Our Cultural Heritage,” as well as an explicit organizing

concept that requires students to “identify the relationship between heroes/heroines and nation-building” (p. 132). The St. Hughes High School Student Curriculum Guide for 2014-2015, which will be further addressed in the case study chapter VI, directly reflects these topics, as the objectives in the guide state that students should be able to “[have] knowledge of the contributions made by our national heroes and heroines” and “Be exposed to the foundations from which the cultural legacy is formed” (“Government of Jamaica,” 1998). This information is key to addressing the second guiding question of this thesis: How do postcolonial literature and history curricula contribute to national narratives of identity and history? Here is an explicit example of the curriculum divergence from the education content put in place under colonial rule, which was explicitly British content, religious content, or a mixture of both. We see a continued effort to focus student learning on cultural legacies and prominent figures in Jamaica’s history.

Even after the ROSE initiative, the general sentiment is that the Jamaican education system still needs more reform. For example, only 24.7% of students met the qualifications, which include passing exam results for five CSEC subjects including English Language and Mathematics, for entry into tertiary institutions in 2008 (Vision 2030, 2009). Although exam results have improved since, the 2014 CSEC results for English and math report that 66.4% of students passed the English exam and 55.5% passed the math exam (diGJamaica, 2015). The Vision 2030 Plan (2009) identifies a number of weaknesses in the Jamaican education system, including gender differentiation in performance (girls consistently out-perform boys)²³, poor performance on grade 4

²³ While the scenario of girls out-performing boys in schools being labeled as a weakness of the Jamaican education system is problematic from a feminist perspective, many studies have been commissioned to uncover the roots of the gender differences in academic performance in Jamaican gender differences in academic performance in Jamaica. A 1999 UNESCO report concluded boys actively and continuously construct an academic identity for

literacy tests, poor attendance in schools, violence in schools, and inadequate access at the tertiary level. According to the Registrar of the Caribbean Examinations Council, Didacus Jules (2010), four things must still be done in order to redefine education in the Caribbean: (1) Agree on a philosophy of education in the contemporary Caribbean, (2) Establish a seamless education system, (3) Make learning fun, and (4) Attune assessment to key competencies and global competitiveness.

While not exclusively pertaining to secondary education but relevant because the GSAT is the entry test for secondary education, Williams (2011) carried out a pilot survey in a Kingston prep school to better understand the public's response to the GSAT exam. Surveying 6th grade students who had recently finished their GSAT exams and 7th grade students at a Kingston co-ed public school, Williams (2011) then formed the Independent Committee for GSAT reform on the basis of these survey results. The survey results indicated that the GSAT exam was an overly stressful experience for students, teachers, and parents, especially considering the high-stakes burden placed on 11 and 12 year olds, who only have one chance to sit the GSAT. This study also found that teachers and parents "feel that the breadth of the GSAT syllabus has led educators resorting to teaching by rote and having students memorize rather than explore, understand, [and] internalize new material" (p. 5). Another concern resulting from the information from this study is that 7th grade students report that their work in 7th grade is easier than their 6th grade work, and there is a worry that students will either lose interest in high school class material, or else become academically exhausted by the time they complete the GSAT. Williams

themselves "as irresponsible, unreliable, and uninterested in academic work" (Evans, 9). Additionally, according to Merris Murrery of the National Council on Education, "Jamaican boys have increasingly resisted schooling as 'girlish.' This 'hard' image which has been embraced by the Jamaican male not only contributes to the resistance to school but is also directly linked to the creole language which is generally spoken by males. This practice has placed the boys in an increasing disadvantageous situation given that English is our instructional language" (Jamaica Partners, 2011, p. 5).

(2011) comes to the following conclusion about whether GSAT underachievers can do well in future schooling:

in its current form the GSAT exam is overly stressful for students who have the means and the resources to do well, whereas it is counterproductive and even irrelevant for those students who are economically disadvantaged or experiencing emotional/social upheaval (p. 10).

In other words, Williams identifies the GSAT as a lose-lose scenario for Jamaica's youth. These students, particularly boys, are marked, seemingly for the rest of their educational experience, by a low GSAT score, which can be the result of a myriad combination of social, economic, and developmental factors. According to Williams (2011), "Sweeping them along with a national curriculum which is unable to address their individual needs is problematic and probably self defeating" (p. 11). Williams (2011) recommends decreasing the number of subjects tested by the GSAT, focusing just on the foundational subjects of math and English to avoid an overly burdened testing curriculum. Long term solutions would even out the unequally-resourced high schools in Jamaica so that good high schools are not in scare supply, which is one of the reasons that such intense competition accompanies the GSAT in the first place, turning it into "a placement exam rather than an achievement test" (p. 15).

Table 2 highlights some of the baseline and target percentages for CXC examination results in Jamaica, to further illuminate the rigor of these exams and the gap that is created in the education system by exam results.

MEASURE	2003 Baseline	2015 Target
Percent of students attaining mastery in all four areas of the Grade One Readiness inventory (taken in first month after enrolment in Grade One)	37.2%	90%
Percent of students achieving mastery on the Grade Four Literacy test	57.7%	85%
National mean score at GSAT for each subject (General School Achievement Test, taken at end of Grade Six primary school)	Math: 48% Language 52% Science 48% Soc'l Stud. 54% Comm. Task 65%	Math: 48% Language 52% Science 48% Soc'l Stud. 54% Comm. Task 65%
Percent of cohort attaining Grade 1-3 in five CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate) subjects including English and Mathematics	Less than 11.5%	60%

Table 2 CXC Test Scores Baseline vs. Target Percentages

Source: Davis, Rae. (2004). Task Force on Educational Reform Final Report. p. 40.

1. Creating the “Ideal Caribbean Person” through Education

As part of the Caribbean philosophy of education, the CXC directly references the official Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person, further explored below.

The Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person that the CXC references when producing curriculum guides is based on the document “Creative and Productive Citizens for the Twenty-First Century” (2011), the result of the 17th Meeting of Conference of Heads of Government in Barbados in 1996. The section of this document entitled “Vision of the

Caribbean in the Future and the Ideal Caribbean Person” was informed by the Regional Cultural Policy, the West Indian Commission Report, the Caribbean Charter for Health Promotion, and the Special Meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers of Education (SCME). The document specifies that the Ideal Caribbean Person “sees ethnic, religious and other diversity as a source of potential strength and richness,” “has an informed respect for the cultural heritage,” “demonstrates multiple literacies... and questions the beliefs and practices of past and present” (Creative, 2011).

