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**Jamaican Creole: A Brief Diachronic Study of
its Syntax**

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1. Introduction

Although the varieties of English spoken in the Caribbean have always aroused a lot of academic interest, the peculiar use of language in Jamaica has lately caught the attention of the general public. Specialists as well as laymen are interested in the work of well-known singers, writers and poets who have contributed to spread the language of ordinary people in ordinary situations well beyond the Caribbean. Local variation is rich and profuse: one single variety is not restricted to just one socio-economic layer; the same speaker seems to fluctuate through a wide range of options. This situation makes any type of linguistic study challenging due to its inherent complexity and therefore this paper has been restricted to just one specific area of research: syntactic change.

In the present paper I will carry out a qualitative, diachronic analysis across texts of four selectively chosen passages in Jamaican Creole or Patois (henceforward JamC) in order to study the diachronic changes in its syntax in the twentieth century. I will also try to offer a tentative explanation for the causes of the changes as well as my perception of the linguistic situation in Jamaica (i.e. Creole continuum, decolization, diglossia).

This study will only consider syntactic variation but will necessarily include some morphological aspects directly connected with syntax, such as the pronominal system and pluralization. I will not consider the syntax and morphology of Rastafarian speech for reasons of space and complexity.

The analysis of the four passages will be preceded by a brief description of the linguistic history of Jamaica and an introductory comment about the preliminary stages in the formation of Creoles and their origins.

2. Linguistic History of Jamaica

Little is known about the linguistic situation in Jamaica prior to Christopher Columbus's arrival in Jamaica in 1494. At the time a large part of the Caribbean area was inhabited by the Arawak Indians and although there were other peoples in the area, like the Tupi-Guarani and the Tainos (Cassidy 1961:10), the linguistic interaction among these groups was not significant. The Arawak language, free from foreign influences, must have changed only gradually during the Arawak presence of seven centuries in the area. After 1494, in a few years the European colonization was to change the Jamaican history radically: the Spanish invaders very soon decimated the Arawaks, partly through direct warfare and partly through forced labour in the plantations.

Not satisfied with the natives' low capacity for work, the colonizers soon replaced Amerindian labour. West African slaves were brought to the island to work on their plantations. Most of them came from Senegal and Sierra Leone and after 1550, from the Congo-Angola region. (Lalla and D'Costa 1990: 14). They spoke a diversity of languages- and this obviously forced them to develop an effective system to communicate among themselves and with the Spanish slave-owners.

This pidginization stage, which I will describe in detail in the next chapter, continued during the rest of the sixteenth century with the arrival of new shipments of slaves.

One of the characteristics of the period of Spanish domination was its relatively flexible social structure (Lalla and D'Costa:11). The small farms, the large savannahs and the open countryside must have encouraged the creation of loose linguistic networks. Besides, relatively free intermarriage between Blacks, Creoles (Jamaican born residents) and the surviving Amerindians probably accelerated the homogenisation of the language.

While discussing this period, we must not forget an African group who was to have a pivotal influence on the linguistic history of Jamaica and even today is considered the sturdiest stronghold of Rastafarian culture on the island: the Maroons. (Pollard 2000: 5-8). As soon as the first English raids began in 1655, the Spanish freed their slaves (Cassidy 1961: 20.). Many of them fled to the mountains and shaped their own culture in isolation. This group grew later, swelled by the steady incorporation of runaways from the English plantations. The first Maroons probably spoke a Spanish-based Creole, which the escapees did not understand. This situation led to a new linguistic transformation, whose effects are still present in the former Maroon district of Trelawny. (Lalla and D'Costa 1990: 13 - Cassidy 1961: 20)

The arrival of the English in 1655 complicated the linguistic situation on the island even more, as some of them settled in areas previously occupied by the Spanish. The English soldiers and indentured labourers who arrived at the end of the seventeenth century spoke a wide range of lower-class dialects from the south West of England, from Northern Ireland, Liverpool and Glasgow. Those were the models the African slaves tried to imitate. Yet, it is highly significant that some of the syntactic characteristics of these dialects were

also present in the African languages of the slaves. (Lalla and D'Costa 1990:13-17).

As time went by, the number of white planters decreased gradually. Yet the inflow of African workers from different regions continued. The emergence of a generalized Creole was inevitable with such a high percentage of people who spoke different languages with different lexicons but with some major structural similarities. (Lalla and D'Costa 1990 : 13) feel that the language forms known now as JamC and Standard Jamaican English must have emerged at this moment. Patrick (2004:1) points out that it was precisely in 1703, when the number of enslaved Africans had risen to 45.000, that "the roots of JamC were planted".

The shift from African majority to Jamaican – born Black majority had a major impact on cultural transmission . For one thing, the new slaves had occasion to learn a local language from other Black workers, already native speakers, not from the Whites .

No doubt the masters' language provided the lexicon for the new Creole, but we cannot be sure about the origin of the other elements. Cassidy (1961:17) believes that, given the wide linguistic spectrum, the most fundamental elements of grammar and intonation would be those possessed in common by the Niger- Congo languages. However, Lalla and D'Costa (1990:18) suggest considering Manding and Guinea Coast Creole English, two trade languages already creolised, as very probable influences.

During the early nineteenth century the linguistic situation was more stable. However, lower- class white immigrants continued to exert some influence on the language. (Lalla and D'Costa 1990 : 26). Something that surely gave the language in Jamaica a very distinct character is the fact that very few women arrived on the island at the time (Lalla and D'Costa 1990 : 26). Undoubtedly, the gender imbalance must have shaped important sociolinguistic conditions.

Another factor that contributed to build the modern linguistic frame of Jamaica is the work of the missionaries in the nineteenth century. (Lalla: and D'Costa 1990: 29). With their presence on the island, the number of written records increased substantially, and the influence of middle class varieties on vocabulary, together with the incorporation of Christian verbal imagery cannot be underrated.

The full emancipation of the slaves in 1838 had a critical effect on many linguistic aspects. The free geographic relocation of the population, the formation of new communities with distinctive cultural features as well as the new patterns of employment and production surely originated changes in the language. There are records confirming significant changes in language behaviour (Lalla and D'Costa 1990: 32) and a relative homogenisation of the syntax and the vocabulary are not difficult to imagine in a society with a high rate of internal migration.

The linguistic history of Jamaica remained fairly uneventful for the rest of the nineteenth century and part of the twentieth. But not for long: the inter-war period (1918-1939) brought about the collapse of the plantation system and the sudden urbanization of Kingston (Patrick, 2004: 1). This led to dramatic social -and consequently linguistic- modifications . Besides, the Declaration of Independence in 1962 meant the achievement of political autonomy and the emergence of national pride. It was also in the sixties that "the seeds of Jamaica's indigenous music were planted" (Bilby 1995:151) and the Rastafarian movement became world-famous.

It is only natural that the impact of these historic events should have exerted some kind of linguistic influence. The analysis of the passages in this essay might shed some light on the connection between contemporary history and language in twentieth century Jamaica.

3. Theoretical Background

The following is meant to give first a brief account of the formation and development of a Creole and then offer a brief review of the common origin of all pidgins and Creoles in an attempt to explain their similarities.

The whole process in the creation of a Creole comprises several stages: the formation of a pre-pidgin or marginal pidgin, an extended pidgin, then the formation of a Creole, its expansion into a Creole continuum and sometimes its decreolisation.

Pidginization is the first step in the formation of a Creole. A pidgin is a rudimentary contact language with elements of two or more fully developed ones. It is created spontaneously – usually in trading stations, foreign settlements or any multilingual temporary situation where simple, superficial communication is needed. It usually disappears when its speakers have no longer any use for it. None of its speakers learn it as a first language (Holmes 1996:90 / Bynon 1977:257) . Rather, it is learned collectively as a second language through limited input.

According to Todd (1994: 3177), pidginization is "a process of simplification and hybridization", as a pidgin uses elements of the two languages that come into contact. The lexicon is generally borrowed from the culturally dominant language and the syntax and phonology , which is kept to a minimum, can be copied

from the substrate language or languages. Other aspects, such as morphology, are absent, or erratic and word order is inconsistent.

In due course, pidgins begin to develop more sophisticated features: Markers for transitive and intransitive verbs, predicate markers inserted before the verb, the demotion of a verb or noun to a subsidiary category like a preposition and occasionally primitive embedded clauses- although this is rare. When a pidgin gets to this stage, we can say it has entered its nativization phase (Todd 1994: 3178) .

As a pidgin begins to be used as a mother tongue, we can consider it a Creole (Bynon 1977: 257 - Holmes 1996: 95). Bickerton, who studied Creole languages in depth in his book " Roots of Language" (1981), considers that pidginization is second language learning with restricted input, while creolization is first language learning with restricted input.

It is quite remarkable that even when the source languages of a given number of Creoles are completely unrelated, yet all the Creoles still share the same characteristics, such as the existence of a full tense/ mood/ aspect system, initial particles, multiple negation, systematic absence of the copula, adjectives functioning as verbs, bi-morphemic question words, unmarked passives, questions and statements with identical word order and- unlike pidgins- subject relative clauses with relative pronouns. This striking coexistence of features in different Creoles has triggered serious research into the origin of pidgins, to which we will return later.

The adoption of the new language as a mother tongue accelerates a number of syntactic changes. Aitchinson (1994: 3185) studied the distinguishing differences between pidgins and Creole speakers and their effect on linguistic transformations: As native speakers, Creole speakers are far more fluent and faster. This usually causes phonological reduction, which has a repercussion on the syntax (e.g. the deletion of initial particles or predicate markers). Creole speakers , for the sake of convenience, also tend to lexicalize periphrases and eliminate redundant elements, such as overlapping aspect markers. One last difference is the amalgamation by Creole speakers of simple sentences to form more complex structures.

