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Mass Media and Folk Media:
The Convergence of
Television and Storytelling
For The Survival of Folk Culture in Jamaica

Joy Angela Forrester

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Communication Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Quebec, Canada.

March 1992

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ABSTRACT

Mass Media and Folk Media:
The Convergence of
Television And Storytelling
For The Survival of Folk Culture in Jamaica

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Concordia University, 1992

Are the mass media only assassins of Third World cultures? Apart from the orthodox modernization and dependency theories is there no other alternative to cultural extinction? This thesis explores the convergence of television and storytelling and their implications for the survival of folk culture in Jamaica. The study contributes to the limited literature on the use of mass media and folk media in cultural development in the Caribbean and in Jamaica in particular. More importantly, it serves as an alternative approach in understanding the problem of cultural imperialism, demonstrating the potentialities of converging mass media and folk media to enhance cultural development. I begin with an analysis of the concept of folk culture in relation to cultural development in Jamaica. I then survey the impact of television broadcasting on Jamaican/Caribbean culture, exploring the compatibility between television and storytelling. The study concludes with an overview of the "Convergence approach" with recommendations for the convergence of mass media with folk media to enhance traditional cultural expression.

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Dedication

To My Parents

who taught me that "determination is the key to success!"

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INTRODUCTION

Scholars examining the socio-cultural influences upon Jamaica increasingly focus on the massive import of American television programmes to the island. They point out, and often lament, that the implanting of foreign cultures threatens to obliterate local culture and national pride. Paradoxically, while communication technology is blamed for this destruction of cultural identities, it is at the same time upheld as the "primary protector of cultural and political sovereignty" (Williams, 1990:5).

Time has proven, particularly with the proliferation of new forms of communication in the island (for example the completion in July 1988 of a teleport facility in Montego Bay bringing Jamaica even closer to the 'global highways') (Dunn, P.25), that there is no escaping American cultural penetration. Nonetheless, cultural imperialism continues to be a prevalent complaint, and media scholars have now turned to the electronic media as a solution to this problem.

But in the majority of cases, communication is seen as operating between two polarities - namely, modernization and dependency. This, I contend, is a very narrow-minded approach on the part of (Caribbean) media scholars: none of whom has to date sought an alternative approach to protecting or preserving the indigenous cultures of the

islands. Communicators must shy away from their fixation upon the modernization and dependency theories. These often create a fixation upon the so-called 'power' of the mass media (referred to at times as "technological determinism") which in most cases, is not helpful in communication and development in Third World countries like Jamaica.

We must face the fact that modern communication systems are not the only means of relaying information to Third World countries. The same local culture that is on the verge of being obliterated contains a wealth of resources of good communicative value more appropriate to the needs of Jamaicans than most communication systems. I am referring specifically to traditional folk media systems. These are not to be understood here as static, sterile systems frozen somewhere in the dark ages. Rather, traditional folk media should be understood as systems which interact with modern technology in a process of renewal and/or change. In other words, traditional folk media incorporate much of contemporary life. In most cases they are even more effective than the mass media because they contain a great deal of historical wisdom.

My main criticism of the modernization approach with regards to communication is that it tends to promote homogeneity and mass culture, to the neglect of traditional cultural elements which could help maintain cultural differences. The dependency approach, even though it

recognizes the use of traditional culture, also has its drawbacks in that it fails to admit to the inevitable transformation of traditional cultures.

Evidently, there is a wide gap between these two approaches in helping us to understand the dynamics between communication technology and local cultures in Third World countries. Study after study reveals that the mass media either privilege elite cultures or lead to the ultimate destruction of traditional cultures. But why not study traditional folk media as alternative channels of communication? In this way, we could develop a more appropriate and effective means of communication, and, more importantly, this could be a means to encourage and preserve local folk values. I am not suggesting that traditional media replace modern means of communication. I propose to look at the potentialities of converging traditional and modern communication systems. Because together they could play an important role in development.

Relevance of the Study

Research has demonstrated that we do not know enough about the full potential of traditional modes of communication in the Caribbean. It is said that this is one of the least researched areas in the fields of communication studies (Lent, 1977). Over the years, many prominent

scholars with special interest in the Caribbean region have identified the need for research in this area. For example, John Lent, upon completion of several research projects in the Commonwealth Caribbean, made the following recommendation:

Studies concerning interpersonal communication networks should be accomplished. The islands, because of their smallness and compactness, could provide valuable information to researchers interested in trying to understand how traditional forms of communication occur. Along the same lines, studies of rumour should be attempted, as well as studies concerning the possible link-up of traditional and modern forms of communication (Lent, p.360).

In 1980, as a result of the MacBride report, UNESCO also recognized the benefit of research in this area. Thus a section of the report reads, "undoubtedly, inter-relations do exist between modern and traditional media in many situations, where their different components are compounded, in such a way as to complement one another, interesting results are achieved" (p. 211).

Rex Nettleford, a prominent Jamaican scholar who specializes in the field of culture, cannot stress enough the importance of the cultural dimension of development. As he writes:

[T]he Caribbean cultural dilemma needs a strategy of change that will restore to the vast majority of its people human dignity through their own cultural growth and development...Cultural development is but one aspect of overall development imperative too frequently seen in terms purely of economic growth and political modernization (p. 83).

Further to this, he points out the relevance of traditional culture to the overall development plan. He states that, "['folk life' is] not to be written off since it encompasses some of the knowledge and skills of modernization integral to national development, the 'imported culture' of the bulk of the middle strata...cannot be the prime source of energy for an indigenous cultural expression" (p.73).

Given the obvious neglect to study traditional communication in Jamaica and in the Caribbean as a whole, my study focuses on how a modern communication system (principally television) could be merged with a folk, or so-called traditional communication practice (storytelling). This has implications for how the cultural dignity to the mass of the Jamaican people could be restored. Why this particular focus on storytelling?

Storytelling is a very vital component of the Jamaican society. Yet its importance as a communication medium has gone unrecognized by the majority of Jamaican/Caribbean scholars. Jamaicans often speak about the

loss of cultural pride and racial dignity, but television is not the only cause of this catastrophe. Much has to do with the stigmatization and the denigration of folk customs such as telling stories in the local Creole language (the only language spoken by the majority of Jamaicans).

I strongly believe that if storytelling could be converged with television (a very popular medium on the island and yet the most feared because of its cultural influence) this could foster at least three important achievements in the development of the Jamaican people:

- a) Communication may finally satisfy the needs of the greater majority of Jamaicans (predominantly those of black African heritage).
- b) Convergence could demonstrate what can be done to preserve other kinds of folk customs. This could bridge some of the antagonisms between technology and culture in Jamaica and the Caribbean.
- c) Jamaicans may regain a sense of self-esteem and pride in their culture - a culture of which most, if not all, Jamaicans have long been ashamed.

Of course, if the convergence of traditional and modern media occurs, this could have implications for communication policy in Jamaica as well as for other Caribbean islands. Policy-makers may have to change or modify their Western, cosmopolitan approaches toward communication and development so as to facilitate

traditional input in their development plans. The policy makers who are particularly partial to modernization may have to abandon their biased judgement that tradition is static; they would have see development in more human terms with culture playing a crucial role. If these practices were to be implemented in policy decisions perhaps we would be one step closer to getting rid of the tradition-modernity dichotomy. Also developing countries would probably have better communication systems more suited to their needs.

Using a descriptive case study approach, this study will rely on personal experience and evidence analyzed in books, reports, journals, (TV) schedules, documents and monographs all of which will culminate in a study of the following form.

Chapter 1 analyses the concept of folk culture in general and in Jamaica in particular. I then discuss the absence of folk culture from the overall development plan in Jamaica, examining in detail the potential use of folk tales as a vehicle for restoring cultural pride among Jamaicans.

Chapter 2 explores the concept of "cultural imperialism" within the Caribbean with special emphasis on Jamaica. Here I survey the development and function of television systems in Jamaica, the role of the institution and groups who govern the use of this technology, the impact

of television on the Jamaican culture and related policy issues.

Chapter 3 demonstrates at the local and theoretical level the similarities and differences between the structural and social components of television and storytelling. The purpose of this chapter is to examine whether or not it is practical to converge the two media.

Chapter 4 outlines the theoretical framework of the "Convergence Approach;" presents examples of studies conducted on the convergence/integration of modern and folk media; and discusses the conditions available in Jamaica for the convergence of television and storytelling. The chapter concludes with recommendations for incorporating modern communication technology with Caribbean folk media to enhance traditional cultural expression.

Definition of Terms Used

To assist with the discussion in this study the following preliminary definition of control terms are provided. Most of these terms are elaborated more thoroughly in the chapters.

mass media

This generally refers to the electronic communication devices (particularly radio, film and television) used to transmit information. When used in this study the term will refer specifically to television broadcasting as we explore its function within the Jamaican society.

folk

The folk or "folk world" is the true spiritual and material world of the "simple folk." These in the case of Jamaica are the descendants of ex-African slaves the majority of whom live in rural areas.

folk media

These evolve from the folk world having characteristics which are intimate with the masses, rich in variety, readily available at low cost, carries traditional messages, a very persuasive means of communication which provides face to face communication and instant feed back

(Lent, 1979, p.37).

folk culture

In the context of Jamaica folk culture refers to the cultural legacy, the traditional customs and practices of the ex-Africans who were taken to Jamaica from West Africa during the era of slavery.

folktales

These are the traditional stories that the slaves brought with them to Jamaica which has become part of the traditional repertoire of the island's folk culture.

patois/creole

The first language of the majority of Jamaicans, it is a mixture of European and African words pronounced in a distinctively African way.

development

This has to do mainly with self-actualization, the enhancement of people's self-esteem, values and beliefs, their attitudes and opinions, their societal needs and the symbols and social imagery that circulate around them in their community.

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CHAPTER 1

FOLK CULTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Concept Of Folk Culture

For generations culture has been the object of tremendous debate among scholars: Anthrporologists, Sociologists and Communication scholars: (to name a selected few) have struggled to reach some kind of common understanding of this term, whose very ambiguity revealed its polysemic nature. Culture can, and has been, interpreted in many ways. Its forms are so complex that we can never quite grasp them in their fullness.