These qualities of the Ideal Caribbean Person are important because the goals for creating this person are paralleled in the goals of the education system. When mentioning the Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person, it is also worth noting the “Profile of the Educated Jamaican” outlined in the Vision 2030 Plan (2009). According to the plan, the ideal educated Jamaican will “speak an additional language and have at least the minimum requirements for tertiary education” and be “rooted in his/her Jamaican ‘smaddiness’”²⁴ (Vision 2030, 2009, p. 57). This description also brings up the language debate in chapter II in terms of whether Jamaican Standard English and Jamaican Creole are considered two separate languages, and which gets designated as the ‘additional’ language. Because the Vision 2030 Plan is so focused on education, there are curriculum content implications that stem from the inclusion of educated Jamaicans being rooted in their Jamaican culture/history/identity.

More recently, Amina Blackwood-Meeks, Director of Culture in Education Programme at the Jamaican Ministry of Education, announced the reintroduction of civics curriculum to high schools in Jamaica over the 2012/2013 school year, in honor of Marcus

²⁴ ‘Smaddiness’ derives from the Standard English word ‘somebody.’ Translated, this specifically refers to ‘somebody-ness’; in other words, Jamaican essence/identity. A cautionary note here about the problematic pitfalls of essentializing categories such as identity, and the overarching postmodernist criticism of identity politics. As Judith

Garvey's 125th birthday. Garvey's teachings make up a large component of the introduced curriculum, which is part of the Ministry of Education's plan to "highlight the life and achievement of the National Hero." Blackwood-Meeks is quoted saying that the Marcus Garvey material is intended to teach students how to be an international citizen, "in terms of Garvey's own concern for oppressed people everywhere in the world" (Davidson, 2014). Here we see an entire curriculum for civics based around a prominent Jamaican figure, and also an alignment between introducing a Marcus Garvey-centered civics curriculum and the ROSE curriculum specifying the inclusion of curriculum material about national heroes and cultural legacy.

Debates about what to include in secondary school curriculums are still going on, as evidenced by the argument from Dr. Donna Hope Marquis, director of the Reggae Studies Unit at UWI, for a cultural education curriculum that specifically includes Jamaica's musical heritage. The general case for the integration of this material is to teach and preserve cultural identity, although it was met with resistance from Education Minister Ronald Thwaites due to the capacity limits of curriculum material (Campbell, 2012).

I. Conclusion

Jules (2010) states the importance of taking a historical perspective when contemplating the current education system: "Education cannot be business as usual, and we must always, and in every historical epoch, continually interrogate the purposes of education" (para. 5). Interestingly, Jules also mentions the internationalization of education and its effects on small states in particular:

Increasingly notions of national curricula are yielding way to 'foreign' or international curricula that literally prepares a student even from the primary stage 'for export'

Butler (1990) points out, there is a need to critique "the categories of identity that contemporary juridical structures engender, naturalize, and immobilize" (p. 5).

(packaged as seamless entry) into tertiary education institutions located in OECD centers. This directly contradicts the effort by many nation states to utilize curriculum at primary and secondary levels to help shape nationalist identification and build citizenship” (Jules, 2010, para. 19).

Seen here is the tension between the global and the local, speaking more concretely to the number of Jamaican students, a total of 14% Jamaican tertiary students, or 3,560 (in 1998) who choose to pursue higher education, and, more recently, secondary schools, outside of the Caribbean- usually in England, Canada, or the US (UNESCO, 2001). Jamaica represents the biggest number of Caribbean students seeking higher education in the US (Francis, 2014a and 2014b). In conversations with Dr. Shondel Nero, she commented on the general feelings in Jamaica that Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England are still held as the esteemed gold standard for education, conditioned by colonial influence. Here again is the complexity and contradictions that exist in postcolonial states in terms of identity, history, culture, and education: one the one hand, championing independence and a break from the colonial power, on the other hand, being conditioned that the colonial power’s higher education institutions are something to strive for, with the underlying promise from both colonizer and colonized that a standardized, British-modeled education is the only means to improving social status and gaining agency.

VI. Curriculum Case Study: Secondary Schools in Kingston, Jamaica

A. Introduction



Figure 1 Kingston, Jamaica Source: www.jamaicacaves.org

For this case study, five secondary schools in the parishes of Kingston²⁵ and neighboring St. Andrew, Jamaica were selected based on the public availability of their syllabi, curricula, and reading lists. This analysis seeks to inform the guiding inquiries of this thesis, which are as follows:

- What are the legacies of British colonization on the Anglophone Caribbean education system?
- How do postcolonial literature and history curricula contribute to national narratives of identity, in terms of the Statement of the Ideal Caribbean, and history, in the context of a postcolonial nation?

²⁵ Kingston is the capital city of Jamaica as well as the largest, serving as the nation's administrative center.

The five high schools selected are Ardenne High School (co-ed), Immaculate Conception High School (all girls religious), Donald Quarrie High School (co-ed), St. George's College (all boys religious), and St. Hughes High School (all girls). Within this school selection, there is a variety of religious, non-religious, all girls, all boys, and co-ed schools. The rankings of the selected schools based on the CSEC exam results gathered and published by the local Jamaican think tank Educate Jamaica are also varied.

Rationale for picking the varied types of high schools are as follows. 1) I have direct public access to their syllabi for English Language and Literature, Social Studies, and History courses. 2) Even with the variation of these schools, they are all still located under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, which provides curriculum guides and approves school syllabi. 3) All high schools in Jamaica are centered around preparing students for the standardized tests, namely the CSEC and potentially the CAPE exam. Thus, besides the addition of religious education courses at the religious-affiliated high schools, the curriculum content of all high schools must be geared toward the CXC exam material. Because there is little flexibility for varying the curriculum, using available documents from high school curricula as opposed to random sampling does not invalidate the methodology of this study.

The Caribbean Examinations Council determines all syllabi and curriculum content and correlates the content with the CXC exams. Thus, the following document analysis of the syllabi from five secondary schools does not seek to highlight radical differences between the various school selections of content options that CXC provides. Instead, this chapter seeks to explore the narratives and subject focus of selected material, and to look at the compilation of British, American, and Caribbean authors in the literature courses in terms of creating a national and regional identity while holding on to certain colonial

influences. As such, the goal here is not a strict comparison between different high school curricula, but to gain an understanding of the overall curriculum material promoted by the CXC, although the various nuances are indeed interesting to note. This analysis looks at different grades (7, 8, 9) and different courses (English language, English literature, history, and social sciences/civics). A brief history of each school will preface analysis to provide context.