When a Creole reaches this stage of relative stability and consolidation it may be used alongside the superstrate or lexifier language. Yet, the separation between the Creole and the superstrate is hardly ever clear. As Spolsky explains (1998: 62) "the various levels of social stylistic variation may be filled by a version of the standard language at the upper end (of the social scale) and of the Creole or pidgin at the lower end". In between, we can find a wide range of intermediate varieties that extend from one end of the spectrum to the other. As we can see, within the linguistic spectrum we can find different degrees of adherence to the lower or the upper end. There is a slow-flowing number of stages ranging from the pure Creole or basilect, the lower and upper mesolects or intermediate strata and the acrolect or educated variety.¹ The whole spectrum of varieties is called "Creole Continuum".

However, this is not always the case. Some other times a Creole enters a stage of decreolization. In this case, the dominant language exerts such a pervasive and permanent influence on the Creole that its speakers gradually incorporate a growing number of features of the superstrate.

Finally, after repeated processes of borrowing of lexical items or adoption of inflectional or derivational affixes, the Creole is finally taken up by the superstrate (Jones 1994: 3188 / Holmes 1996: 101). This development over time during the decreolization process is referred to as a " Post Creole Continuum" (Chaika 1994: 340).

Naturally the borderlines between these stages are very difficult to place and the situation can be complicated even further by a case of diglossia, where there is no continuum and the Creole and the standard co-exist as low and high varieties, but their use is restricted to different domains, like in the case of Sranan² and Dutch in Surinam (Trudgill, 1983: 183) .

Turning now to the common origin of pidgins, Todd (1994: 3179) mentions three theories about the formation of pidgins. Monogeneticists suggest that all pidgins related to European languages may derive from only one type of Lingua Franca, for instance Sabir- the medieval means of communication used between Muslims and Christians. (O'Donnell and Todd 1995: 46/58) Bynon (1997: 261) cites Hancock (1971) as a supporter of a single West African proto pidgin as the only source of Caribbean Creoles.

Polygeneticists insist that speakers in the Caribbean area - masters and slaves- must have been exposed to different languages in very unusual conditions. The European masters probably simplified their speech to a minimum (foreigner talk), thus offering an imperfect version of the target language. This may have prevented the slaves from moving away from the preliminary stages in language acquisition (Todd 1994 :

1. Crystal (1999: 344) distinguishes between StE, spoken by an educated minority, and the local variety of the standard language, influenced by the cultural and physical environment.

2. For Ferguson, Fishman and Fasold diglossia is possible only when there is some degree of linguistic relatedness between the H and L varieties. (Fasold 1984: 37-39-40-53). This would be the case of Haitian Creole and French. Other linguists only consider unrelated languages like Sranan (an English based Creole) and Dutch.

3179). This may also have led them to resort to their various mother tongues as the syntactic bases of the language they were trying to learn. All those African languages may have provided the basis for the Caribbean Creoles.

Todd (1994 : 3179) also mentions the universalist approach, developed by Bickerton. He explains Bickerton's hypothesis saying that pidgins and Creoles are created spontaneously using innate linguistic skills. What makes this approach unique is that Bickerton restricts Creole genesis only to the use of this inborn capacity.

None of these three opinions have gained wholehearted acceptance in the academic world. The flaws and shortcomings of all the theories are still significant and much remains to be done in this field of study.

4. Introduction to the Language Samples and analysis

The diachronic analysis of any Creole poses a significant amount of difficulty in its organization since it is essential to deal with linguistic variation not only through time but also across lects.

In order to simplify the organization of this study, I will only analyse those features in the passages that diverge significantly from the standard and then I will include some charts to simplify the comprehension of the analysis.

The first three passages have been chosen because they constitute reliable samples of genuine, natural speech, since they were collected by renowned Creolists. Besides, they also provide abundant material for analysis, with a reasonable amount of Creole elements (tense markers, structures etc). I have chosen the third sample - a short narration - on account of the writer's knowledge of the varieties spoken in Jamaica and because it provides examples of mesolectal and acrolectal speech in the same character, thus illustrating the pervasiveness of the different layers of the linguistic continuum.

A copy of each sample can be found in the Appendix.

4.1. Sample I: The Storm

This passage is quite old, as it was taken down during one of the two visits Martha Warren made to the island in 1919 and in 1921. Mrs. Warren collected stories from over sixty Black speakers in remote country districts of Jamaica and as she herself admits, many details may have been lost in "the slow process of dictation", but she set the stories down "without polish or adornment", as nearly as possible as they were told to her. The seclusion of the speaker, Vivian Bailey, from Mandeville, and the mountainous characteristics of the area make the narration under analysis a reliable source for the study of basilectal, rural speech.

"The Storm" is one of many Anansi stories, so typical of Jamaican folklore. They make up a sort of trickster tales or fables embodying a basic set of moral values. All the characters in the stories are vernacular figures who speak in a "consistently basilectal way" and one would expect the stories to be told in this variety. This is precisely the case here, in "The Storm".

4.1.2 Analysis

The use of both definite and indefinite articles is only superficially similar to StE. In this passage the indefinite article "a" is restricted to asserted, specific meaning, showing no difference with StE: "...A mango tree" (line 1). "Duck Ants is a very slow man." (line 12). However, in the sentence "X Law pass dat eb'ry man have X tree...." (line 3), the articles have been omitted. According to Patrick, in more modern speech the omission takes place when the meaning of the noun is less specific. (2004: 32-33). Unfortunately, we do not have enough evidence to ascertain that this is also the case in early twentieth century Creole, but it is clear that the meaning of "law" and "tree" (a new, undefined law/ any tree) is less precise than in the two previous examples. The use of the definite article "de" is identical to its standard counterpart "the".

The pronominal system has a clear British origin, but its use shows incongruities regarding case. Both "he" and "him" function as subjects like in "... don' know if him will loose him" (line 11) and "...he kyan't stop." (line 9). "Him" can also appear in place of "his", as in "...put up wid him slowness" (line 12) and "...was washin' his face" (line 19).

"Dey" and "dem" are used as subject and objects respectively : "dey got to find out it was Brer Nanci an' dey run him out of de house." (lines 20-21) / "He...pick dem up.." (line 6).

The significant feature in this story is the deletion of pronominal subjects. This is most peculiar, since StE, and especially Jamaican Creole, are almost uninflected, thus making it extremely confusing to identify the doer of the action. In the passage we find examples like "brer Tiger say, well, (I) mus' tie him to de mango tree" (line 4), "An' (he) don' know if him will loose him" (line 11), "(he) mus' never let him hear" (lines 13-14), "an' after dat (he) go to bed." (line 18).

Inflection for the Possessive Case is also worth mentioning. The speaker here copies the standard

inflection using the morpheme “s” in “Mr. Duck- ants’s brudder” (line 17). What is also significant is the inflection after a pluralized form (ants). It is clear from the context that he meant only one “duck ant” (termite). Cassidy (1961: 52) mentions several cases of similar uses of plural forms as singular.

But unmarked genitives are also possible. On line 16 we can find “Brer Nansi go to Brer Tiger yard” instead of “Brer Tiger’s yard”)- more in keeping with what one might expect in a Creole variety.

The use of the copula is quite surprising for its adherence to the superstrate. The speaker uses the forms “is”, “was” and “were” preceding noun phrases in compliance with the standard rules for number agreement: “It was Mr. Duck- ants brother” (line 18), “Brer Nansi is a man wid a bald head” (line 20) etc.

The study of verb forms deserves special attention in Creole grammars, since we cannot expect to find StE. auxiliaries and inflectional affixes. It is more appropriate to think of a Tense/ Mood / Aspect (TMA) system, a system with three main categories: anterior tense, irrealis mood and non- punctual aspect. Each category has invariant pre -verbal markers which must combine in the order T- M- A. (Patrick 2004: 6) In the present passage, however, we can find both standard and Creole forms.

The use of “Be” as an auxiliary for actions with a continuous aspect is quite irregular in these passages. We find “Brer Nansi in a cotton tree were listening”(line 15) instead of the standard singular form “was”. “ (Him) was washin’ his face”(line 19) co-exists with “...dey talking” (line 15), where the auxiliary has been deleted. In all these cases the standard Present Participle has been kept. We might have expected an option like “a + bare infinite”, closer to the African roots of Caribbean Creoles (Cassidy 1961: 60).

Actions that refer to past or present time are dealt with in a completely different way. They remain unmarked. Patrick (2004: 7) explains that verbs of action, if unmarked, are to be interpreted as past and stative verbs, on the other hand, as present. (E.g. Me X love him = I love him / me run= I ran). Almost all the verbs in the story refer to actions (go, ask, say, see, tell etc) and are automatically interpreted as past. On line 2, the sentence “ Brer Nansi well want de mango” must be assumed to be in the present, since “want” is a static verb.

There are other interesting features in this passage, too. Lines 11 and 12 show a very special Creole feature. Here we come across non- concord auxiliary “don’(don’t)”. In JamC, “Don’t” is tense- neutral; it can occur with any time reference or aspect. Patrick (2004: 14) provides an example to illustrate this: “ Up to now, Spangler don’t come in di area” and Cassidy’s example (1961: 60) confirms the use of “don’t” with any tense: “ postman don’t come yet”. Bailey (quoted by Patrick) claims that “don’t” is restricted to sentences where the main verb is a psychic state verb, like in this Anansi story, but Patrick contends that counter examples are not hard to find (Patrick 2004: 14). Unfortunately, given the number of standard features in this story, it is not absolutely certain here whether the speaker is using a basilectal or a standard feature. It might very well be the latter, as the expression is part of a first- type conditional clause, and the subordinate clause is clearly in the future.