Apart from the content and function of cultural forms, there is the total structure into which culture itself fits. Such relationships are neither straightforward nor predictable. For example, there may be historical discrepancies between cultural forms (like language, music, etc.) and their content or function in society. Certain forms of language structures have elements that can be found in a society even though they are not historically connected. (It is not impossible to find snippets of American vocabulary in Jamaica even though Americans did not play a major role in the early beginnings of Jamaican history.) More profoundly, the contemporary usage of such language structures (whether they exist in all their 'purity' or as pathological manifestations of forms

belonging to some other culture) may differ from their historical usage. The point is, cultural forms are continuously changing, and they change across generations in different contexts or situations.

As the starting point to my inquiry into folk culture, it is therefore important to go beyond narrow definitions of culture. As Thierry Verhelst (1990: 17) rightly points out, "we cannot see culture in the narrow sense of the word, it cannot be seen as a prestige-commodity often reserved for an elite, nor as a more or less folkloric epiphenomenon, but as culture in the wider sense of the word." Verhelst goes on to define culture as "the sum total of the original solutions that a group of human beings invent to adapt to their natural and social environment."

This attitude to culture is vital since the argument of my thesis relies essentially on folkloristic scholarship as well as on a broad definition of culture (the subject of folklore will be dealt with later in this section). It is important to note that the words 'total' and 'invent', which figure in Verhelst's definition, capture in essence what has come to be two very important ingredients in most definitions on culture. In spite of some general differences over the definition of culture, there seems to be consensus across disciplines that culture is very much a 'complex whole'. Raymond Williams testifies to this fact when he states that "there is some practical convergence

between the anthropological and sociological sense of culture as a distinct 'whole way of life'" (1979, p. 13). Also, at the 1978 meeting of the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) it was observed that "Congress participants were on the whole unanimous in their treatment of it [culture] as a complex of spiritual and symbolic elements, as something that exists primarily in the consciousness of society and the individual." (UNESCO 1980: 11) Indeed, the complex nature of culture is something which cannot be denied: in the same vein one has to acknowledge that culture is not static. As different people of societies meet and interact new cultures are created or 'invented' as so pointedly stated before. Verhelst himself reminds us that

In reality, there is no such thing as culture in the pure sense, developing in isolation from socio-economic factors, foreign influences, from constantly renewed challenges. Rather, there are specific peoples living in quite concrete conditions and tossed by diverse cultural elements, the fruits of numerous borrowing, contradictory evolutions, complex cross-breeding (p.53).

It is crucial that this potential for cultural exchange be borne in mind particularly when contemplating culture in the Jamaican context. The history of Jamaican culture reveals that it developed predominantly from a

"mixture" of African and European elements. In this sense, and in other ways to be explained later, Jamaica is very much an illustration of the cross-fertilisation of disparate cultural elements, "that of the old civilization of Europe and the old civilization of West Africa with infiltration from India, China and the Levantine Coast," (Nettleford 1989. p. 21). This amalgamation of cultures, of course, is not unique to Jamaica, but is very much endemic to the Commonwealth Caribbean (a region comprising of former British colonies). Rex Nettleford, professor of Extra-Mural Studies at the University of the West Indies (and perhaps Jamaica's most distinguished scholar on cultural activities in Jamaica and the Caribbean) says quite concretely that cultural "Mix" is the actual defining characteristics of the Caribbean. "The process," he claims, "has resulted in a distinguishable and distinctive entity called 'Caribbean'" (1989, p.21).

The above may be true of the Caribbean situation but one is almost sure to encounter in most, if not all, Caribbean islands opposition and, to be even more accurate, conflicts, between European and African cultural practices. Jamaicans, in particular, have been for generations struggling to liberate their society from the inequalities between the two ethnic groups. Although Europe and Africa are responsible for the new and rich phenomenon which some people call "Jamaican," the cultural homogeneity or

cohesiveness, which the term suggest, does not exist in reality. There are those who over the years have deliberately, or otherwise, tried to maintain mutual exclusivity between the two cultures. This has led some anthropologists to label Jamaican society as "plural," meaning, at the simplest level, the co-existence of separate cultures along different cultural paths. For example, M.G Smith (as Nettleford informs us) describes Jamaicans as a deeply segmented aggregation of European masters, African slaves and in-between offsprings of both, each group having established independent cultural institutions governed by different systems. The later inhabitants of the island (the Chinese, Indians, Lebanese) he claims, only deepen the segmentation and add to further disunity and instability on the island.

This line of argument, while a valuable starting point in the assessment of the Jamaican society, overlooks the dynamic interrelationship between the different cultures, especially the two most dominant (European and African). To separate these two cultures into different camps is to deny the very nature of what it really means to be Jamaican: the 'coming together' of African and European elements which Nettleford calls "creolisation." Creolisation or "indigenisation" as it is sometimes called, refers to the new or the indigenous culture which evolved out of the violent meeting of European and African ancestry. As he

explains,

The term 'creolisation' is sometimes used in a pejorative sense to denote the tenacious hold that the conceivable superordinate metropolitan forces of Europe maintain over the cultural apparatus of the Caribbean. But more properly it refers to the agonizing process of renewal and growth that marks the new order of men and women who came originally from different Old World cultures...and met in conflict or otherwise on foreign soil (1979, p. 2).

Elsewhere, (Nettleford, 1970) he says of this crossbreeding of cultural elements, "The Creole culture of Jamaica is Euro-African and all comers since the middle - nineteenth century have had to (and still do) adapt to this culture. As such they become 'creolized' or simply 'Jamaicanized' " (p. 177). In other words, to be "Jamaicanized" in the narrow sense of the word is to be a part of the continuous 'play' between the subordinate African culture and the superordinate European heritage. This interaction of the two cultures (particularly with regards to language) makes clear the fact that we cannot speak with any precision about a single Jamaican national identity. It is far more accurate to recognize that (historical) similarities as well as (cultural) differences

constitute Jamaicans' "uniqueness" or rather, what Jamaicans have become throughout the course of history.

This is to say that culture, (at least as it applies to Jamaica) cannot be narrowly defined. In determining what culture means in the Jamaican society, one has to take into consideration the historical relationships between the different ethnic groups, but, more importantly, it is crucial not to lose sight of the superior power European culture holds over its "inferior" counterpart. Despite the textured diversity of Jamaican society (culturally speaking) that diversity has up to now been allowed to exist on the terms set by the dominant "master-culture" in the cultural complex (Nettleford, 1979, p. 2-3). Describing how this cultural climate has affected the development of a people whose very roots are being bombarded by modern communication technology is one of the intents of this thesis.

The multidimensional conditions prevalent in Jamaican society clearly suggest that Jamaica is a fertile ground for the transplantation of cultures. As such, "culture," according to Hopeton Dunn (a Jamaican communication scholar, whose definition proves quite pertinent and coincides well with my own ideas) can be understood as:

[A] complex of values and
practices derived from ethnic

and geographical origin, and which is moulded and influenced by new as well as historical transactions in the spheres of social, economic, religious and political life-[in other words every facet of society] (1989, p. 25).

The operative words here are new and historical. Clifford Geertz employs two very useful terms to describe this bifurcation of the new and historical: "epochalism" and "essentialism." By "epochalism" he refers to the cosmopolitan technological discoveries of the age and by "essentialism" he means the traditional aspects of life (1973, p. 241). I will attempt to bridge the gap between these two social phenomena, or what traditionally has been perceived as antagonistic polarities. As Dunn further explains, culture in every sense of the word is based on the assumption that "there is a dialectical relationship between the traditional and the modern: between indigenous approaches and external influences and inputs to aid renewal" (p.25). This definition by no means marks the end of discussion on the subject. However, in the Jamaican setting, culture must be seen as a constantly evolving process. How else can we explore the structural relationships between traditional indigenous cultures and their inevitable interaction with foreign elements? As Myrven Alleyne so intuitively points out, "Jamaican society

and culture [and of course, that of other nations] is at the same time both being and becoming" (my emphasis) (p. 3). Put another way, the world's cultures are constantly recreating themselves upon interaction with new forces. To borrow a phrase from Dunn, culture has not degenerated into "embalmed traditions" (p. 25).

Of all disciplines, that of folklorist is perhaps the most criticized for its "retardation" of culture. This is what Hermann Bausinger (following in the footsteps of William Ogburn) defines as "culture lag" or "cultural lag." From its early beginnings, folklore studies have represented folk culture as hidden, forgotten or backward cultures associated with "primitive" country folk untouched by the industrialized world. The task of the folklorist has been to preserve this culture in its authentic or natural state. Such efforts are, of course, important to safeguard the way of life of the folk society - a society usually marginalized from the rest of the world. At the same time, this attitude towards folklore limits our knowledge of its function in contemporary society. We have already discussed the unavoidable contact between the modern and the traditional world. There is no way in which the folk world can escape the influence of modernization. In this sense, traditional folklorists are naive in their idealization of folk life - I say 'traditional' folklorists because there has been a new movement by other folklorists who depict folklore studies in

quite a different light. These scholars (for example, Bausinger) no longer believe that folk culture is timeless and unchanging. Rather, they attempt "to trace the modifications and mutations undergone by folk culture in the industrialized and urbanized world" (Dorson, 1978, p. 32).

Hence, folk culture has moved into the unpredictable world of evolution and change. Like culture demonstrated above, it is very much affected by societal factors. In the foreword to Bausinger's book, Folk Culture In A World Of Technology, Dan Ben Amos provides a brief, but informative synopsis of the main thrust of Bausinger's theory on the dynamics of folk culture. He writes:

[T]radition, that keystone concept of folklore...in Bausinger's theory is not passed on from generation to generation in language, art, and music as a time-honoured body of knowledge and values. Rather, it is in a constant stage of disarray, about to disintegrate under the pressures of change; and members of the society strive to restore and maintain it in new rituals, displays, and diverse forms of entertainment- constructed and if necessary invented - or the revival of old ones (Bausinger, 1990, foreword vii-viii).

It is important to point out at this juncture that folklorists (and anthropologists on the whole) as a rule,

use the term 'tradition' or 'traditional' interchangeably with the word 'folk culture' or anything connected with this term. This practice will be applied to the study at hand as I do not disagree with such exchange of terms. The reader should therefore bear in mind that when "tradition" appears in these pages it will be used in the context of Bausinger's definition. Hence, tradition, like folk culture, will incorporate ideas of adaptations and transformations.