B. Ardenne High School

Based on its test scores for the CSEC examinations, which place it in Educate Jamaica's Secondary Ivy League category, Ardenne High School is ranked 15th out of 161 high schools, and had 93.5% of its students come out of grade 11 passing a minimum of 5 CSEC subject exams (including math and English), based on the 2014 exam results ("Secondary Ivy League," 2015). Ardenne High is a co-ed, first-to-sixth form secondary school in the St. Andrew parish of Jamaica (See Appendix 3 for US grade equivalencies). Like many schools in Jamaica that originated from missionary establishments and sponsorships, Ardenne was founded as a religious institution by Church of God missionaries who came from the United States in 1929 (Ardenne, 2015). It continues to fall under the umbrella of religious affiliation, as exemplified by its motto "With God as Guide, Seek the Best," and its mission statement, which reads: "Ardenne is founded on high ethical principles based on the moral teachings of Christianity" (Ardenne, 2015).

In Jamaica, English classes are split into two separate subjects: English Language and English Literature. While discussion of English Language courses is important and especially relevant to the earlier discussion of the language debate over Jamaican Creole and Standard English in chapter II, here I analyze the curriculum content of English Literature courses, beginning with Ardenne High School Grade 9. I am in possession of

two different versions of Ardenne High's Curriculum for Grade 9, one copyrighted from 2007 and one copyrighted in 2011, the latter of which is still currently used. At first glance, the curriculum content here seems to be a combination of British and Caribbean material, as evidenced by the authors and publishers of the required reading material. The 9th grade English Literature Curriculum states, "literature provides an approach to the three genres- drama, prose and poetry..." (6). These categories are used to organize the school year's schedule of reading. Beginning with an introduction to drama, the prescribed text for studying Elizabethan Drama is Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Studying short stories is accomplished through selected works from *A World of Prose* (Williams and Simmons-McDonald, 2005), which is "compiled with the approval of the Caribbean Examinations Council by Editors who have served as CSEC English panel members." Hazel Simmons-McDonald, one of the co-editors of this volume, is the former Pro-Vice Chancellor, Principal, and Head of the Department of Language, Linguistics and Literature at UWI, and is also the author of several Caribbean short stories²⁶ as well as stories from around the world that have been compiled in this anthology. In the newest edition of this 2005 anthology, the authors' preface reads, "In this edition we have included a higher proportion of West Indian stories" (Williams and Simmonds-McDonald, 2005).

I will look specifically at three short stories in the curriculum: "Blackout" by Roger Mais, "Berry" by Langston Hughes, and "Shabine" by Hazel Simmons-McDonald. These three short stories deal explicitly with race relations: the north-south race relations in the United States, American tourist and Caribbean local race relations, and mixed-race relations in the Caribbean. Themes of racism, bias, gender, and judgment pervade all three

²⁶ For a comprehensive table outlining the content of *A World of Prose*, see Appendix 5. Notably, there are no English authors present in this short story anthology.

short stories, as does physical appearance, the black male body being seen as a threat, and the social implications of language choice.

“Blackout” is by Roger Mais, a Jamaican author born in Kingston. I highlight the author’s nationality to showcase that the required reading incorporates local authors, giving students the opportunity to read works by someone from their own community. This is important in order to understand the role of education in a postcolonial society, in terms of which authors are accepted into a curricular canon of knowledge, here decided by a Caribbean examinations board.

“Blackout” is a short story about a young white American woman who is approached by a young black man while she waits alone at a bus stop in Jamaica. The woman finds this situation intriguing, and the narrator associates her perception of the black man with “novelty” and a potential adventure. The man asks her for a cigarette. Mais emphasizes the fact that the woman is not frightened or intimidated by this situation, although she does comfort herself by acknowledging that should anything unfortunate happen, she can rely on a scream to alert ‘trustworthy’ people in the nearby houses to come to her aid. However, she does acknowledge being uncomfortable in the situation, and would prefer if the young man said or did something explicitly offensive so that she can justify her discomfort around him. As they strike up conversation, the man begins to explain the difference between Jamaica and America in terms of race, pointing out that there are no lynchings on the island, and mentioning that on the island, the only distinctions are between men and women.

In “Berry” by Langston Hughes, a US black author, we see the contradiction of a black character who has limited social standing, limited economic opportunity, and no

respect from the white adult community being the same character who brings light and a genuine happiness to a group of younger characters.

This is a short story about a young black man from the Southern United States getting hired for low wages on the Jersey Shore to work at a Summer Home for Crippled Children. While the other adults in the story are explicitly racist, Milberry Jones, 'Berry' for short, becomes a friendly caretaker of the crippled children in the story. "The grown-up white folks only spoke to him when they had some job for him to do, or when they were kidding him about being dark, and talking flat and southern, and mispronouncing words. But the kids didn't care how he talked. They loved his songs and his stories." With this theme, Hughes presents to the reader the social construction of racism, in that the children in the story have not yet been conditioned to adopt the same racist mindset that has pervaded their society, and their relationship with Berry is embedded with innocence and friendship based on human interaction and kindness, rather than skin color and speech dialect. Berry becomes the only character in the story who is able to give the crippled children some semblance of both childhood normalcy, with his playfulness and storytelling, as well as a sense of wonderment with the outside world, when he takes them in their wheelchairs to the beach so they can experience the ocean.

"Shabine" by Hazel Simmons-McDonald, a St. Lucian-born author who co-edited *A World of Prose for CXC*, is one of the short stories that includes Creole within the text whenever Justine, the mixed-race main character, her sons, or the man who is interested in her speak, while the narrator maintains Standard English. Justine intrigues the main male character because of her red hair, pale skin, grey eyes, and "chocolate freckles." Simmons-McDonald describes Justine in the eyes of the man interested in her: "She was a blend, a half-breed and to him more beautiful because of her difference." This difference,

however, is the very reason that Justine is not highly regarded or considered an acceptable match for the man by the community. The story ends on a note of longing and wistful, wishful thinking that in another time or another place, perhaps if it would have been socially acceptable and not forbidden by his family, the man and Justine could have been together. Here, racial and class tensions are brought to the forefront. Accompanying CXC questions in the back of the *World of Prose* anthology explicitly ask students, “What does this story suggest about race and class tensions in the society in which it is set?” (Williams and Simmons-McDonald, p. 195).

During the second semester of school at Ardenne High, students study The West Indian Novel by reading “Miguel Street” by V.S. Naipaul. This book is a collection of short stories set in Trinidad and Tobago, which the Trinidadian author wrote while living in London.

Poetry is looked at through *A World of Poetry for CXC*, an anthology of poems. It is interesting to note that both the prose and poetry anthologies are directly geared towards the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC).