Another feature that departs widely from the standard is the marker for the Completive Aspect “done”, which usually follows the base form of the verb. The clause “ after he eat done” on line 6 is approximately similar to its Standard counterpart “after he had eaten”

Passive Voice differs widely from StE. The difference between Active and Passive must be determined from the context, since it is not overtly marked: “ Law pass dat eb’ry man have tree mus’ tie on it.” = A law was passed stating that every man who has a tree must be tied to it (line 3).

One last feature of basilectal JamC is Parataxis, the piling up of verbs in sequences without connectors. This is illustrated in this passage with the sentences “ (Him) pick dem up go away leave Brer Tiger...”(lines 6-7), and “...eb’ry mango he eat tak it an lick Brer Tiger on de head”(lines 5-6). This last example is clearly paratactic in form, but it additionally shows the fronting of the direct object. Cassidy (1961: 62) considers Parataxis a characteristic feature of the Niger- Congo languages, while Patrick (2004: 22), more precisely, attributes Parataxis to Kwa influence.

4.2 Sample II : Anansi Mek Grong

This is also an Anansi story, necessarily associated with deep basilectal speech. It was recorded by David DeCamp, a Creolist, dialectologist and variationist- in 1958 in the hills of Portland parish, in the eastern part of the island. The tapes were given to Patrick, who wrote the transcription, by Ian Hancock, another prominent linguist.

Patrick transcribed the tapes in two versions, as we can see in Appendix II. Here we find a rendering in ordinary Jamaican spelling- with several Standard features, like “ the” or “that” instead of the more usual “ de” and “ dat”- on the left and another one, which tries to reflect the speaker’s pronunciation, on the right. I will use the ordinary version in the analysis but will indicate relevant details in the pronunciation between slashes if necessary.

4.2.1 Analysis

The use of sentence initial particles is a distinctive feature of Creole grammars. In JamC, “Is” or “a” can be used indistinctly at the beginning of sentences (Patrick, 2004: 17-19). In this narration on line 33 we find “A whe´ that- there dry- head something a go?” which might be translated approximately as “And where is that bald- headed woman going?”

The use of articles is not dissimilar to what we have encountered in the previous passages. In this passage we can find three different uses of articles:

“A”, identical in form to the Standard English indefinite article with asserted, specific meaning: “Him is a very smart man” (line 2). “Zero” article is used when referring to non-specific items: “...a law in him country...” (line. 4) And the definite article “the” /de/, which is similar in form to “the” and simply reflects Jamaican accent: “... what happen to him to the end.” (Line: 3) We can also find the same article pronounced as /i/ and /di/ in “An´ by the /i/ time you reach roun´ the /di/ corner...” (Line 16).

The determiner “that” /dat/ is sometimes used directly before the noun it modifies, as StE speakers do with “that”: “That man can work up on black rock top” (line 18), and some other times also reinforced by “there” /de/, (usually spelt “Dat- de”), as on line 33: “That- there dry- head”. The pronominal system is illustrated in this passage through the use of me and I –pronounced /mi/ and /a /-, you, him (/ him/, / im/, / m;/ / in /), she and her (/ar/).

“Me” appears here only in subject position: “Me nah do somet´ing ...” = I´m going to do something (not honest or legal)(line 14). There are no examples of the first person singular objective pronoun. The same word is used as a possessive adjective in: “...Fi me wife an´ pickney them”. (Line 15). The use of /a/ for “I”- spelt directly as “a” by other writers- on line three is quite interesting. It is a typically mesolectal pronoun, clearly derived from acrolectal “I”. (Patrick 1999: 26).

“You”, the second person singular pronoun, is utilized here in the nominative and objective cases, in common with the acrolectal variety. On line 12 the speaker uses “you” without a very clear referent, in what seems to be an occasional mistake rather than a special use of the pronoun.

The use of the third person pronouns is apparently more complex as it undergoes important phonological variations according to the context. The speaker switches from /him/, /im/ and even /hin/, /in/ and /m/.

The informant introduces “she” and “her” as third person feminine pronouns for subject and object position respectively: “...instead of she fass with ´im, him firs fass with her”. (Lines 26- 27). Though common in the mesolect, these two forms are not fully integrated in rural speech, where “him” is used for both sexes. (Cassidy 1961: 53-54)

“Them” / dem/ here replaces StE “them”, but it is also used as “they” in the basilect. The other plural pronouns – presumably “we” and “unu” - probably from Igbo origin (Patrick 2004: 26)- are not shown in this story.

The indefinite pronouns, as Cassidy (1961: 57) classifies items like “Something/ anything” and “somebody” are used here as in StE, with only a slight distortion in pronunciation. (/somting/, /sinting/, /eniting/). According to Cassidy, these pronouns can sometimes be converted to a noun meaning simply “thing”: “Wat a strange sinting”. The same can happen with “somebody”, usually rendered as “smady”, which can mean “person” in sentences like “Smady can heat it.”= (Human beings can eat it).

The pluralisation of nouns in this passage differs widely from the standard variety. While in StE nouns are marked with the allomorphs /s/, /z/ and /iz/, JamC attaches post nominal affix –dem. In the present story, the speaker pluralizes a noun, namely pickney (children), which goes unmarked in StE: “...fi me wife an pickney them.” (line 15).

Regarding the use of the Possessive Case, in this passage we only find the pattern “Possessor noun + possessed noun”: “...Everybody that fass (meddles) in another one business.” (Line 5)

Copula “is” merits special attention, as it is one of the most salient characteristics of JamC. The examples “Him is a very smart man” (line 2) and “An that was the end of Bredda Anansi” (line 37) show the verb “be” linking two noun phrases. In this equative construction “be” can also be replaced by the verb “a”, which I will discuss later. On line 24, the sentence “She´s a very dry- head woman” is a rare example of “be” in its contracted form, which is not at all usual in JamC. Line 38,

(“Him too smart”) on the other hand, illustrates the typically basilectal use of zero copula, also present in Atlantic Creoles and the speech of some Black Americans (AAVE). (Patrick 2004: 16) / (Labov et al, 1968:10) / (Trudgill 1983:59-77).

Verb forms are definitely non- standard in this passage. Continuity in the present invariably takes the Creolised forms “a + bare infinitive”: “Wha´ you a do up there ...” (line 13), “Me nah (no+a) do somet´ing...” (Line 14), “... where you a go” (line 28) and “Me nah go a met= Am I not going to a meeting?” (Line 29). Notice, by the way that the question retains its affirmative order.

Anteriority in JamC is also complex for a speaker of StE. All the verbs of action denoting anteriority are unmarked. Stative verbs, on the other hand, if unmarked, refer to present time. Consequently, the sentence

“...him know people mus´fass with him” must be interpreted in the present, since “know”, as a stative verb, remains unmarked in the present.

In Caribbean Creoles, verb aspect is of greater significance than its location in time. (Trudgill 1983:66). This is illustrated in this story in the very peculiar use of anterior tense/ completive aspect. Patrick (2004: 7 - 8) argues that all Creole basilects do not have an absolute past tense, but a relative anterior tense. “For stative verbs the reference point is the moment of speaking, for verbs of action it is some relevant earlier moment”. Theoretically, a relative anterior tense is pre- marked with the particle “ben” in basilectal JamC, (unstressed “did” in the mesolect) but this rule is not always followed if the idea of anteriority is recoverable from the context (Patrick 2004: 9). In the passage under analysis time clauses denoting anteriority are introduced by “after”, “when” or “by”, thus marking is unnecessary, like on lines 26-27: “When ´im come, ... him firs fass with her” instead of the redundant “When him ben come...”.

Completive aspect, as we have seen, is usually signaled by “done”, both pre- verbally and after the phrase. The speaker in this story preferred to indicate completion by resorting to repetition, a device widely used in JamC. “Well, after she a go a met, she gone” rather than “Well, him ben go done” or “Well, him ben done go”.

Futurity can be expressed through the infinitive or a distorted version of the standard “going to” future. The use of the bare form of the verb in the sentence “Bredda Anansi come down an´eat you”, on line 20, seems to indicate the probable future consequence of meddling in other people’s business. On line 2 we can read “I going tell ...”, where auxiliary been and the particle “to” have been omitted.

Modals- only “can” and “must” here- are used as in StE (i.e., followed by the bare infinitive). Since, as I have already mentioned, contractions are not common in JamC., the quality of the vowel in “can/ can’t (also spelt and pronounced /kya/, /kyaan/) indicates contrast between affirmative and negative.

The only examples of a passive construction in this passage are “...evrybody ...mus´ get hurt”, and “Him supposed to get them fi eat”. Unfortunately we cannot tell whether “hurt”, having only one overt form, is used in its infinitival of participial form. “Supposed” is phonetically unmarked (/sapuos/), probably due to the presence of “to” immediately after it, but it is transcribed as a participle in the version in ordinary spelling. As is to be expected in Basilectal grammar, auxiliary “be” is omitted.

Line 36 provides one more example of Parataxis, or serial construction, which illustrates the presence of the Kwa languages (Patrick 2004: 22): “Sista Guineahen jus´ come back come pick him up”.

The use of “fi” to express purpose in “...to get them fi eat” (line 7) can be either a remnant of the archaic “for to” in the British variety or a phonetic adaptation of the Yoruba or Twi infinitival particle “fa”. (Cassidy 1961: 67).

Finally, we can see that the idiosyncratic use of connectors leads in some cases to deviations from standard syntax. In “Instead of she fass with ´im” (line 26), the conjunction is followed by a finite clause, whereas StE takes a gerundial phrase.

4.3 Sample III : Shootout in the the Barbershop

The following is an interview recorded by Peter Patrick on November 12th., 1989 in Veeton, an area of Kingston which has attracted a lot of migrants, mostly poor and Black, who gradually changed the initial middle class status of the area during the 1950s and 1960s.