There is another important point that must be made clear. It is the fact that, my study is based on the premise that there is no great difference between 'culture', as defined in the overall context of this section, and 'folk culture', as here discussed. The latter stands apart from the former only in the sense that it evolved from, and is associated with, the spiritual and material world of the "simple folk."

Take Jamaica as a case in point. Since time immemorial, "folk" culture in the Jamaican sense has come to mean the culture of the mass of Africans who found themselves in a new environment and who successfully adapted to it. (Brathwaite 1970, p. 3). The main core of Jamaican folk culture is therefore African. This is no coincidence, as Jamaica's population is 96 percent of African ancestry. In such circumstances, where one particular ethnic group makes up the majority of a society, and when that group is placed at the lower end of the social ladder, (as ex-

Africans were in Jamaica) it is common practice for the cultural roots of such people to be relegated to stations of inferiority or at best to "folk" culture. Such is the case of the African heritage in Jamaica. Socio-political and economic determinants and above all, Eurocentric biases, have delineated everything African (sometimes classified as the "local subculture" or the "little tradition") as "folk." Invariably when we speak of folk customs - particularly folktales (a major topic of this study) - it is with reference to the Jamaican African roots, or Afro-Jamaica, as defined by some Caribbean and western scholars.

It is important to note that folk culture in Jamaica is also affected by "creolization" for here, white and black culture also meet in conflict. For this reason, it becomes difficult at times to validate what is or is not "folk," which explains my own vision of an evolving folk life. This is not to suggest that all 'true' or 'authentic' forms of tradition have been destroyed in Jamaica. But tradition or folk customs viewed as an adaptable force will make allowances for fruitful collaborations between the old and the new worlds.

The majority of development planners in the past (those in Jamaica, the Caribbean and in western countries) have erred by refusing to conjoin folk customs with modern ways. The Jamaican society today is bearing the consequences of this error. Folk culture has never really

been recognized as part of the Jamaican "national" culture (if so, only selected and well chosen aspects of it).

Braithwaite, speaking of the ostracism of the folk world in the Caribbean, says, "this psychological problem of the present-day Caribbean, is that this crucial and basic African element has been ignored and is seldom recognized" (1970, p.4). We will attend to this issue in the following section.

It has been demonstrated here that defining folk culture -- especially in relation to Jamaica - has not been easy. The many variables that help to shape this concept must be considered a) the historical background of different ethnic groups, b) the interaction of modern and traditional elements and c) the power relationships that are built into the social and political structures of the society. All of these factors help to define Jamaican folk culture. Obviously, folk culture is an integral part of nation-building in Jamaica and, as such, the continuous practice of excluding it from development plans must be examined.

Folk culture and Development: The Forgotten Dimension

"A man with no memory or past is like a pilot without a compass". Oscar Bimwenyi Kweshi (Verhelst, p.61)

Attempts to solve the problems of underdevelopment and to promote change in "Third World" societies have been based upon two basic theories. First, there is the

modernization theory which assumes that every country has the ability to replicate western societies. Secondly, there is the dependency theory which focuses on the inequalities of the power relations.

Nowadays, scholars and professionals in the field of development are ready to argue that these attempts at Third World development have more or less ended in failure. There are, of course, many factors which contribute to this disaster. My objective, however, is not to relay the complexities of the issues involved. (Studies of these can be found in abundance elsewhere). My contention is that the "modernisation" and "dependency" dichotomy robs nation-building of an essential and resourceful component by neglecting the indigenous folk cultures of the people of the Third World.

For example, from its inception, the so-called dominant paradigm has been based on the assumption that underdevelopment is perpetuated by 'traditional' ways of thinking and acting on the part of individuals in developing societies. The route to modernization, hence, involved transforming Third World population by implanting new values and beliefs (Rogers, p. 218). These advances would later "trickle down" to the "backward" folks at the base of society, principally those in rural areas.

In the late 1960's this model of development began to crumble as it had failed to produce the level of

development expected. As early as 1963, Daniel Lerner, recognizing this failure remarked, "the revolution of rising expectations has been a major casualty of the past decade. In its place has risen a potential revolution of rising frustrations" (quoted in Fair, p. 131). Dependency theory grew out of this disillusionment with modernization theory.

This new paradigm reflected the notion of underdevelopment as a primordial state. Rather than blaming developing societies for their "backwardness," the dependency theorists placed the responsibility for underdevelopment on the shoulders of Western societies. The bulk of their criticisms therefore stressed historical factors and projected imperialism and capitalism as destructive phenomena (Carter, p. 175). According to the dependency theorists, tradition was not an obstacle to development. As André Gunder Frank, an influential theorist of the period explains:

The social system which is today the determinant of underdevelopment certainly is not the family, tribe, community, a part of a dual society, or countries taken by themselves (Bloomstrom, p. 51).

Frank and others (e.g. Baran, 1957; Prebisch, 1950; Portes, p. 74-75) identified capitalism as the main cause of underdevelopment. But this kind of economic determinism has

been the main drawback to the dependency theory. By seeing the world only in terms of capital and power relations vis-a-vis the poor and disfranchised, this model, even though it recognized the value of traditional cultures, failed nevertheless to admit the full potentialities of the local way of life. Verhelst puts it succinctly and to the point:

[T]hey [dependency theorists] stress the need to respect 'local culture.' But a closer look shows that what they mean by this is merely art, music, dance and literature. Their efforts are often limited to the inclusion of a little local colour in the process of development-cum-westernization (p. 18).

This narrow notion of traditional culture which concentrates on aesthetic arts to the neglect of other cultural forms within traditional societies by modernization theorists, are the reasons why indigenous folk elements have been left out of the development process. Time has shown that it is important to make traditional, or (as we have discussed earlier), folk culture an integral part of nation-building. For these cultures are more than just obstacles to development. They are also part and parcel of our economic, social and political life. As such, they serve to inform every aspect of life. We should therefore take full advantage of this rich and valuable resource.

Let it be understood that I am not advocating here

a nostalgic, sterile return to traditional reality. (This the reader should have realized from my arguments in the previous section). I am suggesting that we should recognize that traditional/folk culture has a great deal of wisdom that the modern world could well use.

The benefits of drawing on the fruits of one's cultural roots, (or the "recourse to sources" as this process is academically called) has already been recognized by some scholars. This is evident by the words of Verhelst. In his support for traditional culture, he states, "far from being some kind of folk revival, it is a question of sinking to the bottom in order to rise again and, if necessary, evolve and change. For, change is often the price cultural communities must pay to remain what they are..." (1990: 62).

The imagery projected above of tradition is a nurturer: a source of strength and renewal accentuates its importance to development. Also, implicit in this imagery is the fact that we cannot, and should not, refuse to seek out this rich storehouse of life.

With regard to the Caribbean region, scholars like Nettleford have been writing for a long time now about the regenerative value of traditional culture (cultural "roots" in Afro-lingua term). "Better," says Nettleford, "if the cultural process were seen as a process with the source of life beginning in the roots sending up shoots which eventually bear fruit which ripen fall back again in a

never-ending regenerative process (1979: 70).

In spite of such efforts like that of Nettleford (and others) and movements by several generations of local leaders to acknowledge the importance of Jamaicans' cultural roots - the so-called "subculture" - fundamental resources like traditional folk culture hardly play a part in national development. In fact, cultural expression almost invariably comes from the bulk of the people in the upper and middle strata of the society. This, in summary, has been the paradox of cultural development in Jamaica. To quote a popular phrase, 'the more things change the more they remain the same.' In other words, Jamaicans' African heritage may have won some acceptance by Jamaican leaders as suggested by the phrase, "greater participation of the large majority," documented in the proposed cultural policy for the island by the Exploratory Committee on the Arts and Culture (1972; 26). However, European culture and presently Anglo-American culture are the main driving force behind cultural development in Jamaica. How has such (what I will here call) "foreign-mindedness" affected the way in which Jamaicans perceive themselves?

The above question desperately needs to be explored for we cannot begin to speak about cultural development until we gain some insight into the mentality of the Jamaican people. One must remember that development in any form entails much more than economic prosperity. "Real

development is not photogenic, since, above all it takes place in people's hearts and minds" (Verhelst, Foreword, p.3). Put in more scientific terms, quantitative, mechanistic assessments of "progress" hinder the growth of the internal/mental development of people which is crucial to any form of external, societal development. The equation thus follows, rejection of any of the human cultural experience ultimately inculcates a rejection of self. We therefore must turn our attention to this flaw in the development process particularly in the case of Jamaica - a society where people suffer persistently from low self-esteem. What is the reason for this?

Folktales, Creole and the Jamaican Identity

The folk society of Jamaica, as to be expected, has various kinds of folklore - folklore meaning: "myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, folk beliefs, costume, folk medicine, traditional foods, folk speech, charms, curses, games, folk music, folkdance, folk tales, etc. (Dundas, 1989, p.2). The last is the focus of this section. However, there are two points which must be emphasized before we begin our discussion. First and foremost, it has been generally theorized (and accepted by myself) that folklore is perhaps the most important source for the articulation and perpetuation of a group's identity (Dundas 1989, Spicer

1971, Bauman 1971). Secondly, the methodological assumptions here is that any sub-unit of folklore (i.e. folktales) can be isolated for the purpose of investigation. The issues related to folktales hence only serve as an example of what needs to be addressed in the overall cultural experience of Jamaicans.

The subject of the Jamaican identity is a difficult issue. It is as difficult and perhaps more mystifying than the concept of culture itself. Because both culture and identity are so intricately linked it is almost impossible to examine the one without having to deal with all the complexities of the other. To keep the problem simple, we will establish one basic principle which will govern this entire thesis: that is, to unravel the problems surrounding one's identity is to identify the denigration of certain cultural forms. As one will see in the case of Jamaica, one of the primary causes for Jamaicans' poor perception of themselves has to do with the neglect of folk customs such as storytelling (relaying or sharing folktales).

During the British colonial era African folk culture was marginalized from the wider Jamaican society. The achievement of "independence in 1962 demanded the examination of the Jamaican personality, the development of a national identity and the bridging of the gap between classes and cultural groups in the society" (Barnett 1985, p.12). The new local government thus formulated new

policies on the grounds that national cultural expression should reflect truthfully the dynamics of the black majority. Such objectives culminated in the creation of committees like "The Exploratory Committee on the Arts and Culture, 1972."