C. St. Hugh’s High School

St. Hugh’s High School for Girls was started in 1899 by Archbishop Enos Nuttal, through the Anglican Order of Deaconesses in Jamaica (History of St. Hugh’s, 2007). Originally called the Deaconess Home School and later the Deaconess Home High School, St. Hugh’s was split into two schools: the St. Hugh’s High School for Girls and St. Hugh’s Preparatory School, the latter a private co-ed school also operated by the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. According to McKenzie (1991), “The Deaconess Order played an important role in late nineteenth century Jamaica, stepping into the breach to fill a void left by the colonial administration in the fields of

education and health care.” With the establishment of the Deaconess Home High School for Girls in 1913, students were able to sit the external University of Cambridge examinations. The school at this time received moderate financial assistance from the Jamaican government. When the Jamaica Schools Commission requested a change of the school’s name²⁷ in 1925, St. Hugh’s was picked because St. Hugh’s College at Oxford was the alma mater of the incoming principal, Evelyn Stopford (McKenzie, 1991).

St. Hugh’s is ranked 27th out of 161 Jamaican high schools, and 75.9% of its students completed five CSEC subject tests at the end of grade 11, based on 2013 exam results (JA-Blogz, 2014).

In the 7th grade Language Arts curriculum guide, Term One begins, similar to Ardenne High, by studying short stories. A combination of local authors and British authors are listed, including “The Village Washer,” a short story by Trinidadian author Samuel Selvon, and “Drunkard of the River” by Michael Anthony, a renowned Caribbean author also born in Trinidad. “The Village Washer” is a short story from Selvon’s collection *Ways of Sunlight*, which features stories about Trinidad in Part 1, and stories about Trinidadian immigrants in London in Part 2. In Term Three, students read British author C.S. Lewis’ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* to understand elements of a fairy tale.

Both the prose and drama selections for grade 8 zero contain themes of financial struggle with central black characters. The Grade 8 Literature Curriculum Guide 2014-2015 focuses on the three previously identified areas of literature: prose, poetry and drama. Assigned reading for the prose section is *The Cloud with the Silver Lining* by C. Everard Palmer, a Jamaican-born children’s author. Under the poetry curriculum, the

²⁷ It is worth noting the prevalence of English names of schools/streets/parishes in Jamaica. A current discussion of questioning current standard language titles is the problematic confederate names still used for official buildings/streets in the southern US. The next school profiled, Donald Quarrie High, is an example of recapturing the power of naming in a local context.

Poetry Workbook compiled by S. Myers-Lawrence is listed. The play listed under the drama coursework is “A Raisin in the Sun” by Lorraine Hansberry, a US black playwright. Both *The Cloud with the Silver Lining* and “A Raisin in the Sun” feature black families, one in Jamaica and one in Chicago.

The social studies and history curriculum at this school clearly exemplify culturally relevant material. The 7th grade Social Studies curriculum guide 2014-2015 begins by stating, “At this grade level students start the ROSE (Reform of Secondary Education) syllabus... This content aims to guide students in a better understanding of [our] nation’s history, cultural values and an awareness foundation for our motto.” Objectives include gaining knowledge of contributions from national heroes and heroines and being exposed to foundations of cultural legacy. This curriculum contains a section entitled “Our Ancestors,” which encompasses information about the Tainos, Europeans, Spaniards, Africans, British, Chinese, Indians, Lebanese, and Syrians.

The Grade 9 History Curriculum Guide begins the school year with the teachings of Marcus Garvey, focusing on the concept of self-reliance and Garvey’s role as a national liberator. Following this, students are taught about the creation and failure of the Federation in the British Caribbean and movements toward independence in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and British Guiana. Included in the student activities under the Federation in the British Caribbean topic is the analysis of the poem “Dear Departed Federation” by Louise Bennett, a prominent Jamaican poet who writes in Jamaican Creole, and is credited with the literary recognition of Creole and instilling a sense of Jamaican pride around Creole as a culturally rich language (St. Hugh’s, 2014).

D. Donald Quarrie High School

Donald Quarrie High School, commonly referred to as DQ High, opened in 1977 and is named after a recognized local track and field Olympian (Donald Quarrie, 2014). The government of Jamaica owns the land that the high school sits on. DQ originally opened for grades 7-9, but was put on the shift system, in which the school operates one shift of students in the morning and another later in the day, to accommodate floods of students from surrounding feeder schools, expanding the grade levels from 7-10, and later becoming an official high school in 2000. Through a sponsorship by Jamaica Private Power (JPP), DQ High claims to have one of the most up-to-date computer labs and library support facilities in Jamaica. According to its website, Donald Quarrie “continues to graduate students who are well-rounded and contribute to national development...” However, out of the five high schools chosen for this case study, DQ High ranks the lowest (119th out of 161) in terms of CSEC exam results. A mere 7.5% of its grade 11 students completed the five CSEC subject exams in 2013 (JA-Blogz, 2014).

The DQ Grade 7 English Literature Curriculum begins with the novel *Sprat Morrison* by Jean D’Costa, a Jamaican author. D’Costa attended St. Hugh’s High School, UWI, and Oxford University, her scholarly research focusing on Jamaican Creole. Her novel’s setting is in Papine, a suburb of Kingston, making this novel of direct spatial/territorial relevance to the students.

Additional required reading for short stories draws from the anthology *Over Our Way*, edited by Jamaican-born Jean D’Costa and Velma Pollard, with the following selected short stories: “Millicent” by Trinidadian author Merle Hodge, “The Bicycle” by Jean D’Costa, “Ascot” by Jamaican author Olive Senior, and “Anancy and Mongoose” by Velma Pollard. These readings could be categorized as having less explicitly race-based

themes, but are considered culturally relevant material because they are all set in the Caribbean and have black central characters.

Suggested poems for the poetry division of the curriculum are “The New Boy” by Irish poet John Walsh, “Flame Heart” by Jamaican-born Claude McKay, and “Rainy Day” by American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

The DQ Grade 8 Literature Curriculum has a clear selection of local authors, furthering the cultural and geographic relevancy of the curriculum. The curriculum begins with the novel *Charlotte’s Web* by US author E.B. White. Later in the school year, short stories are studied by reading selections from *The Sun’s Eye: West Indian Writing for Young Readers*, compiled by Ann Walmsley, a Londoner who taught high school for three years in Jamaica. Suggested short stories from this anthology are “An Honest Thief” by Barbadian author Timothy Callender, “The Village Washer” by Trinidadian author Samuel Selvon (the same short story in St. Hugh’s High grade 7 Language Arts curriculum), “Sharlo’s Strange Bargain” by Antiguan author Ralph Prince, and “An Heir for the Maroon Chief” by Namba Roy, a Jamaican author. DQ’s curriculum seems to contain the largest proportion of Caribbean authors compared to the other schools.