In the following decade property prices fell and this afforded bargain purchases for working and lower middle class individuals (Patrick 1999: 31). Most of these new residents, though now urban dwellers, have some ties with rural areas: birthplace, upbringing, land tenure or extended family. This widely varied social spectrum makes this area an ideal place for a linguistic study of mesolectal urban speech.

The two women interviewed by Patrick are Dinah, a 46 year- old domestic servant and Olive, 24, her daughter, who is an office worker. In 1989 they lived in a poor two- room rented “yard” in a self- described ghetto area of Gullyside.

Once again, the inconsistency in the spelling of Creolised languages is significant and there may be considerable differences between the ordinary spelling version of this passage and the previous ones. Whenever necessary, I will use slash marks to convey pronunciation.

4.3.1 Analysis

This dialogue illustrates the usage of a very special feature of JamC.: “Is” as a sentence initial focusing particle (Patrick 2004: 17). On line 35 we can read: “Is so him get shot up”. Here, “is” is identical in function to “a”, which we have already analysed in “Anansi Mek Grong”.

The sentence “Bad man dem time-de” = They were bad men in those times (line 2) illustrates the use of “dem” as a plural proximal and distal demonstrative, equivalent to “these” and “those” (Patrick 2004: 30 / Cassidy 1961: 55). Here it is emphasized by “de”, which can precede or follow the noun. (i.e.: “dem -time-

de" or "dem- de- time").

The use of "dem" as a plural marker bears the same characteristics as in the rural variety previously studied except for its peculiar use on line 44. It can be postponed to a proper noun (Patrick 2004: 37): "...an left Olive- dem now up de yard". It can be translated as "Olive and her group/ Olive and the children."

The use of pronouns is more varied in this typically mesolectal recording than in the previous rural transcripts. The first person singular appears as "me" / mi / and "I" / a- / ai/ in subject position, but only "me" is used as object: "...me can get all some couple thousand for go kill da big man- de" = I could even get a couple thousand to go kill off that big man there." (line 9); "A want tell you somethin" (line 13); ...I /ai/ use to walk... (line 14) ; "...an den now hear me "(line 42). "Yu" and "dem"- now a personal pronoun- are not marked for case .

The possessive structure "possessor noun+ possessed noun" analysed in the basilectal Anansi stories occurs here on line 20, when Dinah refers to "de man little place". Though with a slightly different meaning, the particle "a" (equivalent to "of" in StE) can also be used to indicate possession, as on line 36: "...de whole of him foot".

Regarding adjectives, it is worth noting that Dinah, on line 8 , regularized the use of "bad" in the comparative degree. She followed the rule " adjective + er". ("...dem get badder".) A triple comparative, " worserer" is also possible . (Cassidy 1961: 64).

This text is particularly interesting for the use of the copula – or its absence – . It is omitted before adjectives : " dem man-de _ just vicious" (line 12) . Cassidy (1961: 58) believes the omission is due to the fact that adjectives function as verbs: "She—dead now" (line 28). To clarify his point Cassidy provides other examples : " Him full him long bag wid cane= He/ she filled his/ her long bag with (sugar) cane" and " Rum drunk you very quick= Rum makes you drunk very quickly"

Before locatives, on line 20, for instance , Dinah left out the copula in " all who inside the man little place" , but according to Patrick (2004: 17), copula "de" can also be used in these cases in the mesolect.

In equative contexts, as we have already mentioned, the subject and its nominal complement are joined by the verb "a" : " ...but dem a bad man..." (line 41). Patrick (2004 : 17) points out that in the mesolect the use of "a" alternates with non- concord is/ was, as on lines 3 and 16 : "...dem was bad man before dem get ina politics"/ " Him was a barber".

"Be" as a progressive auxiliary is omitted in Dinah's speech. She expresses continuity by alternating between the basilectal "... dem just a fire = They were just firing" (line 32) , "Dem a take coke =They were taking coke" (line 11) and the mesolectal " Pure gunshot comin up = Pure gunshots were coming up (line 31). This fluctuation can take place in the same utterance (lines 38-39) : " ... if yu out upon de road an dat car drivin, an a man justa fire shot..."

In this dialogue we find " use to= used to" in " dem use to rape" (line 5) to indicate habitual aspect in the past. Habitual actions were formerly signalled by " da" and "de" and these particles are still in use in western Jamaica (Patrick 2004: 7). Patrick also states that aspectual " a" and "da/de" for the continuous and habitual aspects respectively are tense neutral- contrary to " use to"- and may be preceded by tense markers " ben+ a", " ben+ de" .

In this transcript the verb "have" is not used to express possession, but existence, which, according to Patrick, is a distinctive feature of Pidgins and Creoles. We can find two examples on lines 25/ 34 : "Yu have a glass church up there= there is a glass church up there" and " Yu have a guy up there= There is a guy up there". Curiously enough, possessive " have- habe" has been omitted on line 37: " So him _ only one foot now".

Like in the others, in this passage past actions are systematically unmarked. What is new here is the use of "left or lef" as an infinitive instead of "leave" : "...I use to walk come down the road, left dem children up de house" (line 14). Patrick (2004: 11) claims that "for a number of strong verbs the stem corresponds to an English past form". Thus we can find "los" , from lose, "marid" from marry, "bruk" from break and "lef" from leave. In these cases , the verb, though apparently inflected, is not marked.

As in the previous passages, stative actions like "Yu see = You understand" (lines 23/ 42) and " Yu know" (line 24) must be interpreted as present. However, " A tell yu" (line 42) is also obviously meant to be in the present, although unmarked non- stative verbs have to be interpreted in the past. This expression should perhaps be considered simply formulaic and has probably been taken from the Standard variety . Another acrolectal feature here is the use of "don t" in " A don t know", pronounced as /a do no / (line 26). This use of "don t" is most probably also formulaic, taken from the superstrate, and must be clearly interpreted in the present. Basilectal speakers, however, use "don t" as a general negative, identical to their " no" and it is not necessarily associated with the present tense. Cassidy (1961: 60) provides examples where the meaning is obviously past: "Postman don t come yet" and others where the tense reference is less obvious: " Him don t do nuttn (nothing) = He/ She didn t do/ hasn t done anything" As well as "don t", it is also

possible to find the auxiliary “do”, used unemphatically in the affirmative. In these cases, “do” must not be confused with the StE present auxiliary. Cassidy assumes that “This use reflects the time of its adoption, since unemphatic do, now an archaism, flourished in Early Modern English”.

Passive Voice is not marked on the verb and has to be inferred from the context, the same as in the previously analysed texts : “De whole church lock up” (line 29). “...de piece cut off” (line 37) . Conversely, the expression “ ... so him get shot up” (line 35), clearly passive in meaning, consists of “get+ participle”, as in StE.

Subject Relative Clauses have also attained the same degree of complexity as the superstrate. They have pronouns as subjects, like in StE. : “ de lady over there who /we/ use to preach” (line 27).

Although this dialogue shares many Creole characteristics with the other two I have so far analysed, it has some unique features that are only found in urban areas. Dinah, who has had little access to formal education, alternates between the basilectal forms we might expect from a person with her background, and the typically mesolectal varieties usually found in cities and among people with more education. For instance, on line 22, she uses “never” as a standard negative adverb of frequency, (“A never see a big man bawl (cry) so in all me life= I had never seen...”) and also as a lower mesolectal past tense marker in “don’t ask if we never pray for peace= don’t ask if we never prayed for peace (during the 1980 elections)” (line 51).

“Never/ neva/ neba” as a tense marker can occasionally combine with past-marker “did” in “neva did”, parallel to basilectal “no ben”. As an invariant pre- verbal marker, “neva” is incompatible with inflection on past- reference verbs (Patrick 2004 : 10).

Verb chains are sometimes replaced by more standard structures, like “...when yu ride comin down...”(line 26), where the speaker uses a present participle after a verb of movement like in StE, instead of the paratactic “when yu ride come down”.

Conversely, some verbs do not take standard complements . On lines 24 and 49 we can read: “ ...an start bawl for murder” and “A don’twant experience dem thin de...” rather than “start + ing / inf.” or “want+ to”. All these examples of inconsistency are only natural in a Creolized society, especially in urbanized regions, where speakers have occasion to encounter different varieties and adopt them freely in their own speech .

4. 4 Sample IV: Memories from Back A Yard

This narrative was written by Kharl Daley, a writer living at present in Toronto, Canada. He was educated at the prestigious Kingston College in Kingston and has written articles and short stories using both nearly-standard Jamaican English and Urban Jamaican Creole. He has also volunteered to assist me in my analysis with comments about his perception of JamC as a native speaker and has contributed valuable information about the values and attitudes of the speech community.

His use of the language in this last passage is particularly enlightening because it illustrates not only the mesolectal speech of urban dwellers in poor areas, with which we are already acquainted, but also offers an insight into the way some educated speakers usually write. For the sake of convenience, I will consider Daley’s style as acrolectal, though there is not much agreement among scholars as to the boundaries between a highly decreolised upper mesolect and Standard Jamaican English.

4.4.1 Analysis

As already noted, this narrative is made up of two different parts: The characters’ dialogue in a lower mesolectal variety of JamC. (Kharl Daley: personal communication) and the narration itself. I will devote the first part of the present analysis to the dialogue and then I will pass on to the acrolectal narrative .

The mesolectal exchanges between the two characters are rather short, so we cannot check all the distinctive characteristics we have analysed so far. There are no examples of Possessive Case, modals, passive constructions or the use of the copula. Yet, through their brief exchanges, it is evident that the Grandmother and Garnet’s dialect shares a number of features with the language in the previous samples.