The purpose of this committee was to assess the cultural situation in the country after ten years of political independence (UNESCO 1980, p.26). Several recommendations were made especially pertaining to the performing arts (i.e. music, dance, drama). Particular emphasis was placed on integrating African folk customs as a means to mend the "imbalances of history," or, put another way, the neglect of the folk society.

Storytelling was identified in this policy as an area of neglect which warranted attention, proposals having being made for its usage in the theatre, schools and traditional festivals, I would contend however, that not enough emphasis has been placed on utilizing folktales as an essential tool in the development of the Jamaican cultural identity.

Folktales are central to the promotion and affirmation of one's identity. They help illuminate who we are on the basis of their structure. But more importantly, the language in which such tales are told gives full expression to one's self, for after all, we are what we speak.

In the Jamaican cultural situation, therefore, it is paramount that folktales be given more attention than they have received in the past. With the exception of reggae music, (and this too has been stigmatized in its own way) storytelling is the only arena in which Jamaicans are not ashamed to express their creole tongue. This may seem a minor issue to the development planners in Jamaica, but expressing one's identity through language is also a part of development - call it spiritual/human development if you will. But whatever adjective is affixed to this phenomenon, bear in mind that language is a powerful assertion of one's identity.

The problem with Jamaica is that attitudes towards the folk society run to pure "tokenism." Only those elements of the African heritage which can be sold on the tourist market are given any kind of recognized credibility. Nettleford correctly describes this commodification of Jamaican/Caribbean cultural wares as "cultural tourism," which simply means pandering to tourist "folksy exoticist tastes" (1989 p.20).

The cultural forms which requires the use of the local language (invariably described as Creole, Patois ['patwa'], Jamaican Talk, dialect, 'Backyard' lingo, etc. (Wong 1986, p.113) rarely receive any form of national display or support. This is unfortunate, for Creole is the language of the majority of the Jamaican people. (Few

outsiders are aware of this reality). It originated in the late 17th and 18th centuries when the African slaves working on the plantation created for themselves a language with which to communicate in their new environment. Over the years, Creole has undergone several changes and refinement but still it remains the "unofficial language" of Jamaicans - classified and labelled "bad" or "broken English," something of which Jamaicans are to be ashamed.

Paradoxically, Creole is the very soul of the Jamaican people; it is a major source of creative energy (as demonstrated by the potent lyrics of Jamaican reggae music). Above all, Creole is the main medium through which most Jamaicans assert and solidify their cultural identity.

The above is reinforced by the following observation made by Nettleford:

Jamaicans...have a language, by no means a "corruption of English" as Jamaican Talk has been described by those who are yet to understand the power of this oral creole tongue which most Jamaicans speak most of the time... A Cambridge Dictionary of Jamaican English celebrates the reality of the phenomenon; and the richness of the creole linguistic universe throughout the region tempts literary artists, critics and scholars to original work of highest order (1989 p.23).

In light of such accomplishments the continuous denigration of Jamaican Creole is inexcusable. There are many ways in which this language can be used to enhance traditional cultures as vehicles for restoring cultural pride among Jamaicans. Storytelling is ideal for such advancements, it being both a cultural form as well as a channel for Creole expression.

Folk Tales As Foundations For Cultural Pride

The oral culture of any society draws its resources from human relationships within that society. In this sense folk tales generally reflect the image people have of themselves. As in the case of contemporary Jamaicans and their African ancestors before them, many of the tales they tell are symbolic of their day-to-day experiences and the impact these have had in helping Jamaicans define themselves.

Because folktales are so intrinsically bound up with people's experience - taking and giving back to the society its perceptions, values, etc., I firmly believe that if greater emphasis is placed on storytelling it would provide psychological release from oppressions imposed by society. For example, with regards to Dance as a cultural art form, Nettleford explains that in this field "the psychological damage done to the spirit of Jamaicans because

of shame and pretence could be confronted and repaired" (Nettleford & Barnett 1985 p.2). I argue here that the same can be said of Storytelling.

The idea that storytelling can be a psychological outlet for a people marked by racial heritage is not a new one. Many anthropologists and folklorists who have studied the folklore of Black people have argued that, in most cases, folk tales were used by African slaves to triumph over their oppressions. Jamaicans have for many generations used folklore to resolve their inner conflicts, to rid themselves of some of the "stereotypes they had been forced to accept as replicas of themselves" (Barrett, p. 51).

Throughout the course of history folktales have been a site of social protest for many Jamaicans. They helped forge an identity for Jamaicans of the plantation society and it can today (because it is still rooted in Jamaican experience) be a vehicle for restoring cultural pride. It is important not to forget that lessons learned in the past often have some bearing on future realities.

Conclusion

We have thus explored the role of folk culture in the context of Jamaican society. The real tragedy of its disintegration is the absence of folk forms like storytelling from the general development plan. When such a

feature is repressed, or left undeveloped "the worst is to be expected for there is then a 'withering away', an atrophying of consciousness itself and unless the latter can recover, the process may be irreversible." (Verhelst, p.61). If storytelling were promoted (as well as other forms of folk cultures) it could lead to the resistance of cultural disintegration and the death of national pride.

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CHAPTER 2

TELEVISION AND CULTURE IN THE CARIBBEAN: A FOCUS ON JAMAICA

Television Versus Culture: An Overview

It has been almost three decades since Jamaica gained its independence from Britain, but Jamaicans continue to grapple with the issue of their cultural identity. It is an issue of even greater concern given the global proliferation of new forms of communication technology into the Caribbean region or likely to be imposed in the near future (Dunn, 1989, p.25). For example, the completion in July 1988 of a foreign-controlled, multimillion - dollar teleport facility in Montego Bay, with the title Digiport International, has meant the inauguration of hundreds of satellite circuits for high-speed transmission to the United States (Dunn, 1988, p. 25, Lent, 191, p. 68). What implications do this and other technological advances have for the cultural sovereignty of Jamaica? This island, particularly since the advent of satellite and cable television, incessantly laments the influx of popular American television programmes.

"Cultural penetration" or "Cultural Imperialism" has now become a predominant concern among Jamaican leaders and scholars. More and more, television is viewed as a kind of vicious demon with sinister intent to destroy the

island's cultural identities. As such, much is focused on the preservation of local culture. To this end, many media scholars and practitioners have argued, and are still arguing for, the use of communication systems particularly television, as a vehicle for cultural survival.

I agree that television can be instrumental in protecting Jamaican culture. But it cannot be successful on its own, unless fundamental changes are made in the policies and attitudes of the owners and managers operating this medium. I say this because television is much more than simply a conduit for the passage of information; its content is not the only thing which may be functional or dysfunctional (as the case maybe) to Jamaican culture. Television's "socio-political orientation [which] is largely determined by its owners" (Cuthbert, 1976, p. 50) can also facilitate or obstruct the development of culture. In other words, the function of Jamaican television within the Jamaican society depends to a great extent on the needs and aims of the institutions and, or groups who are users of this technology.

Before we begin to identify television as a destructive force or as the now popularly acclaimed "saviour" of local culture, it is essential to look at the development of the medium in Jamaica and its role in the cultural sphere. Only by shifting through this background can we determine whether or not television is the true and

only cause of cultural erosion or if it is in fact a good vehicle for cultural preservation.

Most media scholars in Jamaica and in other parts of the Caribbean continuously concentrate on the "free flow of information" from western countries (especially the United States) as the perpetrator of television's negative impact on Jamaican\Caribbean people. Communicators invariably argue that gaining control over the flow of information and in effect controlling television broadcasting itself would curtail the destruction of local culture. Undoubtedly, satellite dishes are bombarding the Caribbean - not to mention other international air-waves with "alien" stories and values. But what of the media owner's responsibility for allocating the use of television? In all the rich literature on "Cultural dependency," "Cultural domination," "Cultural Imperialism," and the like, rarely do we see writers focusing on the media owner's responsibility to preserve local heritage. We must remember that the way in which a medium is used can be as devastating as the free flow of information from "high" to "low" as it is so often referred.

It is myopic to speak of destruction and preservation of local culture by focusing only on one aspect of the issue. We need to know more about the circumstances in which television operates to get at the root cause and hence the solution to protecting Jamaican culture. No one

can deny that the "massive" influx of information from outside sources is destructive to national culture. This is a universal communication problem over which much ink has been spilled. Jamaica is not unique in this situation. The Caribbean on the whole suffers, other Third World countries are suffering, and even some so-called developed countries are burdened by the infiltration of foreign television content. Canada is a typical example: because of its close proximity to the United States, Canadians have been the most vocal of the developed countries to express concern over imported American programming. As Herbert Schiller observes, "Canadians have been waging a losing battle against the American electronic invasion. Sixty per cent of Canadian households are within direct reception of American transmitters" (quoted in Hosein, 1976, p.9). Further to this, Hosein, (in a 1976 study of The Problem of Imported Television Content In The Commonwealth Caribbean) informs us that the Canadian social scientist Arnold Rockman once wrote:

If personal (and national) identity is acquired and reinforced through communication and action, then at present there is good reason for a Canadian sense of inferiority. Our mass media are largely filled with programmes produced by U.S. networks. It makes no difference whether the broadcasting stations are located on Canadian or U.S. soil...Most of the available

programming for most Canadians consists of non-Canadian material. Most of this material incorporates U.S. middle-class values (p. 9).

Over the years, the international flow of information has been one of the focal areas in many UNESCO meetings on mass communication research. For example, Nordenstreng and Varis in their study of international television traffic reported that at a 1969 UNESCO meeting held in Montreal discussions were centred on the role of the mass media in relaying information and shaping people's attitudes all over the world. It was said that:

While the media have the potential for improving and extending international understanding, intercultural communication does not necessarily or automatically lead to better international understanding. On the contrary, the opinion was expressed that what has come to be known as the 'free flow of information' at the present time is often in fact a 'one-way' flow rather than a true exchange of information (p.18).