E. St. George’s College

Although its name may indicate a higher education institution, St. George’s College is a Jesuit Roman Catholic all-boys secondary high school in Kingston, founded in 1850 by Spanish Jesuits. USAID funded a St. George’s building expansion in the early 1990s. Today, the school holds approximately 1,350 students and receives support both from the Society of Jesuits and the Jamaican Ministry of Education, the latter in the form of grants (Jackson, 2003). St. George’s ranks 17th out of 161 high schools, with 91% of its students

successfully completing five CSEC subject tests at the end of grade 11 (Secondary Ivy League, 2015).

From the Second Form Book List found on the St. George's College website, the books listed for English Language include the Oxford Dictionary and the following novels: *Miguel Street* by V.S. Naipaul (Trinidad) (the same novel used at Ardenne High for grade 9 English Literature), *Hot Spot* by Basil Dawkins (Jamaica), *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (US), and *Animal Farm* by George Orwell (Britain). St. George's College has an internal bookshop where students can purchase or rent the required classroom books.

St. George's College English Literature Third Form [Grade 9] Course Outline²⁸ specifically states in the introduction “**All the books and poems are the set texts stipulated by the CXC CSEC syllabus for English Literature, for the period of September 2010 to June 2014**” (bold in original). Selected poems are chosen from *A World of Poetry for CXC* by Mark McWatt and Hazel Simmons-McDonald, the same anthology text used at Ardenne High School. Selected poems include “Once Upon a Time” by Gabriel Okara, a Nigerian poet. In this poem, a father laments to his son about the loss of carefree, childlike laughter, and the replacement of calculated responses and actions that don't match his inner feelings. The fourth stanza reads:

So I have learned many things, son.
I have learned to wear many faces
like dresses- homeface,
officeface, streetface, hostface,
cocktailface, with all their conforming smiles

²⁸ See Appendix 4

like a fixed portrait smile.

The implications of teaching this poem for a postcolonial curriculum are huge. This poem directly confronts what Lezra terms “acts of atrocity” while simultaneously calling in to question dominant historical narratives. These lines seemingly call to mind the work of Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, in which he details the psychological battles that occur when those with black skin are unable to hide their outward appearance, and yet are seemingly only able to mimic the behavior that whites deem respectable in order to be able to function in a racist society. As Fanon describes this constructed conundrum, “not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man” (p. 110).

The next required poem is “Forgive My Guilt” by US poet Robert P. T. Coffin, about the author’s experience shooting and wounding two birds he is unable to catch, and whose dying cries continue to haunt him. The final lines of the poem could potentially be a broader metaphor for white guilt over past atrocities when read in a Caribbean context: “But I have hoped for years all that is wild, /Airy, and beautiful will forgive my guilt.”²⁹

English poet Henry King’s poem “A Contemplation Upon Flowers” is also required, as is “God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Victorian English Jesuit poet, and “A Stone’s Throw” by Elma Mitchell (British). The poem “Dreaming Black Boy” by James Berry, a native Jamaican who spent the latter portion of his life in England, references Paul Robeson, a US Black singer and actor involved with the Civil Rights Movement, who wrote an essay entitled “I Want to be African,” describing his interest in examining his ancestral histories. “Dreaming Black Boy” contains a wistful list of wishes from a black boy, and begins with situating the boy in his role as a student: “I wish my teacher’s eyes wouldn’t/go past me today.” This line speaks of a desire to be recognized,

to be seen, and to be educated. This line could be considered especially relevant to the Jamaican education context in terms of the gender performance gap.³⁰ “Epitaph” by Dennis Scott, a Jamaican poet, is a beautiful, haunting poem about a hanged slave, which Scott likens to “a black apostrophe to pain.” Questioning the historical records of the event, written by white men, the poem continues:

At least that’s how
they tell it. It was long ago
and what can we recall of a dead slave or two
except that when we punctuate our island tale
they swing like sighs across the brutal
sentences, and anger pauses
till they pass away.

Another one of Scott’s poems, “Marrysong,” is used in the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) syllabus for the Cambridge International Examinations in the UK, which is also provided remotely to schools around the world. This is an example of the crossover and diversification from former colonies that has occurred within the British curriculum.

²⁹ It is worth noting that with this chapter’s analysis of the wider themes at play in selected stories and poems, it is beyond the scope of this project to examine and further analyze how all of this curricular material is presented in the actual classrooms, in terms of what themes and interpretations are highlighted or emphasized to the students.

³⁰ The gendered education achievement gap (boys’ underachievement and under-participation) in Jamaica is exemplified in the following statistic from Jamaican secondary schools in 2005: “Overall, only 48,992 boys sat the [CSEC] exams compared to 81,111 girls. This alone is a strong indicator of high drop-out rates among boys and disparity in survival to the final stages of formal education, and is hypothesized to be due to a number of causes including male youth violence, disinterest, and socialized masculine identities disassociated with education” (Jha and Kelleher, 2006).

All told, out of the ten selected poems for St. George's College Third Form [Grade 9] English Literature Curriculum, six of the authors are British/English, three are Caribbean (two Jamaican and one Guyanese), and one is Nigerian.

Also included in the English Literature Curriculum is Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and *Old Story Time* by Jamaican author Trevor Rhone. Similar to Ardenne High's syllabus, the short stories "Blackout" by Roger Mais, "Shabine" by Hazel Simmonds-McDonald and "Berry" by Langston Hughes are recommended from *A World Of Prose for CXC*—the same as Ardenne High.

F. Immaculate Conception High School

Immaculate Conception High School (ICHS) is an all-girls, Roman Catholic sponsored, public grant-aided high school that caters to students of all denominations (Immaculate Conception, n.d.). It was founded in 1858 by the Scottish Franciscan Sisters, and was later put under the discretion of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, who continue to sponsor the institution. The school's website contains a helpful flow chart (Figure 2) of the school's hierarchy, beginning, of course, with the Jamaican Ministry of Education:

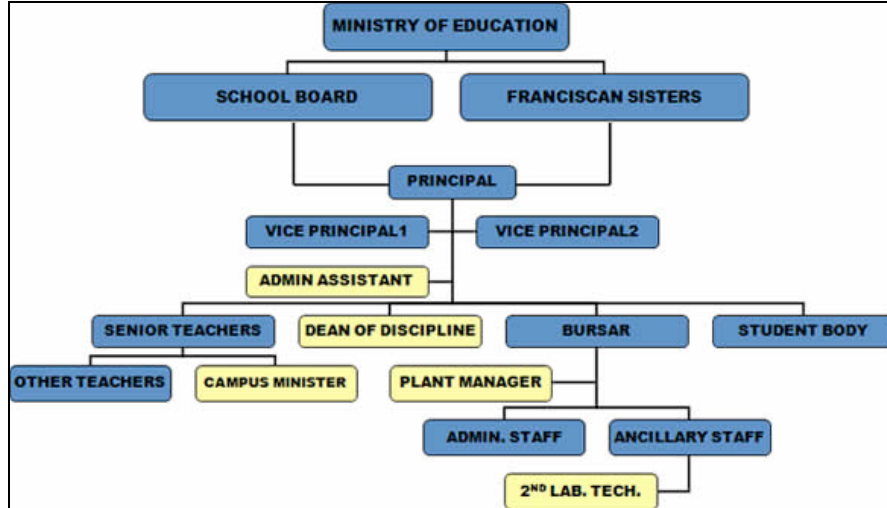


Figure 2 Immaculate Conception High School Structure

Source: http://www.immaculatehigh.edu.jm/schoolprofile.php?view=school_profile&show=SCHOOL%20STRUCTURE

The total student population of ICHS is approximately 1,620, drawing from the top 1,000 candidates in the Grade Six Assessment Test (GSAT) examination. ICHS is ranked 2nd out of 161 high schools, the highest ranked out of the five high schools discussed in this case study chapter. A total of 99.6% ICHS grade 11 students passed five CSEC subject tests (including math and English), based on the 2014 exam results (Secondary Ivy League, 2015).

Immaculate Conception High’s academic curriculum has been approved by the Ministry of Education, and includes a two-year post-secondary programme, which is equivalent to an AP or honors course. This programme requires the CAPE subjects of Communication and Caribbean Studies, the latter of which is a “Social Studies course that examines regional Geography, History, Sociology, and development issues such as small state economy and the impact of slavery on gender relations and health practices.”

Interestingly, although the school ranks exceptionally well and only takes the top 1,000 students according to GSAT test scores, Immaculate Conception High engages in criterion

testing, therefore avoiding ranking students against each other. According to ICHS, “Quality delivery of the curriculum is also assured by...standardized curricula with unit and yearend tests and/or examinations based on syllabus determined tables of specification under the supervision of department heads; and evaluation performance on the GSAT, CSEC, and CAPE.” An exceptionally high 95-99% of ICHS graduates go on to tertiary education.

In the Grade 7 English Curriculum, which is broken down into English Language and English Literature, for ICHS 2012-2013 (the syllabus that is still currently posted on the school’s website), both English courses emphasize the use of grammatically correct Caribbean Standard English (CSE). The required reading texts for English Literature are as follows: *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery (Canadian) and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis (British) for the purpose of studying prose fiction (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is also used in Ardenne High’s grade 7 curriculum). *My Father Sun-Sun Johnson* by C. Everard Palmer (Jamaican) is used to study the West Indian novel. *Over our Way* (A Collection of Caribbean Short Stories) edited by Jean D’Costa (Jamaican) and Velma Pollard (Jamaican) and “Enchanted Island” by Ian Serraillier (British) are required to study short story appreciation. *Over our Way* is also used in Donald Quarrie High’s grade 7 English Literature curriculum.

Selections from Shakespeare and the poetry anthology *Sunsong Book 1*, edited by Pamela Mordecai (Jamaican) and Grace Walker-Gordon (Jamaican), are used to study poetry. Poems selected from *Sunsong Book 1* are “New Scholar” (aka “Good Morning Teacher”) by Louise Bennett (Jamaican), “The David Jazz,” and “At the theatre (To the lady behind me)” by Alan P. Herbert (British). Only within the poetry section does the syllabus mention Creole, when it calls for students to understand “poetic language

(Creole, Standard English, poet's choice of words) to determine [the] poet's message.”

“New Scholar” by Louise Bennett is written entirely in Jamaican Creole. Looking at the nationalities of the various authors and editors of the required reading for this English Literature course, there is a fairly even distribution of western (British and Canadian) and Caribbean (Jamaican) nationalities, with slightly more Jamaican bylines. Whether purposefully or not in light of this being an all-girl's high school, this syllabus also contains more female authors and editors of the required texts than some of the other high schools examined.

In the Grade 9 English Literature syllabus, *Crick Crack Monkey* by Merle Hodge, a Trinidadian author, is required reading for the novel category. Also required are Shakespeare's “Macbeth,” McWatt and Simmons-McDonald's *World of Poetry for CXC* and Williams and Simmons-McDonald's *World of Prose for CXC* (2005), and the compilation *Elements of Literature* (“Beowulf” and The Prologue to “The Canterbury Tales”). Hodge's *Crick Crack Monkey* is well known as a major novel by a post-colonial West Indian female author. This novel is a commentary “on how the colonial education, by presenting the lived experiences of the Caribbean people as invalid, negated the very subjectivity of the colonized by taking them away from their ‘own reality,’ and thus is able “to sustain both the creole and colonial cultures as opposed sites of cultural production which the ‘modern’ Caribbean subject cannot transcend entirely, nor reconcile” (Gikandi, 1989).

Selected poems from *A World of Poetry for CXC* are “Journal” by David Williams, “Ana” by Mark McWatt (Guyanese), “Early Innocence” by James Berry (Jamaican), “Childhood” by Olive Senior (Jamaican), and “The Woman Speaks....Son” by Lorna Goodison (Jamaican). The inclusion of poet Olive Senior is, I feel, worth noting for the

continued relevance of her poetry. Although this particular poem was not selected as part of the required reading for ICHS, Senior has a piercing poem entitled “Colonial Girls School,” written from the perspective of the Caribbean girls attending a colonial school, which “yoked our minds to declensions in Latin/and the language of Shakespeare” (Senior, 1985). Continuing on, this poem reads:

Studying: *History Ancient and Modern*

Kings and Queens of England

Steppes of Russia

Wheatfields of Canada

There was nothing of our landscape there

Nothing about us at all

Marcus Garvey turned twice in his grave

Olive Senior was an advisor to the Caribbean Poetry Project, a collaboration from 2010-2015 between Cambridge University and UWI Mona, which “encouraged engagement with Caribbean poetry, and improved the teaching and learning of poetry in both British and Caribbean schools,” particularly secondary schools (Caribbean Poetry Project, 2015). Out of this project came the publication *Teaching Caribbean Poetry*, published by Routledge in 2013 and based on the course jointly devised between the Universities of Cambridge and the West Indies (Bryan and Styles, 2013). The publication is edited by former UWI Professor Beverley Bryan and Professor Morag Styles.