The use of the articles seems to be the same: “de” is identical to “the”, although it has been omitted in “ _ Pastah (the pastor) preach a beautiful sermon today” (paragraph 16) In this sentence we can also find the indefinite article “a” used for specific meaning: “A beautiful sermon). In “ She hab egg”(paragraph 12) the article has been left out , since “egg” is not specific or definite.

We are already familiar with features such as the fluctuating use of verb forms for the same time reference: Future time in: “ Me soon cum back, me a go church” (paragraph 8), “(she) a go lay today”(paragraph 12), double negatives : “ Granny, me noh mean nutten, sari= I didn’t mean anything, sorry” (paragraph 11) / “ oonu.... pickney noh hab nat a scrap of mannas= You children don’t have a scrap of manners” (paragraph 20), serial constructions: “ Cum get up now and go sweep de yard” (paragraph 4), initial particles and question without inversion: (“ A who yu a talk to so , yu tink me an yu a quabs ?= Who are you talking to like

this? Do you think we are friends?"(paragraph 10) / " So, what him talk about, Granny?" (paragraph 17) etc. We have already analysed these features, so we do not need to go over them again.

However, there are two purely mesolectal items worth mentioning: First, the use of pronouns: the second person plural pronoun "oonu" or "unu"- wholly African in origin- and the erratic use of "me" and "a" for the first person singular. The Grandmother says "Me soon cum back"(paragraph 8) and later "A sari yu neva cum and hear im" (paragraph 16). These sentences illustrate the spontaneous fluctuation of a purely basilectal form ("me") and a mesolectal one ("a") in the same speaker (Cassidy 1961 : 54). The second item is the use of mesolectal "neva"(alternatively spelt "never" or "neba") by the Grandmother, also in the sentence "A sari yu neva cum and hear im". It is clear from the context that she means "I 'm sorry you did not come to church today". Her use of this word can be contrasted with the standard use of "never" by the narrator in "I never liked going to church"(paragraph 5). This, like all the other syntactic characteristics of the speech of Garnet as the narrator - probably an adult looking back on his childhood - are purely acrolectal. They are also typical of the author, Kharl Daley, and have not been exaggerated here to create a special local atmosphere.

The most striking feature is the use of participles, both after auxiliaries for the Perfect Tenses and as adjectives. When the participle is irregular, it is used as in StE, for instance in "The sun had already risen" (paragraph 1) "... few would have taken the oath of silence..." (paragraph 7), and "...how many fights Rusty Brown had won" (paragraph 12). This proves that the writer has full active knowledge of how the tense is formed. However, in the case of regular participles, the final marker "ed" is frequently, but not always, omitted. Thus, we can read "...this would have cause me..."(paragraph 5), "the... dew had moisten the soil..." (paragraph 6) but at the same time "...I had smelled the stench..."(paragraph 7).

Alongside these expressions we can find others like "Two cent coins would be place inside" (paragraph 13) and also "...to the person who had placed the money in the ring" (paragraph 13), where both the infinitival and participial forms of the verb "place" are used. Although this peculiar omission of the "ed" marker might be simply a phonemic reflex, this does not seem to be the case here, since in some contexts the pronunciation of the "ed" suffix does not entail much difficulty (e.g. "Place + /t/ + vowel" in "...would be placed inside."). Anyway, it would be advisable to undertake a more detailed study of this phenomenon.

Participles are used as adjectives as in StE in "Rusty Brown ... will be the featured attraction" (paragraph 12), but at the same time we can find just the infinitive where the standard variety requires a participle: "enamel chamber pot" (paragraph 1). We even find participles and base forms in the same sentence in "... scampering to remove wash clothes that were already dried or at least damp..." (paragraph 14). This may be considered as one more example of the flexibility of the continuum and the resilience of the vernacular forms.

The expression "The... program was been aired"(paragraph 1) is certainly ungrammatical in StE and seems to reveal the presence of basilectal "ben/ bin". But, at the same time, it does not conform to any of the rules for the use of "ben/ bin" as the usual marker of past or anterior tense in the basilect. Patrick (1999: 195) has studied the use of this marker in detail and has concluded that "ben / bin" occurs in locative environments and in passives - like in Daley's sentence. Patrick provides more examples : Which part him bin?=Where was he/ she? or Where has he/ she been?, Im ben de home = He/ she was at home or He/ she had been at home=/ Me nah ben born dem time= I had not been born at that time). The pre- verbal use of this marker before infinitives is typical of rural speech and is extremely rare in the mesolect, at least in urban districts. It is considered as a typical feature of Jamaican Creole and is used to imitate the speech of country dwellers by more refined urban speakers. Patrick also speculates that a "likely path for decroliation would be the disappearance of ben before uninflected past reference verbs and its persistence in those cases where it contrasts minimally with Standard English". Kharl Daley's particular use of "been" might very well be due to the pervasive presence of "ben" as part of the passive competence of every Jamaican. (Patrick, 1999: 194).

The apparently unsystematic absence of past tense markers is another interesting characteristic. In paragraph 13 we can read "I like playing this game and on many occasions split other peoples gigs..." (Note, incidentally, the omission of the apostrophe in the possessive). "I rip the back of my shirt...and ran straight into my house" (paragraph 15), "the next thing I heard was snoring coming from Granny, which ultimately cause me to fall asleep" (paragraph 20) and "...the weather had taken a drastic change, as dark thunder looking like clouds scroll across the sky" (paragraph 14).

On some other occasions, the narrator uses tenses as in StE, but shifts from Past Simple to Present Simple or vice versa in the same paragraph. (See par. 1 and 12). Besides, the standard sequence of tenses is not present in this conditional clause "...and had I my slingshot, few would have taken the oath of silence and become a delicacy..." (paragraph 7).

The Future and Conditional tenses is also idiosyncratic in "She would catch a hen...(and) upon her

release, the poor hen will cackle all the way under the cellar where it normally laid its egg.” (paragraph 12).

Besides shifting tenses, this acrolectal writer sometimes deletes the final “s” in the third person present tense, in common with mesolectal and basilectal varieties : “... said Granny as she picks up her bible and purse and head towards the door” (paragraph 8).

4.5 Comparative Tables

Due to the extensive amount of information under consideration, it will certainly be convenient to resort to the use of tables to display the variables from the four linguistic samples.

Tables 1a, 1b and 1c show variation in time and lects and may help to simplify the visualization of the changes in JamC in the twentieth century. It is basically meant as a synopsis of the variables analyzed above and its only purpose is to offer a clearer view.

We must bear in mind the fact that this is an extremely restricted sample of the language and, consequently, not all the features in the continuum can appear in the passages. The dotted lines merely indicate that that feature is not present in the passage; not that it is/ was never used in that variety.

Table 1a: Morphosyntactic features. List of features in each sample

	The Storm (1919) (Basilect)	Anansi Mek Grong (1958) (Basilect)	Shootout in the Barbershop (1989) (Urban Mesolect)	Memories of Back a Yard (2001) (Urban Mesolect)	Memories of Back a Yard. (2001) (Acrolect)
Articles	de/ a/ zero	de/ a/zero	de/ a / zero	de/ a /zero	a/ the
Plurals	noun+dem	noun+ dem	noun+dem	noun+ dem	noun+ “s”
Possessives	Marked (’s)	Unmarked	Unmarked	unmarked	no apostrophe but phonologically marked

Table 1b: The verb. Main features of the Tense, Mood and aspect system in each sample

	The Storm (1919) (Basilect)	Anansi Mek Grong (1958) (Basilect)	Shootout in the Barbershop (1989) (Urban Mesolect)	Memories of Back a Yard (2001) (Urban Mesolect)	Memories of Back a Yard. (2001) (Acrolect)
Copula	“Be” (full concord)	. is/ was . unmarked	.zero/ . a . non- concord “was”	..... .Base form	“Be”, (full concord)
Futurity	Will	. (no aux.) going to+ base form . base form	.....	.A+ go+base	. will . will be + ing.
Pres./ Habitual Asp.	Unmarked (static vb.)	unmarked (static vb/ formulaic)	Unmarked (static vb/action vb/formulaic)	unmarked (static vb./ formulaic)	. base/ . base+s
Past Habitual	. unmarked	. unmarked	. unmarked	. unmarked	. base+ “ed”
Aspect	Some irregular pasts		. used to		. irregular pasts
Present/ Continuity	.....	. a+base form	.....	. a+ base form	.....
Past / Continuity	. non- concord “was” / “were” +ing	. a+ base form	. (no aux.)+ ing . a+base form	. a+ base form	“ was”/ “were”+ing
Past / Completion	. base form+ done	gone	.....	.....	. had+ ed . had + base form

Table 1c : Main patterns in the samples

	The Storm (1919) (Basilect)	Anansi Mek Grong (1958) (Basilect)	Shootout in the Barbershop (1989) (Urban Mesolect)	Memories of Back a Yard (2001) (Urban Mesolect)	Memories of Back a Yard. (2001) (Acrolect)
Negation	done+base form (tenseless)	.....	· never+ base form	· noh+base form	Standard
Parataxis	base+base+ base form	base+base+ base form	base+base form	base+base+ base form	.....
Passive Constructions	passive subject+base form	.....	Passive subject + base form	.....	non- standard.
Relativization	.....	.....	Relative pronoun in subj. Relative clauses	.....	Relative Pronoun in subj.rel. clauses
Word order for questions	Subject + verb	Subject + verb	Subject + verb	Subject + verb	Aux. + subject + verb

In any study of Creolised languages, diachronic analysis is only reliable if kept within one lect at a time (i.e.: variation in the basilect in a certain period of time). With this in mind, I will organize the material in two parts: Tables 2a, 2b and 2c will show the differences in the basilect (the two Anansi stories) and tables 3a, 3b and 3c, the variation in the mesolect (“Shootout in the Barbershop” and the dialogues between Garnet and his Grandmother in “Memories from Back A Yard”). I will leave out the acrolectal sample in this comparative study since it merely shows the state of the lect at present.