These authors demonstrated empirically that the "free flow of information" concealed the reality of a one-way flow of information with its origin in the United States (with some competition from England, France and Germany). "This flow," according to them, " dominates the international

communication market." In another study (cited Cross-Cultural Broadcasting: Political Effects) we are also informed that "A growing number of Third World politicians fear that their countries' dependency on foreign broadcast technology and programming will be intensified in the future if steps are not taken now to develop and protect native communication industries" (UNESCO, p.37). These are just two examples of studies conducted to examine the international flow of information. Obviously, the problem is extensive and quite controversial. However, the free flow debate is not the main issue of this chapter. The problem has been raised here albeit briefly, to point the reader's attention to the often one-sided analysis of the global problem of imported television programming.

Such preoccupation with the "one-way flow" of information invariably overlooks national communication practices which maintain, or could maintain, the cultural perspective of a society. This variable along with considerations of the divergent interests of the rulers of the media and the general public must be taken into account. Ingrid Sarti (1981, p.319), in her criticism of the inadequacies of the dependency approach to the analysis of Latin American communication systems, reminds us that, there is always a need to examine the other side. For example, "how did the peoples in underdeveloped countries react to the new wave of the communication (and in the context of

this chapter, television) era? What types of changes occurred effectively in their daily lives: [their response], their knowledge, their consciousness?" What of the media owners role in encouraging or discouraging people's interaction and participation with the media?

The answers to the above questions and others - especially in the case of Jamaica - will arise only from concrete analysis of television's historical and social underpinnings. These need to be assessed before we can make conclusive recommendations for solutions to the problem of cultural extinction. This chapter, hence, sets out to examine the development and function of television in Jamaica, television's impact on the culture of Jamaican people and related policy issues. All of these have received little attention in Jamaican/Caribbean literature on mass communication.

Television In Jamaica

In 1959, the Jamaican British government established the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (the JBC) "to raise the standards of broadcasting and 'to develop a truly Jamaican radio service'" (UNESCO, 1977, p.17). Three years later, following the island's independence, the Corporation was granted an exclusive franchise for the first local television station (JBC-TV). In its initial operation,

JBC television was funded not by the government (who initiated its development) but by a "consortium of foreign interests providing management and agency services and technical expertise" (Goul and Lyew-Ayee, 1985, p.42). It was then established that the station would operate on revenues derived from spot advertising and commercial transmission.

At the time television broadcasting attracted only a very small audience, namely, those who were financially and geographically in a good position to receive transmission. As most of us know, the larger the audience, the greater the advertising revenue. Nevertheless, even at this early stage when only a few Jamaicans had television, sufficient profit was made to meet the costs of cheaply available imported programmes. The programmes sold on the international market were programmes which had already made a profit for their production companies and therefore could be rented or bought at extremely low rates.

From a profit-making point of view, it became clear to the early foreign investors that it was far more lucrative to establish a television system in Jamaica with minimal equipment input and heavy reliance on cheap imported content than to establish or depend on local production; the cost of talent, personnel and production facilities by far out-weighed the cost of advertising. It is this stress on advertising which inevitably led Jamaica to depend on

imported television content. It is said by Cuthbert and Hoover that most television licensees at the time believed that "a television license [was] a license to print money" (Sussman and Lent, 1991, p.265). From its very beginnings JBC-TV was designed as a profit-making enterprise.

Twenty-nine years later, after the government has taken full control of the Corporation facilities, the financial picture and economic imperatives remain unchanged. As a government institution, JBC-TV has been given the mandate similar to that of any other national media institution to serve and promote the development of all people in the society (implicit and paramount here of course is the promotion of local culture). Time has proven that the Corporation has failed to adequately achieve its objective.

For example, in the report of The Exploratory Committee of the Arts, 1977, we are informed that "The JBC set itself the objective of reflecting a national culture through a wide range of cultural and entertainment programmes presented by local talent" (p.17) Conversely it is also said that:

Although the Jamaica
Broadcasting Corporation was
entirely government-owned, it
sold advertising time and was
expected to pay its own way.
The result was that, in spite
of the popularity of local
entertainment shows, culture
and cultural programmes
remained within the great

colonial tradition, the
'little' African folk
tradition being largely
ignored or treated as
frivolous by the electronic
mass medium (p.17-18)

JBC-TV, in this case, has violated its promise to the Jamaican people, a promise it continues to break every time it fails to allocate adequate time to local programming or refuse to grant access to those people whom it is designed to serve (which is more often than not). JBC's failing responsibility to the public needs has generated considerable criticisms and discussions and even some proposals. As early as 1972, John Hearne, a news analyst, was broadcasting pleas for Government funds so that more local programming could be made available:

All we ask is that our Government invest money so that we see more plays by people like our own Barry Reckford or Trevor Rhone: that we get more documentaries in depth of where we as a people are going; that we see and hear our music and dance presented at some length in styles that are authentically Jamaican instead of bastard Anglo-American... A government of Jamaica that does not recognize this as a necessity from the government that appoints it, might as well end the fiction of this so-called public corporation right now and offer it for

sale to the highest private bidder (quoted in Goul and Lyew-Ayee, P.43).

Such criticisms might appear harsh but they are well founded criticisms. Aside from the problem of having a dependent economic base support structure for the Corporation, the Jamaican government has never really committed itself to be directly involved in the ongoing operations of the station. This is a situation which is a common problem among government-owned media within the Caribbean. These governments almost always allow commercial pressures to determine the way in which the media is governed. Marlene Cuthbert quite correctly, calls such practice a *laissez-faire* response." In her words this is "one which, by default, allows market forces to determine the policy" (Cuthbert, 1986, p.4). This issue will be discussed in more detail further on in this chapter. For the time being, it is useful to examine the way in which the Jamaican government has appropriated the medium in the service of its people.

There now exists one statutory body (originally called the Broadcasting Authority, now known as the Broadcasting Commission) which was set up in 1959 by the government to ensure that JBC complied with the terms of its licence, and to offer the Corporation advice about broadcasting development. Additionally "under the terms of its license the Jamaican Broadcasting Corporation is

required to reserve broadcasting time for programmes provided by the Agency for Public Information (API) now called the Jamaican Information Service (JIS) and for educational programmes of the Ministry of Education" (Goul and Lyew-Ayee, 1985, p.42). These are the only legislated programmes that have been made to ensure the development of the Jamaican cultural identity through television programming.

To explore all the functions of the Broadcasting Commission requires more space than what this chapter allows. Since it is not one of the major topics of this section but is more a demonstration of the type of structure behind the JBC, I will contend myself with saying that even this Broadcasting Commission has been made impotent by the Government's "laissez-faire" attitude. Aggrey Brown, Director of the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication (CARIMAC) U.W.I. Jamaica observes that "...in the absence of clear government guidelines for the operation of the mass media of communications in Jamaica, the media operate in an unrestricted free market environment" (Brown, 1976, p.42). This has significant implications for any ruling authority commissioned with the responsibility to carry out national objectives (ie. broadcasting local programming) and at the same time make a profit. Obviously, there is a conflict of interests in the television system. The absence of a clear over-arching broadcasting policy does not help even if there

is a ruling authority such as the Broadcasting Commission. Brown's comments on the press could easily be applied to television:

In the present Jamaican context...the concept of the freedom of the press [television] is a camouflage for the larger deception that is involved in the media owners' protecting their own economic self-interests. For freedom of the press cannot be divorced from the free-enterprise system that the media not only support but that supports the media to the tune of \$12 million per year (p.49).

What Brown is saying is that commercial profit-making is the important factor in all areas of communication in Jamaica.

The Government has allocated time for educational programmes and other programmes of local interest, but these are inevitably dominated by American entertainment programs. This of course, is of no surprise for American shows are the mainstay of advertising revenue. Studies have proven that Jamaica "used 88.3 per cent foreign shows by 1985. In fact, if news and Jamaican Information Service shows had been dropped, local programming would have ceased to exist" (quoted in Lent, 1990, p.281). The Government obviously has made some effort to encourage Jamaican content through news and public information programmes, but this effort, (to use a popular phrase) is "just a tip in the bucket." A great deal more needs to be done to safeguard local culture.

Needless to say, it is not only the government that should be blamed for the popularity of American programming on Jamaican television. The television administrators themselves and the advertisers have an important input as to what gets shown on local screens. With regards to the latter their dislike for, or more accurately, "mistrust" of local programming greatly impedes the progress of local production. For without advertisers' support, especially in light of the economic imperatives, there is no way in which a Jamaican show can compete with an American product. As it has been observed:

...if you bring in Marcus Welby with all its Emmy awards, the advertiser feels confident that it will be popular in the island. If you make a programme in the islands, you have to prove yourself first, and then you will get advertising... Meanwhile you've borne costs above the cost of an imported programme. So getting advertising support is very difficult (Hosein, 1976, p.13)

As you can see, the advertising industry plays a key supporting role in the primary activities of television broadcasting in Jamaica. However, it should be noted that present advertisers, (what I term, "anti-local" attitude towards local production) has been changing. Over the years, a few local programmes have emerged as highly popular. As a

result some advertisers have grown less resistant to supporting local productions. Nevertheless we still cannot lose sight of the centrality of advertising in television production and its consequences; JBC-TV alone accounts for 20 per cent of the media advertising market in Jamaica (Brown, 1976, p. 48).

It is often said that if we do not have confidence in ourselves we cannot expect others to have confidence in us. For the longest time Jamaican television administrators have painted a bleak picture of Jamaica's dependence on imported content. The prevailing belief is that there is no way out of this dilemma. However, I contend that if television administrators were to display more faith in their own capabilities and that of the public whom they serve, such positive attitude would greatly enhance the development of local programming. By "local programming," I mean shows which are produced in Jamaica which carry local themes and values; present local talents, and are based on the cultural realities (especially the language) of the Jamaican people.

Unfortunately, the lack of confidence among the people directly concerned with Jamaica's television output or programme content have inhibited the growth of the Jamaican television industry, especially its expansion into the local community. One of the many and not usually identified reasons why Jamaican television is flooded with

Anglo-American shows stem from a lack of effort on the part of television administrators to create local productions. Hosein describes this kind of inertia as "inadequate programming will" and quite correctly. In his same perceptive manner he has identified three other administrative dispositions which hinder local productions a) the Eurocentric perception that "good quality" programme should replicate the glow and glamour of Hollywood, b) the restriction of production opportunities to only those within the television establishment, and finally, c) the belief that good quality programmes require vast sums of money for production (1976, p.15).