G. Conclusion

After examining a selection of syllabi from five high schools in Kingston for culturally relevant material that addresses , there is no simple conclusion. Yes, the curriculum content in secondary schools put forth by the Ministry of Education currently includes both Caribbean and British content, as well as some US authors in the English Literature Courses. Social Studies and History courses cover Caribbean culture, national heroes, and emphasize cultural legacy and the numerous populations that formed Caribbean history through colonization, slavery, independence, and immigration. In the 50-odd years since Jamaica gained independence, the education system has improved in terms of culturally relevant content since the colonial schools, which simply regurgitated British curriculums and/or rote religious material. Overall, in terms of local, culturally relevant material, I would argue that analysis of the above secondary schools shows a largely equitable incorporation and promotion of Caribbean material that deals explicitly with colonial histories and race relations. There does not seem to be any attempt by the CXC to censor these contentious topics that appear in chosen short stories, poems, and social science materials.

What has not changed, however, throughout the many education reform efforts initiated by various bodies including the Ministry of Education, IMF, World Bank, local think tanks, working groups, and foreign recommendations, is the structure of the education system. It still parallels the British system of education that was set in place during colonization, in terms of a rigorous exam-centered education model. The education system in Jamaica parallels the competitive nature of English grammar schools. Teaching to the test does not seem to be criticized in the many education debates in Jamaica, as it is constantly in the United States, for example. Few people question the standardized testing

structure, maintaining instead that a national curriculum and standardized education structure are the best ways to seek and ensure a uniform, equalized education across Jamaica, a country that has struggled severely with equity in its education system in terms of student access, teacher quality, school resources.

While there does not seem to be excessive debate over the current curriculum content in the English Literature classes in Jamaica, the language debate is still going strong, in terms of which language, Jamaican Standard English or Jamaican Creole, should be given official recognition and status in acknowledging that Jamaica is in fact a bilingual nation. Another issue that arises is the incorporation of oral language traditions into the curriculum. Jamaican Creole is present in short stories and some poems included in the Literature curriculums, but oral story telling, a large part of Jamaican culture, is not included. Amina Blackwood-Meeks is well known in Jamaica for her instrumental role in reviving the art form of traditional Caribbean storytelling, which she claims is part of the “indigenous knowledge system” (Reckord, 2016).

In English Language classes, the overwhelming focus is on proper adoption of Jamaican Standard English. The fact that Jamaican Creole is present in local mediums such as song, storytelling, spoken word, and slam poetry, which are not included in the formal curriculum, is worth noting. One assumes that these mediums are not included because they are not mediums that are (or easily could be, without complete exam restructuring) present on any of the CXC exams.

Additionally, tracking students into different levels and qualities of schools based on exam scores, instead of having a location-based school zoning system, further exacerbates the classed structure of education in Jamaica, maintaining its continued parallel with the British education system it inherited. However, the wide disparity in the quality of schools

in Jamaica, due to many factors ranging from cost, resources, teacher availability, and teacher training, makes the argument for a national curriculum and uniform testing practices more salient, in order to establish some kind educational standard. Tracking that begins, essentially, with the grade 4 literacy tests, which test for literacy in JSE and not Jamaican Creole, the first language of most primary education students, thus sets the terms for their educational future before they even enter secondary education. Because success on CXC exams is the biggest priority in the Jamaican education system, and the only means for accessing the next level of education, this becomes essentially a chicken-or-egg situation, where additions of more Creole into curriculums or more Caribbean-authored texts would only be salient if they were also included on CXC exams, which may be unlikely to happen because of the endorsement of the current CXC examinations by education officials in England. This credibility from the former colonizer country, while psychologically complicated, is how the current system operates, and it is made more authoritative by the continued ideals of England's top higher education institutions, which are also exam-based. The Jamaican development plan's call for equal access to education and complete population enrollments in primary and secondary education seems at odds with an education system that does not base its success on democratized education and access, but gains its very education credibility (seen through the many iterations that education is the only/most important way to succeed and achieve a higher social and economic status) from its exclusivity- in a sense, following a simple market phenomenon of supply and demand coupled with merit-based success.

VII. Conclusion

Potential policy implications from this study pertain to education policies for the Caribbean, education plans for small states, and more generally, education policies and reforms particular to decentralized education systems that are not based on standardized testing, but that include a diverse curriculum that does not shy away from candid discussion of historical events and is relevant to the past, present, and future of postcolonial states.

Looking at the debates, criticisms, and conversations surrounding curriculum content can be used as a litmus test for the political climate, as well as the growing pains as postcolonial nations navigate historical narratives and identity through their education systems. It is clearly imperative that local educators need to be involved in the creation of culturally relevant course material in secondary classrooms.

Recalling the discussion in the introduction chapter, one fundamental issue is to define the purpose of education in Jamaica. In the case of postcolonial education in Jamaica, continuous reforms have attempted to address the many different purposes of education, from country development, to professional development, to international competitiveness, to creating a culturally relevant national narrative through literary canons and historical perspectives.

While the curriculum content in the Anglophone Caribbean has incorporated culturally relevant material in the humanities and social sciences courses, the education structure remains rigidly based on examinations. High scores on these examinations, which start in grade 4, are largely dependent on Standard English writing proficiency as well as financial access to textbooks, school fees, tutoring, and extra lessons, this system tends to funnel students in a class-based stratification.

One of the most interesting findings in the research for this thesis and from the case study research specifically is the particularity of the Caribbean Examinations Council. The CXC holds a unique position as both a creator and evaluator of local Caribbean knowledge. Setting aside for a moment the well-known problems with standardized testing, the CXC perfectly showcases the negotiation between the global and the local in a postcolonial context. The CXC encapsulates the re-claiming and re-branding of an imperial/colonial-introduced evaluation system to serve a locally driven purpose of cultural knowledge production. The partnership between the CXC and the many Caribbean authors and anthologies that the CXC promotes in English courses firmly establishes the priority of curating culturally relevant material in secondary school curricula. I was surprised and intrigued to find that the CXC embodies, or at the very least, markets itself as embodying an ongoing act of subversion, by re-appropriating and transforming an established western narrative and established literary canon, and the structures of power and authority that accompany these established structures.

Recalling discussion about utilizing a pedagogy of meta-language to help students think through the language debate in schools, here I offer recommendations for a meta-curriculum or meta-learning pedagogy. Engaging students in a discussion in literature and social studies courses about why and how the material they are learning arrived in the curriculum is essential. This serves to establish the both the power dynamics and politics that are intertwined with curriculum decisions as well as the fluidity of text canonization, historical narratives, and official knowledge, in the sense that these things can be negotiated and re-interpreted to include lost and subaltern narratives and versions of knowledge.