Unfortunately, this study will only offer a limited spectrum: the analysis of the basilect will simply reflect the alterations in this lect during the first half of the century; that of the mesolect, the changes in the second part. Yet, we will be able to get a general view of the tendencies in the linguistic spectrum in Jamaica.

Table 2a: Basilect. Changes in morphosyntactic features 1919-1958.

RS : features that remained stable ; D St : features that diverged towards the standard D Cr.: features that diverged towards the Creole.

	RS	D St.	D Cr.
Articles	X		
Plurals			X
Possessives			X

Table 2a shows that the use of the articles kept their Creole characteristics. Plural marking and the use of the Possessive Case, on the other hand, evolved towards the Creole.

Table 2b: Changes in the verb system (1919-1958)

RS : features that remained stable ; D St. : features that diverged towards the standard D Cr.: features that diverged towards the Creole.

Note: The dotted lines indicate that there is not enough evidence in the material for serious analysis

	RS	D St.	D Cr.
Copula			X
Futurity			X
Pres/ Habitual Aspect	.....	.....	.....
Past/ Habitual Aspect	X		
Present/ Continuity	.....	.....	.....
Past/ Continuity			X
Past/ Completion	.....	.....	.....

We can see that the use of the copula, the expressions of future time and the marking of continuity in the past evolved towards the Creole. The habitual aspect in the past did not change, but kept its highly Creolized features. This shows the general tendency of the verb system to adopt or reinforce Creole features

Table 2c : Changes in verb patterns (1919-1858).

RS : features that remained stable; D St : features that diverged towards the standard D Cr.: features that diverged towards the Creole.

Note: The dotted lines indicate that there is not enough evidence in the material for serious analysis.

	RS	D St.	D Cr.
Negation	X		
Parataxis	X		
Passive Constructions	X		
Relativization	.....	.....	.....
Word order for questions	X		

All the patterns under study retained their Creole characteristics. This points to the evolution towards a strong Creole presence in the speech of basilectal speakers during the period.

As the three tables show, none of these features have moved towards St E. Many of them remained stable, but then we must not forget that they were creolised forms already. So even if there was not a dramatic approximation to a “deeper” Creole, by mid- century this lect had become a vital creolised variety in which its African roots were still strong.

I wil now continue with tables 3a, 3b and 3c. They show the variation in the lower urban mesolect since 1989 to the present. Once more, we must not forget that the corpus being analysed is limited and, consequently, the result of the analysis is only tentative.

Table 3a: Basilect. Changes in morphosyntactic features 1919- 1958.

RS : features that remained stable; D St : features that diverged towards the standard D Cr.: features that diverged towards the Creole.

	RS	D St.	D Cr.
Articles	X	.....	.....
Plurals	X		
Possessives	X		

Table 3a shows no changes in any of the variables, which kept their Creole characteristics.

Table 3b: Changes in the verb system (1919- 1958) RS: features that remained stable; D St : features that diverged towards the standard D Cr.: features that diverged towards the Creole.

Note: The dotted lines indicate that there is not enough evidence in the material for serious analysis

	RS	D St.	D Cr.
Copula	X		
Futurity	.....	.....	.....
Pres./HabitualAsp	X		
Past/ Habitual Asp.	X		
Present/continuity	.....	.....	.....
Past/ continuity	X		
Past/ completion	.....	.....	.....

Table 3c : Changes in verb patterns (1919-1858). RS : features that remained stable ; D St : features that diverged towards the standard D Cr.: features that diverged towards the Creole.

Note: The dotted lines indicate that there is not enough evidence in the material for serious analysis

	RS	D St.	D Cr.
Negation	X		
Parataxis	X		
Passive constructions	.....	.....	.....
Relativisation	.....	.....	.....
Word order for questions	X		

Tables 3b and 3c show the consolidation of creolised forms in this lect. This points to the fact that the substrate syntax, which was already strong in the eighties, has remained so up to the present. There are no signs of a decreolization process at work.

What is more, the presence of non- standard forms in acrolectal writing (sample IV) indicates that the

African substrate seems to be gradually permeating into the upper end of the continuum.

5. Conclusion

This study shows a general tendency in Jamaica towards the consolidation of Creolised forms. The first chart illustrates that the basilect has sustained extensive change in the first part of the previous century. It has varied within the Creole, without having adopted a considerable number of standard elements. Lower Urban Mesolectal speech has not undergone much transformation either. Rather, its features seem to have become deeply entrenched in this stratum of the continuum. So much so that the consolidation of at least some Creole features also seems to have taken place at the higher end of the scale, too. It is indeed meaningful that an educated writer should make no effort to comply with the standard grammar, with which he is obviously acquainted.

The adoption of Creole forms all along the spectrum indicates the consolidation of these forms and it rules out the possibility of decreolisation, at least in the foreseeable future. Likewise, the presence of vernacular forms in the work of educated writers and the slow, gradual nature of the changes along the spectrum in the latter part of the century dismiss the possibility of diglossia in Jamaica. Once more, these conclusions are based solely on the information in the present study, which, we must remember, is far from extensive. Any assertion in this respect deserves more careful analysis.

What may have led to this process of consolidation of the Creole? The presence of typically vernacular characteristics in any language is necessarily connected with the construction of a distinctive national identity, a process that was hastened in Jamaica at the time of the second basilectal recording, shortly before the Declaration of Independence from Britain. It was at that time, too, that Rastafarianism began to gather momentum. The dramatic popularisation of Rastafarian culture in the early sixties, with its religious practices, its emphasis on the Back-to-Africa movement and the belief in Haile Selassie's supernatural powers, among other deeply African cultural aspects (Pollard, 2000: 5/13), also helped to advance further Creolisation.

One might also speculate that the rapid urbanisation of the country in post-colonial years, which obviously entailed demographic changes, must have accelerated the formation of new, varied linguistic networks. The constant fluent interaction among speakers from different layers in the continuum surely helped to make the transition along the linguistic scale smoother than in pre-industrial times.

Although naturally this deserves detailed study, we might safely conclude that the combined influence of all these events in the sixties, namely the Declaration of Independence from Britain, the subsequent spread of local culture at home and abroad and booming urbanisation certainly consolidated the Creolisation process and will remain important landmarks in the linguistic history of Jamaica.

Words:10.036

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Appendix

Language Sample I

The Storm

Vivian-Bailey, Mandeville.

1 Brer Tiger got a mango-tree in his place. Brer Nansi go an' ask if he could sell him a
 2 ha' penny wort' of mango. Brer Tiger say no. Brer Nansi well want de mango. Brer
 3 Nansi say, "Law pass dat eb'ry man have tree mus' tie on it 'cause going to get a
 4 heavy storm." Brer Tiger say, well, mus' tie him to de mango-tree. After Brer Nansi
 5 tie Tiger, climb up in de mango-tree, an' eb'ry mango he eat tak it an' lick Brer
 6 Tiger on de head. After he eat done, he shake off all de ripe mango an' pick dem up
 7 go away leave Brer Tiger tie up on de mango-tree.
 8 Brer Tiger see Brer But pass an' ask Brer But to loose him. Brer But say dat he
 9 kyan't stop. Brer Tiger see Brer Ant passing,
 10 ask Brer Ant to loose him; Brer Ant say he kyan't depon[1] haste. Brer Tiger see
 11 Brer Duck-ants passing an' ask him fe loose him. An' don' know if him will loose him,
 12 for don' know if him will put up wid him slowness, for Duck-ants is a very slow man.
 13 After him loose him, Brer Tiger tell him many t'anks an' tell him mus' never let him
 14 hear any of Duck-ants's frien's pass him an' don' call up "How-dy-do."
 15 Brer Nansi in a cotton tree were listening when dey talking. De nex' evening, Brer
 16 Nansi go to Brer Tiger yard an' knock at de door. An' say, "Who is deah?" an' say,
 17 "Mr. Duck-ants's brudder." An' dey tak him in an' mak much of him, get up tea
 18 because it was Mr. Duck-ants's brudder, an' after dat go to bed. In de morning
 19 provide tea for Mr. Duck-ants 'fore he wake, an' when he wake an' was washin' his
 20 face he got to tak off his hat. An' Brer Nansi is a man wid a bald head, an' dey got
 21 to fin' out it was Brer Nansi an' dey run him out of de house.