Consequentially, the medium has been developed according to its administrators' taste and beliefs which, in most cases, reflect those of the broader economic forces - to the detriment of the wider Jamaican society. Invariably, Jamaicans only see on their television screens what the operators have selected for them, mainly programmes which are not necessarily culturally relevant (shows like, "Marcus Welby" and "Dallas") which more or less meet the needs and views of the administrators. The result is that a broad cross-section of the population has been prevented from participating in the activities of the medium. And as Cuthbert wisely notes "media which operate in the interests of a minority of the population are dysfunctional to development" (1976, p.55). It would be necessary, therefore,

to retrain the minds and attitudes of Jamaican television professionals to help create new tastes, especially "local taste," for the appreciation of "things Jamaican." That this is easier said than done is obvious to the most casual observer. Media professionals have economic constraints and deep-rooted biases that are not easily overcome. Nevertheless, I believe that a renewed consciousness towards local production could motivate television staffers to formulate and devise outlets for local expression. Hollywood need not be the constant standard of assessment for television production. Furthermore, there are many able outsiders who are fully qualified to produce television programmes. Jamaica's television professionals must escape their fixation on in-house television production and in the same vein they must abandon the notion that good programmes are always expensive programmes.

If such orientations are abandoned television would be made accessible to the wider public which would increase the potential for creative local productions. The reason is that there would be a greater quality of outside producers who would have to rely on lower budgets, not to mention local talents - talents which would be less inclined to copy or meet the performing standards of the metropolitan society. The final products would be the development of programmes with a distinctive Jamaican flavour.

In summary, the infiltration of foreign television

and the absence of local programming in certain respects, has to do with "attitudes and will" - the willingness of the Jamaican government to help finance television broadcasting; the willingness of the advertisers and broadcasters to support the medium and the exercising of positive attitude towards Jamaican productions. Admittedly, the constraints of costs, inadequate production facilities, staff and high level talent will always exist. But Jamaica's government and television administrators need to devise ways to draw material from the local core of the society to the more metropolitan centre.

It is important to note that no concrete evidence exists which guarantees that government support would necessarily lead to more local production, but it can be assumed that because the government controls and allocates air time resources, and since they have identified foreign content "as a danger" (see Nettleford, 1979, p. 132-133), it is possible that the government would support local programming. Of course, this will not happen over-night, there has to be a gradual process of weaning the Jamaican society from its dependency on foreign television. Jamaica has a great deal of talents ready to be tapped: institutions such as the Cultural Training Centre and CARIMAC, not to mention the talents to be found in community theatre groups are sources for much needed local material. Jamaicans need to see and hear more of the people who look and talk as they

do and this can be achieved with some effort. For this reason, Jamaica (as well as other Caribbean countries) must refrain from focusing too much on the "Cultural Imperialism" issue. As it has been demonstrated in this chapter, the destruction or support of local culture is not always externally imposed. In some cases it is also self (or internally) imposed. I am not by any means dismissing the threat to local culture resulting from Jamaica's dependence on imported content. But there are obviously other important factors which have been continually overlooked and it is time that these be addressed.

For example, in addition to the above one important question yet to be resolved is, how do Jamaicans respond to television broadcasting in Jamaica (local or otherwise)? The answer to this question would be even more revealing as to whether or not we can continue to blame the destruction of Jamaican culture entirely on foreign influences.

The Local Response: Television's impact on Jamaican society

As we have so far discussed, most contemporary literature is replete with examples of cultural imperialism or dependence with regard to the impact of television broadcasting in Jamaica. Virtually every document on Jamaicans/Caribbean interaction with television reveals a picture of the dominant and the dominated; the strong and

the weak; the rich and the poor, and so on. The point is, Jamaicans are continuously portrayed as victims of the metropolitan centres of power, those who own and operate the flow of information all over the world (as mentioned earlier, the USA, France and Germany).

The fear of American cultural colonization is a recurring theme in Jamaican discourses on culture. But it is important to note that with the exception of two studies which examine foreign content on regional television, (one conducted by Hosein, mentioned earlier, and another carried out by Aggrey Brown to be discussed later) "no research has been done to measure the impact of the visual media on regional [Jamaican] cultural expression. Nevertheless, there is some documented and undocumented empirical evidence that supports the assumption that the visual media in particular have had some impact on regional culture" (Brown, 1990, p. 59). It is useful at this point to examine some of these discussions and thoughts on the subject.

The notion of "cultural imperialism" gained prominence throughout the Caribbean region beginning in the late 1970's and continuing up to the present. Because Jamaica more or less shares the same pressures of Cultural bombardment experienced by the other four or so million people in the Commonwealth Caribbean, the Jamaican situation is, more often than not, discussed as a regional problem. This point must be made clear so that the reader may know

that regional documentation is sometimes the most accessible means of exploring the problems of cultural imperialism in Jamaica. In this sense, before we look at the Jamaican case specifically it is important to review some of the regional imperialism debates to give some context to the problem.

In recent times, there have been many regional seminars convened around the subject of US cultural penetration in the Caribbean. On this issue, Caribbean leaders, officials and professionals have all voiced their concern about the undermining of the Caribbean way of life by the widespread availability of foreign television material. Topics range from the need to foster individual worth and cultural identity to the protection of political and economic sovereignty. For example, at one of the annual general meetings of the Barbados - headquartered Caribbean News Agency (CANA) William Demas, president of the Caribbean Development bank, stated that the "'insidious penetration' of irrelevant foreign television is threatening the economic advancement of the West Indies" (The Daily Gleaner, 1986). Later that same year at a Caribbean Media Seminar held in Kingston, Jamaica, in November, Demas again stressed:

First World communications technology is bombarding us with material beyond our capacity to absorb, and presents the threat of making our worth while media systems redundant and worthless...these 'external

intrusions' into Caribbean life-styles, are, adversely affecting peoples perception of self. They [are] also affecting the level of expectation of material returns from regional economies, and called into question the validity of the rich cultural traditions of the Caribbean (quoted in Dunn, 1988, p.47).

Demas views strongly reflect those of many leaders and practitioners within the region's communication sector. At the June '87 annual general assembly of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU) Cyril Walker, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Barbados told the audience that "foreign cultural information reinforces values which are non-traditional and false and aimed at entrenching first world tastes and consumerism" (The Daily Gleaner, 1987).

The danger of the influx of foreign television in the Caribbean was confirmed by a 1988 report entitled Caribbean Voices- Caribbean Images written by a Canadian consultant (Evan Browne), commissioned to study broadcasting in the region. In the report, Browne reinforced that foreign TV is threatening culture in the Caribbean and recommends regional co-operation in the production of television programmes and urges "'significant changes' in the attitude of governments to ensure the increase of regional and local programming." He further warns:

The problem associated with the impact of U.S. television programming is considered to be critical. If action is not taken, Caribbean culture, politics, and its very independence could be jeopardized. (The Daily Gleaner, Jan. 1988).

To demonstrate the seriousness of the problem, in an earlier 1987 UNESCO-sponsored survey of television programme content conducted by Aggrey Brown it was found that 88 per cent of television programmes transmitted in the region originated from outside the region. Almost a full 10 per cent increase over the 78.5 per cent found by Hosein in his 1976 survey. This lead Brown to conclude that the Anglophone Caribbean was the most penetrated region of the world by foreign television content. As such he declared the situation "potentially devastating and detrimental to regional culture" (Brown, 1987, p.23-24).

The above reveals how those in professional and academic circles have assessed the impact of US television on the lives of Caribbean people in general. We must now turn our attention to explore how Jamaicans themselves respond to television at the national level. Virtually no research data exist to prove how television may influence the life of Caribbean people. But for sure, Jamaicans, like people all over the Caribbean (and the world) have had a growing attraction to American mass culture. On the other

hand, Jamaicans do have a strong taste and demand for local programming when such shows are available. It is on these two levels that we must assess the Jamaicans' response to television.

Lent documents that "almost from the beginning, when television sets were placed in public squares in Jamaica, there has been a demand for the medium in this relatively poor island" (1977, p.235). We are all aware that in the early stages of television broadcasting in Jamaica, the medium was monopolized entirely by foreign content. The acceptance of television in the island, proves among other things, that Jamaicans liked and wanted what they were receiving. The Jamaican attraction to foreign shows can be understood by looking at set-ownership figures. Lent (1977) recorded that "over 70,000 sets had been purchased in Jamaica, penetrating 65 to 70 percent of the Jamaica homes that had electricity" (p.236). In a recent report (1987) it was found that Jamaica had approximately 387,000 colour TV sets and a potential audience of 628,000 (Brown and Sanatan, P.129). Carl Stone, a professor of Political Sociology at the University of West Indies (UWI), provides a more precise breakdown of the foregoing when he writes that "some 60 percent of Jamaica urban owner-income dwellers now have access to t.v. and the lower income t.v. watchers now greatly outnumber the middle and upper-income segment of the Jamaican t.v. market" (The Jamaican Weekly Gleaner, 1991, p.

11). It is of interest to note that television's popularity is also attributed to its value as a symbol of prestige. Other than that, Jamaicans can and do buy the medium for its entertainment and local information value.

It has been said that of all the Caribbean islands, Jamaica represents the most self-contained example of an island that "recognized the images of majority culture and the insufficiency of local programmes" (Brown and Sanatan, p. 29). This statement is supported by the words of Stone who declared that "JBC-TV must ...be congratulated for having substantially reduced the imported content of its programming with a significant new stream of locally produced programmes that from recent estimates seem to have reduced the import content of our local t.v...away from the very high Caribbean import levels," (1991, p. 11).

In spite of the present 88% foreign content on JBC-TV, any Jamaican who watches television today would testify to the above. Obviously, there is still a lot more to be achieved in the way of local programming. Nevertheless, JBC has made successful effort to satisfy its customers.

According to a few recent television schedules, JBC has added to its list of "entertainment" shows local programmes such as: "Lime Tree Lane," (a Jamaican sitcom); "Evening Time" (a kind of local "sesame street"). Youth programs like "School Challenge Quiz," and "Rapping" plus several interview programs and talk shows such as the

popular "Diana Wright Show", "Profile," and "Morning Coffee Guest," respectively. Other shows include religious and exercise programmes and the government JIS features. On a typical day, for example, a Friday, the bulk of these shows are aired in the morning, some being repeated in the evenings beginning around 4 pm. It has been said that "the early morning TV slot has attracted a fair audience" and good programming is identified as one of the favouring factors (Brown and Sanatan, p.129). All this goes to prove that Jamaicans are responding favourably to local productions.