A final note here about the problems arising from essentializing categories like identity. The Statement of the Ideal Caribbean is incorporated in the education curriculum as a model for the Caribbean identity that the postcolonial curriculum seeks to cultivate. The 'ideal Caribbean' framework necessitates inclusion and exclusion about what constitutes true Caribbean identity. Referring to earlier discussions about Stuart Hall's idea of identity as something that is not fixed, but continually in process, both explanations of Hall's conception of identity necessitate some idea of a common historical and cultural identity. This can then be used to find commonalities or differences to position identity against. In this sense, educational attempts to create and promote official bodies of historical and cultural identity through establishing curriculum canons of local knowledge fall in line with both of Hall's descriptions. I would argue that identity in this sense is not essentializing, but rather an attempt to fill the void in local/subaltern narratives of historical events and Caribbean voices in literature. This knowledge creation is ever-evolving, as anthologies are updated to include more Caribbean authors in new editions and as more Creole-based texts become canonized in curriculums.

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Appendix 1



Figure 3 Map of Kingston

**VISION OF THE CARIBBEAN IN THE FUTURE
AND THE IDEAL CARIBBEAN PERSON**

Informed by :

**The Regional Cultural Policy
The West Indian Commission Report
The Caribbean Charter for Health Promotion
The Special Meeting of SCME, May 1997**

CARIBBEAN FUTURE

The Caribbean should be seen as that part of the world where the population enjoys a good quality of life with the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, health care and employment being all virtually satisfied. The environment should be one which provides clean air and water, unpolluted seas and healthy communities - an environment that has not been destroyed by the development process.

THE IDEAL CARIBBEAN PERSON

The Ideal Caribbean Person should be someone who among other things :

is imbued with a respect for human life since it is the foundation on which all the other desired values must rest;

is emotionally secure with a high level of self confidence and self esteem;

sees ethnic, religious and other diversity as a source of potential strength and richness;

is aware of the importance of living in harmony with the environment;

has a strong appreciation of family and kinship values, community cohesion, and moral issues including responsibility for and accountability to self and community;

has an informed respect for the cultural heritage;

demonstrates multiple literacies independent and critical thinking, questions the beliefs and practices of past and present and brings this to bear on the innovative application of science and technology to problems solving;

demonstrates a positive work ethic;

values and displays the creative imagination in its various manifestations and nurture its development in the economic and entrepreneurial spheres in all other areas of life;

- has developed the capacity to create and take advantage of opportunities to control, improve, maintain and promote physical, mental, social and spiritual well being and to contribute to the health and welfare of the community and country;
- nourishes in him/herself and in others, the fullest development of each person's potential without gender stereotyping and embraces differences and similarities between females and males as a source of mutual strength.

Figure 4 Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person

Appendix 3

Grade Equivalencies	
USA	JA
Basic/Pre-School	Basic/Play-School
K1	Kindergarten
K2	
K3	Grade 1
Grade 1	Grade 2
Grade 2	Grade 3
Grade 3	Grade 4
Grade 4	Grade 5
Grade 5	Grade 6
Grade 6	Grade 7
Grade 7	Grade 8
Grade 8	Grade 9
Grade 9	Grade 10
Grade 10	Grade 11
Grade 11	Grade 12
Grade 12	Grade 13

Figure 5 US-Jamaica Grade Equivalencies

Source: Immaculate High School. Statistical Indicators.
http://www.immaculatehigh.edu.jm/schoolprofile.php?view=school_profile&show=STATISTICAL%20INDICATORS

Appendix 4

TEXT	OBJECTIVES
<p>A World of Prose by Hazel Simmonds McDonald and Mark McWatt</p> <p>Blackout - Roger Maise</p> <p>Shabine - Hazel Simmonds- McDonald</p> <p>Emma – Caolyn Cole</p> <p>The Man of the House- Frank O'Conner</p> <p>Septimus- John Wickham</p> <p>The Day The World Almost came to an end- Pearl Crayton</p> <p>The boy who loved ice-cream- Olive Senior</p> <p>Berry-Langston Hughes</p> <p>Mom Luby and The Social Worker by Kristen Hunter</p> <p>To Da-duh in memoriam by Paule Marshall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make dramatic presentations on sections of the play• Identify and discuss how language, cultural and social issues affect meaning, characterization and themes• Show how stages direction and other dramatic techniques affect meaning• Explain how the dramatic unities of time, place and action affect meaning and interpretation. <p>The students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify major and minor characters• Recount the sequence of events (plot)• Describe and analyze the characters and their characteristics• Identify and analyze themes• Link information in the story with current issues• Write poems/ paragraphs/ essays on various aspects of each story• Draw interpretations on different stories• Make dramatic presentations on the stories• Identify and discuss how language, cultural and social issues affect meaning, characterization and themes• Learn about other West Indian as well as non-West Indian cultures vicariously• Compare and contrast stories based on themes, characters, structure, plot and setting.

Figure 6 St. George's College English Literature Third Form Course Outline

Appendix 5

Title	Author	Nationality	Gender
Raymond's Run	Tony Cade Bambara	US (black)	F
Blackout	Roger Mais	Jamaica	M
Shabine	Hazel Simmons-McDonald	St. Lucia	F
The Promise	John Steinbeck	US (white)	M
A Good Long Sidewalk	William Melvin Kelley	US (black)	M
Her First Ball	Katherine Mansfield	New Zealand	F
Blood Brothers	John Wickham	Barbados	M
Emma	Carolyn Cole	US (white)	F
Death by Landscape	Margaret Atwood	Canada (white)	F
Two Boys Named Basil	Mark McWatt	Guyana	M
Child of Darkening Humour	Noel D. Williams	Guyana	M
The Man of the House	Frank O'Connor	Ireland	M
Septimus	John Wickham	Barbados	M
The Day the World Almost Came to an End	Pearl Crayton	US (black)	F
The Two Grandmothers	Olive Senior	Jamaica	F
The Boy Who Loved Ice Cream	Olive Senior	Jamaica	F
Georgia and Them There United States	Velma Pollard	Jamaica	F
The Ex-Magician from the Minhota Tavern	Murilo Rubião	Brazil	M
What Happened?	Austin C. Clarke	Canada (black)	M
Berry	Langston Hughes	US (black)	M
Mint Tea	Christine Craig	US (white)	F
Mom Luby and the Social Worker	Kristin Hunter	US (black)	F
To Da-Duh, in Memoriam	Paule Marshall	US (black)	F

Table 3 *A World of Prose for CSEC Contents*