Language Sample II

Anansi Mek Grong

Told June 1958 by Mr. J.D. Lewis, an elderly man of Belmont in Portland JA, to David DeCamp

<p>Him is a very smart man, you know! I goin' tell what happen to him to the end. 4. Now him form a law in him country once that everybody that fass in another one business Mus' get hurt. But accordin' to him, Him supposed to get them fi eat. 8. So him go up on a rock-top once An say, well then, 'im goin' mek groun', because him know people mus' fass with him. 11. So while he was there workin', as you pass on you say,</p>	<p>Im iz a veri smaata man yu noo A gwain tel wa hamp to him tu di en Noo in faam a laa ina in konchri wans dat evribadi dat faas in anada wan biznis mos get hort . Bot akaadin tu im him sapuos tu get dem fi iit So him gu op an a rak tap wans an se wel den im gwain mek grong bika im nuo piipl mos faas wid im So wail ii woz deyr working az yu paas aan yu se</p>
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- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>“Hi! Bredda Anansi, wha’ you a do up there?”
 Hear: “Me nah do somet’ing an see if me can
 Get anyt’ing out a it fi me wife an’ pickney them?”</p> <p>16. An’ by the time you reach roun’ the corner
 Hear them say, “But what a foolish man!
 That man can work up on black rocktop like that?”
 By your say-so, thru you fass you drop down dead.
 Bredda Anansi come down an’ eat you.</p> <p>21. Well, him carry on fi a while same way until
 Sista Guinea-hen hear bout ‘im an plan fi ‘im.
 An’ one day when she come now—
 She’s a very dry-head woman you know—</p> <p>25. and thru Anansi see ‘im come,
 When ‘im come, instead of she fass with ‘im,
 him firs fass with her. An’ him say, ‘im say,
 “Sista Guinea-hen, where you a go?”
 Sista Guinea-hen say, “Me nah go a met?”</p> <p>30. Well, after she a go a met, she gone.
 By she reach round the corner,
 him forget the law. Him say, “Eh!
 A whe’ that-there dry-head something a go?”
 Him can’ go a met, too? Same time
 Bredda Anansi drop off o’ the rock an come down.
 Sista Guineahen jus’ come back come pick him up</p> <p>37. And that was the end of Bredda Anansi.
 Him too smart.</p> | <p>Ai Breda Anansi wa yu a du op de
 lyr mi naa du somting an se ef mi kyan
 get eniting oot a it fi mi waif an pikni dem
 An bai i taim yu riich roon di kaana
 Yeyr dem se, Bot wat a fuulish man
 Dat man kyan wok op an blak raktap laik dat
 Bai yu seso chru yu faas yu jrap doon ded
 Breda Anansi kom dong an iit yu
 Wel im kyari aan fi a wail siem wie antil
 Sista Gini En hiyr boot im an plan fi im
 An wan die wen shi kom nou—
 Shiiz a veri drai ed wuman yu nuo—
 An chru Anansi sii m kom
 wen im kom insted a shi faas wid im
 him fors faas wid ar . An im se im se
 Sista Gini En we yu a go
 Sista Gini En se, mi naa ga a met
 Wel afta shi a ga a met shi gaan
 Bai shi riich roon di kaana
 hin figet di laa . hin se ee
 A we dat de drai ed sinting a go
 Im kyaan ga a met tu . siem taim
 Breda Anansi jrap aaf a di rak an kom dong
 Sista Gini En jos kom bak kom pik im op
 An dat was di hen av Breda Anansi
 him tuu smaat</p> |
|---|---|

Language sample III

Shootout in the barberhop

Collected by Peter L. Patrick

- 1 Dinah: [NB: /ʔ/ is schwa, while /ɰ/ is the ‘wedge’ vowel —
 wen im se ‘go’, yu haf tu go. wen im se ‘shuut’, y? j?s shuut.
 When (wen) im seh “go” yu have to go, when im seh “shoot” yu jus shoot.
- 2 y? n?? [ksst] bad man dem taim de, man!
 Yu knou? Bad man dem time -de , man!
- 3 S? dem w?z bad man bifuor dee get ina di palitiks, n??
So dem was bad man before dem get ina politics, no?
- 4 Dinah: iinhiin, de(m) w?, (m)i n? nuo. . . likl bai likl . . . yes . . .
 Dem were, me no know...little by little...yes...
- 5 Olive: yes, staat bifuor palitiks man, kaz dem yuus tu riep an tingz laik dat.
 Yes, start before politics, man, cos dem use to rape an thins like dat.
- 6 Dinah: b?t n? tu tuu, b?t nou wen yu sii dem kya(ng) get mVni
 But no too,too. But now when yu see dem can get money
- 7 an dem sii wie dem kyang get m?ni fi kil a man,
 an dem see where dem can get money for kill a man,
- 8 dem mek dem get bada . . . y’anastan, bikaa laik se nou,
 dem make dem get badder, yu understand, because seh now
- 9 mi kya(ng) get aal s?m k?pl toozan fi go kil aaf da big man de,

- me can get all some couple t(h)ousand for go kill off dat big man de.
 10 dem pie mi fi go kil im aaf, s? . . .
 dem pay me for go kill im off, seh...
- 11 dem taim de, mi tink dem a tek kuok tuu y? no . . .
 Dem time de, me tink dem a take coke too yu know...
- 12 mhm, kaa dem man-de j?s vish?s y? no . . .
 cos dem man-de just vicious, yu know...
- 13 A waan tel yu s?mting, wan nait yu sii . . .
 A want tell yu sometin, one night, yu see...
- 14 ai yuus tu waak k?m d?ng di ruod, lef dem chiljren ?pa di hoos
 I use to walk come down de road, left dem children up de house
 an,
 an
- 15 de(n) waak k?m d?n a dis ais kriim plees, likl bit batamsaid di
 den walk come down a dis ice- cream place, little bit bottomsides de
 hoos, an . . .
 house, an...
- 16 taakin tu di man, im w?z a baaba y? nuu,
 talkin to de man. Him was a barber, yu know,
- 17 Im chrim an im sel ais kriim an du evriting . . .
 im trim an im sell icecream an do evrytin...
- 18 A(n) wi onli hiyr a kyar k?min ?p di ruod,
 an we only hear a car comin up de road,
- 19 BLA-BLA-BLA-BLA-BLA-BLA, pyur g?nshat, an yu nuu wa wi du,
 BLA-BLA BLA BLA BLA BLA pure gunshot, an yu know what we do
 ins-
 ins-
- 20 Aal huu insaid a di man likl- plees, di ais kriim plie,
 all who inside of de man little place, de ice- cream place,
- 21 daiv d?ng pan di gr?ng an im shet ?p di duar,
 dive down upon de ground an im shut up de door
- 22 an a big man y? no, a neva sii a big man baal so in aal mi laif,
 an a big man, yu know, a never see a big man bawl (cry) so in all me life,
- 23 di man put im ed pan i- i han pan i hed yi sii piita,
de man put im head upon i-im hand on im head ,yu see, Peter,
- 24 an staat baal fi m?rda y? no . . . bikaz-
 an start bawl for murder yu know.... because-
- 25 di piipl dem insaid di ch?rch, y'av a glas ch?rch h?p die,
 de people dem inside de church, yu have a glass church up there,
- 26 A do no if wen yu raid k?min d?n yu sii a glas ch?rch, a-
 I don't know if when yu ride comin down yu see a glass church, a-
- 27 di lied i ova dier we yuus tu priich, wi kaal ar mada wait,
 de lady over there who use to preach, we call er Mother White,
- 28 di- di paasa fi di ch?rch, shi ded nou . . .
 de- de pastor for de church, she dead now...
- 29 di huol ch?rch lak ?p, an lak aaf di lait imidiyetli,

- de whole church lock up, an lock off de light immediately,
- 30 A(n) evribadi lai d?n pan di fluor pan dem beli . . .
an everybody lay down upon de floor upon dem belly...
- 31 pyur g?nshat k?min ?p, wan kyar y? no an im pyur g?nshat,
pure gunshot comin up, one car yu know an im- pure gunshot
- 32 Dem j?s a faiy- PLOM-PLOM-PLOM-PLOM-PLOM, lef rait an
dem just a fire-PLUM-PLUM-PLUM-PLUM-PLUM, left, right an
senta-
center-
- 33 IV: aatamatik an aal de-
automatic an all de-
- 34 Dinah: Yes, an mi tel yu, yu sii man . . . iz- yu hav a gai h?p dier so,
yes, an me tell yu, yu see man... It's- yu have a guy up there so,
- 35 im sid?n pan da ais baks widoot n? fut, is so im get shat ?p.
im sit upon de icebox without? no foot, is so im get shot up.
- 36 Dem shat im, an . . . mash ?p di wuol a im fut
dem shot im an mash up de whole of im foot
- 37 S? im uonl an wan fut nou, an di piis k?t aaf,
so im only one foot now, an de piece cut off,
- 38 S?, if yu hoot pan di ruod an dat kyar jraivin,
so, if yu out upon de road an dat car drivin,
- 39 an a man j?s a faiya shat, im n? biznis huu it kyach,
an a man just a fire shot, im no business who it catch,
- 40 Kaa im insaid a di kyar, an, dem n? nuo
cos im inside of de car, an, dem no know
- 41 I(m)- i- k- wi kya(n) faiya bak tu an kyach im, b?t dem a bad
im—we can fire back too an catch im, but dem a bad
man . . .
man. . .
- 42 A tel yu y? sii, a kra di nait, an den nou iyr mi,
I tell yu , yu see, I cry de night, an den now hear me,
- 43 'Gosh, luk oo ai k?m oot a di oos
"Gosh" look how I come out of de house
- 44 'an lef Aliv-dem nou h?p a di yaad,
an left Olive-dem now up at de yard,
- 45 'mi d?n yiyr so lai d?n, dem yiyr di shat,
me down here so lie down, dem hear de shot,
- 46 'dem m?s bi a lai d?n pan dem beli h?p a di hoos tu'
dem must be a lie down upon dem belly up at de house, too.
- 47 so yu kya(n) j?s imajin man . . . i teribl man,

- so yu can just imagine man... is terrible, man
- 48 a wudn laik ekspiryens n?tn laik dat agen, y? n? . . .
I wouldn't like experience notin like dat again, yu know...
- 49 no sa, a do(n) waa(n) ekspiryens dem ting de . . .
no, sir. I don't want experience dem thin de...
- 50 IV: wai dee wuda j?s k?m in an sprie shat pan d-
Why dem would just come in an spray shot upon d-
- 51 Dinah: dis iylekshan, do(n) aks if we neva prie fi piis . . .
dis election, don't ask if we never pray for peace...