A more specific case of the growing appeal for Jamaican shows is demonstrated by the uncontested popularity of the Jamaican local sitcom Oliver at Large. Nettleford writes that,

Oliver at Large polled in [Jamaica] 1988 highest popular votes over such established United States warhorses as Dynasty, Dallas and the Cosby Show which are standard fare on Jamaican television as they are in other parts of the region. Though no one could pretend that "Oliver" surpassed its contenders in scripting or slickness of production, the popularity of this Jamaican offering reflected local faith in, or yearnings for, "things Jamaican" (1989, p. 27).

The fascinating thing about Oliver at Large is that its popularity reached and extends far beyond the shores of Jamaica, gaining as much acceptance in the homes of millions of Jamaicans abroad. From London to Miami to New York to Canada this show has been pirated and passed on from one video cassette to another. The author has had the privilege of viewing several episodes here in Canada without ever seeing the programmes once on the local JBC-TV. This in addition to the show's own popularity in Jamaica demonstrate the potential strength of local production. It should be pointed out that as late as 1988, a media survey conducted by Don Anderson of Market Research services, found that "despite a significant increase in the number of TV sets, the peak viewership" in Jamaica [had] not increased." Anderson blamed the drop-off in viewership on the fact that "JBC-Television programming (at the time) had not been sensitive enough to [the] demands of its viewers" (The Daily Gleaner, 1988). He went on to state that viewership would increase if there were local content on television. We have just reviewed the rewards of this prognosis. As such, we may justly conclude that the bombardment of foreign programming is not the only deterrent to the development of local programming. Evidently, Jamaicans will consume their local culture if given the opportunity.

On the other hand, there is reason to believe that the consumption of American t.v. is not all bad. Undoubtedly

there are, as observed by Hugh Smalls, a former Jamaican Ministry of Youth and Sports,

Some people who have been led astray by the indoctrination of the mass media [i.e. television] by the constant showing [of material] that comes out of North American television studios. This has had the effect of alienating some of the young people's minds against themselves, and pride in their country (quoted in Nettleford, 1978, P.133).

Regardless of such catastrophic assault on the Jamaican people, Jamaicans have demonstrated outstanding innovative spirits. They have shared in the great "American" drama and from this have crafted and honed for themselves successful local shows, not to mention, an explosion of music videos that complement local soca and reggae hits. Jamaicans have proven, in a sense, that technology which paradoxically serves cultural penetration, can be used for cultural production and can in the same manner be a vehicle for cultural preservation.

At this point it can be argued that television has the capability to be used for development purposes understood here as individual and collective self-actualization. We have seen that the antagonisms between television and culture can be overcome albeit in some areas given the political will. This, however, can only be

implemented through effective broadcasting policies. If none exist or if there is a problem in this area then we are literally "fighting a losing battle". Hence, before proceeding any further, we must take a brief look at some policy issues.

Jamaica's TV Policy

There is an ongoing complaint in the Caribbean that broadcasting is without a meaningful policy. Upon close examination of the Jamaican Broadcasting ACT there is no doubt as to the validity of the foregoing. On the issue of programming content in subsection (18) of section 3 of the ACT it is written that

the Authority [the Broadcasting Commission] may, after consultation with the licensees, and with the approval of the Minister, make regulations ... to control the character and standards of programmes broadcast by licensees, and to provide for the allocation of time to the broadcasting of programmes which are of Jamaican origin or performed by Jamaicans (My emphasis) (P.ii).

Any lay person would be able to recognize that such ruling is ambiguous, non-committal and thus lends itself to

different interpretations. To not specify exactly what Jamaican Origin means; to avoid establishing a fixed quota and time for local productions and to say that the Authority may (when quite easily it may not) make regulations is to refuse to be committed to specific and effective regulations that would counteract the "massive" influence of foreign TV.

Proper legislative coercion can be implemented to limit the percentage of imported programmes on Jamaican television, thereby increasing the amount of local programmes. This has been achieved with some success in Canada when previously it was thought to be an impossible task. Jamaica could heed this example. This island is being heralded as the leader in the development and support of national culture. It has been the first to establish "a dominant majority culture in the landscape utilizing all the local and traditional forms of behaviour alongside the most modern set-up of satellite dishes" (Brown and Sanata, p. 24). As much as this is a major accomplishment of which Jamaica should be proud, it is much too early for it to be basking in such glory. There is a great deal more to be done to maintain an amicable coexistence between modern and traditional systems on local TV. Judging from the following statement by Paul Robertson, the present Minister of Information and Culture, it is going to be a long and trying process. Apparently, Jamaicans cannot depend on government legislation to ensure broadcasting of local programmes.

Well, I want to make it clear. This government is not going to attempt to legislate the morality of this country. We are not going to try to dictate what it is that people listen to or see. We feel very confident that if there are good local programmes, Jamaicans will watch good local programmes. [If] they are sloppy, they are going to turn off the radio and T.V. But it just doesn't happen by itself. It has to be encouraged ... we are not in a position to give it [JBC] any significant subsidy but we are going to try. (1989, p. 10)

We have discussed how important government subsidies are to the promotion of local programming. It is good to see that progress is being made in this area. However, the government cannot continue (as it seems determined to do) to neglect its legislative responsibility with regards to broadcasting in Jamaica for such laissez-faire policy is not effective. Specific legislative procedure must be laid down to ensure that television administrators and advertisers facilitate the production of local shows. The government must recognize policy regulations as another priority in order to rid Jamaican broadcasting of its overdependence on the "free enterprise market system."

Conclusion

The case studies and arguments presented here suggest a number of factors that have either influenced or obstructed the development of local programming. Given the facts, a crucial question begs to be asked, is there a place for the promotion of storytelling on Jamaican Television? I believe we can all agree that there may be a place. The conditions are obviously favourable: first and foremost Jamaicans are yearning for something representative of themselves on their screens; secondly television (as it has been argued) does not completely erase all trace of the Jamaican cultural heritage, and thirdly, (and certainly attainable) with the right government and administrative support local programming could increase tremendously.

The timing could not be more appropriate for presenting storytelling as one solution to the cultural extinction issue. I am confident that I am not alone in seeing the wisdom of utilizing this traditional folk form as a tool for advancing the cultural sovereignty of Jamaicans. For example, Brown and Sanatan reported that on the basis of their research on the "Role of Caribbean Media," it was generally agreed "that the transformation of language forms and general cognitive perceptions are critical facets of the process of recovering cultural sovereignty" (p. 11). Nettleford also reminds us that the "highly expressive

creole languages ... remain critical to the region's future development as it has been to its survival in the past" (1989, p. 30). I have already explained the centrality of Creole language to storytelling and its role in fostering a national identity. Hence we can establish that storytelling is an important alternative medium. One can well imagine how influential it would be if it were to be integrated with a ubiquitous medium like television. To say this, however, is not enough, we need to explore pragmatically the possibilities of combining both media.

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CHAPTER 3

EXPLORING THE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN TELEVISION AND STORYTELLING

Introductory Remarks

The thought of integrating, or what I prefer to call "converging" old and new forms of communication systems to promote the continuity of traditional culture, is not a new discovery. As nations sit poised on the edge of collapsing into a "global village" (one which brings different cultures together), leaders the world over have been calling for the use of more indigenous creativity in the service of cultural continuity. Some leaders, Katz informs us, "are also concerned with the instrumental use of the themes of traditional culture as a more effective means of reaching people with the message of national integration and modernization" (Katz, 1979).

Whatever the objective may be, trying to adopt traditional media to suit modern systems is likely to prove quite problematic. A typical example is the proposed marriage between television and storytelling. I can identify at least two areas wherein this integration would prove difficult. The first and most obvious "problem area" has to do with the fact that television is by nature, what some people call a "dirty medium," meaning, it always manipulates its raw material. In line with this reality, storytelling

transmitted via television is unlikely to be the same as when relayed to an audience face-to-face. Stuart Hall pinpoints this fact when he states that "it would be quite wrong to believe that these forms and contents [i.e. storytelling] come to us via television screen untransformed. There is practically no un-mediated or untransformed transmission on television" (Hall, 1975, p.89). To stress his point, Hall added "television is technically and socially a thoroughly manipulated medium. The utopia of straight transmission, or the 'naturalistic fallacy' in television is not only an illusion, it is a dangerous "deception" (p.97). In this respect we can guarantee that there may be profound changes in storytelling if it is combined with television.

Television's structure itself, could also change by its adaptation of storytelling. It is unlikely that the merger of television and storytelling would follow the standard format of other television productions. This is not to say that television would be completely transformed. But in order to attract an audience large enough for the survival of storytelling on television certain modifications of television presentations may be necessary. These modifications may involve television's general function and features. We are therefore faced with a possible transformation on the part of both media.

The second problem is that which concerns

performance. By performance, I mean those qualities of communication systems which are intrinsic to their nature, their use, and their characteristic mode of communication. It has been argued that there is a wide and deep gap between the concepts of performance adhered to by traditional artists and modern communicators. Wimal Dissanayake, for example, correctly observes that "the intimate personal relationship between the parties in communication and the absence of the tyranny of time are two concepts which, counter to modern communication, are central to folk media performances (1977, p. 122). I doubt there is another folk medium which epitomizes these concepts better than storytelling.

This folk art thrives on the assumption that the desire to perform is ever present in the performance environment. In other words, storytelling prides itself on the reciprocity of participation invariably capitalizing on the immediacy of the moment. This kind of interactive communication is clearly different from our experience with television whose primary function in the performance arena is that of a mediator. With television, audience participation in most cases is restricted to a mental or "visual" exercise. That is to say, performance on the part of the audience is achieved vicariously through the "techniques and personal of the television presenter" (Hall, p. 26). Other than this, the only other interaction an

audience may have with the medium rests on piecing together various elements of television text so that it makes sense.