Shootout in the Barbershop: Translation

- 1 Dinah: When he said "Go", you had to go. When he said "Shoot", you just shot.
2 You know? [kisses teeth] (There were) bad guys (in) those times, man!
- 3 IV: So they were bad guys before they got into the politics, no?
- 4 Dinah: Mmhm, they were, I don't know . . . Little by little . . . Yes . . .
- 5 Olive: Yes, starting from before politics man cause they used to rape and things like that
- 6 Dinah: But not too too, but now when you see they could get money,
7 and they saw where they could get money to kill a man,
8 they made them get worse . . . You understand, because like say now,
9 I could get even a couple thousand to go kill off that big man there,
10 they pay me to go kill him off, so . . .
11 Those times, I think they were taking coke too, you know . . .
12 Mhm, because those men (were) just vicious, you know!
13 I want (to) tell you something, one night, you see . . .
14 I used to walk down the road (here), leave the children up at the house and
15 then walk down to this ice cream place (here), a little below the house, and ...
16 Talking to the man, he was a barber you know,
17 he (would) trim and he (would) sell ice cream and do everything.
18 And we just heard a car coming up the road,
19 BLA-BLA-BLA-BLA-BLA-BLA, pure gunshots. And you know what we did, ins-
20 everyone who (was) inside of the man's little- place, the ice cream place,
21 dived down on the ground and he shut up the door,
22 and (he was) a big man, you know! I never saw a big man cry so in all my life,
23 the man put his head on his- his hands on his head you see Peter
24 and started to yell murder, you know . . . Because-
25 the people inside the church, (there is) a glass church up there,
26 I don't know if when you ride coming down you saw a glass church, a-
27 the lady over there who used to preach, we called her Mother White,
28 the- the pastor for the church, she('s) dead now. .
29 The whole church (was) locked up and the light (was) turned off immediately,
30 and everybody lay down on the floor on their bellies . . .
31 Pure gunshots (were) coming up, one car you know, and he- pure gunshots,
32 they (were) just firing- PLUM-PLUM-PLUM-PLUM, left right and center-
33 Automatic and all-
- 34 Dinah: Yes, and I tell you, you see, man! It's- you have a guy up there,
35 he (always) sits on theicebox without a foot, (that)'s how he got shot up . .
36 They shot him and . . . destroyed the whole of his foot,
37 so he only (has) one foot now, and the piece (was) cut off.
38 So, if you (were) out on the road and that car (was) driving,
39 and a man (was) just firing shots, not caring who it caught,
40 cause he was inside of the car, and they didn't know-
41 we might fire back too and catch him, but they were bad guys . . .

- 42 I tell you, you see, I cried the night, and then now hear me:
 43 "Gosh, look how I came out of the house
 44 "and left Olive and the others now up at the yard,
 45 "I'm down here lying down, they heard the shots,
 46 "they must be lying down on their bellies up at the house too",
 47 so you can just imagine, man. It was terrible man,
 48 I wouldn't like to experience anything like that again y'know . . .
 49 No sir, I don't want to experience those things . . .
 50 IV: Why would they just come in and spray shots on th-
 51 Dinah: This (last) election, don't ask if we (didn't) pray for peace . . .

Language Sample IV

Memories of Back A Yard by Khari Daley

- Par. 1** *It's 5:30 in the morning and I could hear the roosters crowing from near and far "cook-ko-roo-koo!" As if they were holding a contest to hear which could crow the longest and loudest. I made a pee, lowered the enamel chamber pot to the floor and while using my left foot to gently push it beneath the bed, crept right back under the cover beside Granny. It's Sunday morning, another hour and the entire neighborhood will be up, the saints and sinners alike, will be getting ready for church. The radio was on, it played through the entire night and the Evangelist Billy Graham's Program was being aired. Granny loves listening to his sermon of hell and heaven and bible tales. The sun had already risen, its rays, coming through the cracks of the board walls, created a colorful reflection on the shiny curtain hanging at the window, that Granny had received countless years back from Aunt Tiny, her daughter in Montreal, Canada.*
- Par. 2** *"Greens! Greens! Anybody wants fresh calaloo?" The voice of a vendor heading down the lane, repeating himself numerous times. "Hold on dey Greens man!" shouted Mavis, a woman living almost four gates up the lane from mine. It seemed she had chased him to make the purchase. Her loud chatter woke Granny who slowly got up, knelt beside the bed and began her morning prayer. When she was finished, she picked herself up from the floor muttering these words, "A wandah wey me fe wear tiday go church? Garnet!"*
- Par. 3** *"Yes Granny."*
- Par. 4** *"Cum get up now and go sweep up de yard, today noh worri cum a church, stay ome and study yu book far next week yu a go do yu exam."*
- Par. 5** *I never liked going to church anyways and in any event I had bucked my big toe and this would have cause me much pain and great difficulty to wear a shoe.*
- Par. 6** *Outside, the morning's dew had moisten the soil and made the plants and vegetation beam with life. Hummingbirds were feeding from the blooming petals of hibiscus flowers, grown as hedges to the barbwire fencing, as tiny little insects and flies gyrated on mango skins and seeds from last night's eating. The silence of the morning is punctuated by mooing cows being taken to pasture, dropping their dump all over the lane, some stopping to graze on grasses and shrubs along the side walks. Several cracks of a whip echo from the backs of the cows as Rockfish shouts, "Move up Vera, move up Icy and Doreen!" Which are the names given to animals in the herd, presumably those lagging behind.*
- Par. 7** *I swept the yard, lit the rubbish and made a trek to the bushes, where I gathered the dried branches of trees for firewood to roast breadfruit and to boil the peas for dinner. There in the bushes, I came upon a huge wasp nest and almost got stung by a wasp. Birds were chirping all around and had I my slingshot, few would have taken the oath of silence and become a delicacy to my taste bud. Watching the birds sway from branch to branch, my eyes wandered off to the ground and right next to me was a big load of human waste swarmed by a thousand gyngi flies. Though I had smelled the stench all along and was not quite bothered by it, the sight of it now sickened my stomach and I hurriedly loaded the sticks in a bundle, tie them with a wisp and trotted off to the house. On my return home, breakfast was already done. Fried dumplings, plantains, ackee and saltfish and also chocolate tea, ready to be devoured. Our house had one small table, occupied with all sorts of things and so as I customarily did, I ate from a small bench situated in the right corner of the house, while Granny, with her back towards me, dresses for church.*
- Par. 8** *"Me soon cum back, me a go church and yu tan ina de yard an tek yu book," said Granny as she*

picks up her bible and purse and head towards the door.

Par. 9 *“Aright Granny noh worri yu self.”*

Par. 10 *“Mine me an yu eno bwoy, a who yu a talk to so, yu tink me an yu a quabs?”*

Par. 11 *“Granny me noh mean nutten, sari.” Granny, though seemingly acknowledging and accepting my apology, said nothing and continued her way.*

Par. 12 *It was mid-day when I completed my studies and decided to go next door. Every Sunday, except for when it rains, that yard was full of people watching and betting on cockfights. Rusty Brown a rooster, very light in weight and of few feathers around his posterior, blessed with long pointed sharpened spurs and blind in one eye, was scheduled to fight. An Indian man named Jerell owns Rusty Brown, who is yet to loose a fight and will be the featured attraction and overwhelming favorite. I don't quite remember how many fights Rusty Brown had won but to the best of my recollection, he remained unbeaten that day. Granny loved cockfights and she reared poultry and I now recall how she would catch a hen and insert her index finger up its rectum and then saying, “She hab egg and a go lay today.” Upon her release, the poor hen will cackle all the way under the cellar where it normally laid its egg.*

Par. 13 *My going next door was never to watch cockfights but mainly to play gig. A circle would be drawn and in the middle, a hole about one inch deep is dug. Two ten cent coins would be place inside with dirt covering it and all gig players would try to use their gigs to knock the money from the ring. If successful, the money becomes yours, however, if in an attempt to knock the money out the ring, your gig got stuck inside the ring, then the owner of the gig must appoint someone to take a maximum of three tries with their gig to knock the stuck gig out and if such attempts failed, the owner of the gig looses it to the person who had placed the money in the ring or then a fee of ten cents must be paid for its retrieval. I like playing this game and on many occasions, split other peoples gig in my attempt to bail theirs out. The ring was so large that many gigs got stuck inside and I made more money bailing out rather than trying for the coins.*

Par. 14 *Within an hour of my arrival next door, the weather had taken a drastic change, as dark thunder looking like clouds scroll across the sky. Even vultures perched in a coconut treetop, taking turns to feed on the carcass of a dead dog in the bushes nearby, seemed to have noticed the change in the weather. Women living in the yard were scampering to remove wash clothes that were already dried or at least damp from clotheslines. Suddenly it began to drizzle. My gig playing buddies and I dashed off to our respective homes as the lightening flashes and the mighty roar of thunder burst in the sky, followed by heavy raindrops. As kids when this sudden change of weather occurred, we'd say that the devil and his wife were fighting and the roar of the thunder would be God pulling out his chair from his table to go part them. I was always afraid of the thunder and lightening and to this day it does send a shiver down my spine.*

Par. 15 *Dashing through the barbwire fence, I rip the back of my shirt, just barely escaping a scar and ran straight into my house where Granny had already returned from church and was taking a nap.*

Par. 16 *“Garnet!”*

Par. 17 *“Yes Granny.”*

Par. 18 *“Pastah preach a beautiful sermon today a church, a sari yu neva cum and hear im.”*

Par. 19 *Well next time noh dey Granny so mi noh miss nutten. So what him talk bout Granny?”*

Par. 20 *“Him sey oonu late a days pickney noh hab nat a scrap a mannas”, replied Granny. I pretended I didn't hear in order to end the conversation and wisely so, as the next thing I heard was snoring coming from Granny which ultimately cause me to fall a sleep.*