Transformation, hence, and the differences between the nature of performance as experienced with storytelling and television, holds many implications for the convergence of the two media. But it should be pointed out that the disparities between storytelling and television are not so intrinsic that they cannot be reconciled. I will argue here that the best approach to bridging the antagonism between the two media is through the notion of continuity and change. This means that both television and storytelling could change but they also need to maintain a certain degree of continuity in form.

It is useful to note that television, even though it has the tendency to transform other medium, is in itself a hybrid medium. In part, this is because it is so extraordinarily heterogeneous in content and subject-matter. Any analysis of television's formal properties will reveal that it draws on and appropriates a great deal of forms and techniques from other sources, including other media. Somehow, television has the remarkable ability to generate new connections without completely losing its basic popular features. Its ability to create new forms, especially with older or more 'traditional' media, has been recognized by other media scholars, notably by Stuart Hall who claims that:

its [television's] position as a highly advanced and socially-specialized technology is marked by the degree to which it combines old and new media into a new medium. As Enzensberger has remarked [in his article "The Consciousness Industry"]: "All new forms of the medium are constantly forming new connections, both with each other and with older media..." (1975, p. 89).

Thus, in the domain of folk culture, earlier defined, television has the potential to bring about some startling and perhaps productive results. We, however, cannot know the extent of this until we have explored the structure of television, and that of storytelling to assess how the two media affect one another.

Our entry point to this inquiry, of course, has to occur mainly in the form of a textual analysis because the text plays a key role in aiding our understanding of the media's function in society and this is an important link between old and new forms of communication systems. For television undoubtedly has its roots in society and so does storytelling. With regards to the former, Roger Silverstone, in his essay "Television and Narrative", astutely observes that, "at the heart of any consideration of the place of television in society and culture lies the text - the inscription: the images, words, sounds, and music of film and video, which are recoverable and tangible (Silverstone, 1988, p. 30). In other words, the text provides an avenue

for tracing television's link with society which could help us to seek innovative ways to promote cultural continuity. Storytelling, as I have repeatedly stated, is not to be outdone in this area. In terms of its relationship with society, Richard Bauman has remarked, "in exploring the social nexus of oral storytelling, we explore one of the most fundamental and potent foundations of our existence as social beings" (1986, p. 114). Put more simply, storytelling is a vital part of our day-to-day experience as demonstrated by the following:

When one looks to the social practices by which social life is accomplished, one finds with surprising frequency - people telling stories to each other, as a means of giving cognitive and emotional coherence to experience, constructing and negotiating social identity; investing the experiential landscape with moral significance in a way that can be brought to bear on human behaviour; generating, interpreting, transforming the work experience; and a host of other reasons (quoted in Bauman in reference to several research studies p. 113)

It is widely accepted that storytelling is a composite of narrative (textural structures) but as can be realized from the above, oral literature is merely a thin

and partial record of human interaction with society. Therefore, in addition to exploring the literary side of storytelling (which is the general practice), we must also in context, pay close attention to individual creativity. This means that performance must also be assessed when determining storytelling's contribution to cultural continuity.

In what follows, I seek to find a link between technology and oral folk culture (both of which, over the years have been placed in two opposing camps). Put more specifically, I seek to determine the degree to which television, at the basic level of 'text', conflicts with, or is analogous to, Jamaican storytelling. But it should be pointed out here, that because of the performer's central role in the performance environment, both performer and performance will be considered in order to determine the relationship between television and storytelling. Such a discovery, I believe, provides the basis for our understanding of the relationship between culture and technology. This knowledge, in part, could enable us to attack the growing problem of cultural loss.

The assumption here is that other cultural forms (for example, music and drama), may display a similar relationship with other media technology. Such a possibility has been noticed by James Carey who notes that:

The starting point of our analysis is this quest for lucidity and the task is to elucidate those forms and practices, those durable features, that withstand the vicissitudes of modern life. This recuperation is not merely a means of going primitive, of seeing quasi-universal practices reinscribed in modern life, but a means of constituting the grounds of intersubjectivity: of seeing the experience of others in the light of our own and our own experience in the light of others. To grasp hold of the popular arts with terms like myth, ritual, pilgrimage, liminality, story, narrative, chronicle...is to see in a miraculously discontinuous world persistent practices by which that world is sedimented and held together (p. 17).

At the heart of this study therefore, is the question: can Jamaican storytelling survive the vicissitudes of modernity (principally, television technology)? The remainder of this chapter is an attempt to address this concern. I will proceed to examine the pros and cons of linking television and storytelling in Jamaica. This analysis traces the tradition of storytelling as a social practice in Jamaica. The objective is for us to understand storytelling as a cultural phenomena which could help us assess the implications of its convergence with television.

**Bridging The Antagonisms: The Pros And Cons Of Linking
Television And Storytelling In Jamaica**

Storytelling is a vibrant part of Jamaicans' day-to-day activities. For many generations it has been a central part of the fabric of the island's folk culture. Tanna tells us that:

Jamaica is a society of oral traditions and oral art forms. Few Jamaicans read books regularly. Even the leading newspaper, which enjoys a wide circulation, is often read aloud by one person to a group of family or friends (p. 25).

Dance (1985), in her study of folklore in Jamaica, discovered that "Annancy tales...remain a significant aspect of daily life for a number of people" (p. 11). By conversing with Jamaicans, visiting their homes and institutions, and observing street-corner gatherings, Dance was able to published a book on contemporary Jamaican folktales (tales which other folklorists have never before documented).

Remarking on her accomplishments Dance writes:

Most of the folklorists have tended to do their field work only in remote, rural areas of Jamaica. While there is indeed an abundance of materials available from isolated groups in Jamaica,

there is also a wealth of folklore to be found in the yards and prisons and living rooms of Kingston and other urban areas (Dance, P. xxi).

The very fact that folktales have survived through generations (even in present day Jamaica) attest to the value and significance they have for Jamaican people. Alleyne (1988) describes the Jamaican attitude which perpetuates the orality (or storytelling nature) of Jamaican society as "traditional Jamaican collectivism." By this he means Jamaicans' propensity towards group or community gatherings. He explains:

The collectivity principle, communalism, and involved communication all manifest themselves in the need to be constantly relating to others (whether talking, arguing, quarrelling, working together) at the work place, at the standpipe or at the street corner...it does seem that, at a major segment of Jamaican cultural continuum, people will forgo certain apparent comforts, convenience and economic gain in return for more fun out of life largely derived from interaction with other people (P. 163).

As one can discern by this disclosure, community-sharing is a common and well-loved practice in Jamaica.

People enjoy conversing and listening to one another so much that every new event or experience becomes an opportunity to formulate a story to be shared. I myself can testify to this experience as one who has shared in the Jamaican love for storytelling and gossip (or "susu" as it is called in Jamaica). The folklorist Walter Jekyll, in his book Jamaica Song and Story, praises the Jamaican people for their "keen sense of the ludicrous" in being able to give a funny turn to stories about their everyday experiences (Jekyll, 1966, p. 5).

By what means did oral narrative become such an integral part of the Jamaican way of life? A large percentage of Jamaica's culture is a legacy of the West African slaves, who in 1517 were brought to the island to work on the sugar plantations. Thus, the dominant cultural roots of Jamaica are "the peoples of present day Ghana and Nigeria, integrated over the years with traditions of other West and Central African peoples" (Tanna, p. 21). Africa is known (in addition to other things) for its rich oral tradition. Its folklore is comprised of a remarkable abundance of stories. One category is the Annancy (or Annansi) tales which African slaves brought with them to Jamaica.

As such, Annancy or "spider", as he is popularly known, is the hero of an enormous body of Jamaican folktales. Originally regarded as the creator of the world,

Annancy is generally known to be a notorious trickster figure:

An animal of inferior size and strength and superior cleverness. By no means an exemplary moral figure, he displays cupidity, gross appetite, and ruthlessness and often gains the advantage over his dull-witted and earnest opponent by sheer lack of scruple (Feldmam, p. 15).

In Jamaican stories, Annancy appears to be both human and animal at the same time. Upon hearing an Annancy story it is always difficult to tell whether he is man or spider: there are times when he is either one or the other or even both. The distinction is not always clearly kept in view by the narrators. Feldman informs us that:

The transformation of animals into men or gods and vice versa, presents no difficulty to the native mind. Tradition often relates that an animal trickster was formerly a god of man, and in the tales his person emerges as unmistakably human (p. 15).

It has been argued by Roger Abrahams who has studied both African and Caribbean folklore that "those who identify themselves with Annancy by telling his stories

resemble spider in their social position within the community (1983, p. 170). This is definitely true with respect to the Jamaican society where Annancy stories are told by the descendants of African slaves (the majority of whom live in rural area or in urban ghettos in Jamaica). Many of these people associate themselves with the sly Annancy character as a means to counter the power of their oppressors. Through the craftiness of the "magic spider man" they are able to assert their power when elsewhere it is not possible. Dance (1985), a folklorist who has studied Jamaican and Black African tales informs us that "these Jamaican [Annancy] tales are not self-denigrating tales, but rather veiled protests against a racist system in which the black is destined to lose, fail and suffer, no matter what he does" (p.3). Nettleford himself said the following in reference to storytelling during the time of slavery. "It is as though every slave strove to be Annancy and he who achieved the spider-form became a kind of hero" (quoted in Jekyll, p.14).

Slavery has been abolished for many years but Annancy serves virtually the same purpose in contemporary Jamaica as he did in the colonial era. Abrahams informs us that "in some dimensions, these [Annancy] stories must be seen as reflections on the tellers and their audience" (sic). They are texts about living voraciously and energetically at the margins" (p. 179). To a large degree,

therefore, Annancy stories are as much reflections on the Jamaican society as they are cognitive arenas for sorting out people's inner conflicts; the latter are a product of the disturbances taking place in the former. Abrahams also points out that "stories are often about confusion and even social dissolution" (p. 165).

At this juncture, a crucial question needs to be asked: does television perform the same social function as Annancy tales? First, let it be established here that television operates in Jamaica much the same as in other parts of the world, that is to say, there is no 'unique' function (so to speak) of television in Jamaica; what is said here of television could very well be applied elsewhere. Television, as I have demonstrated thus far, has its roots in society; its images are emblematic of things in the 'real' world. In this sense, it shares a common bond with Annancy stories in acknowledging issues, crisis etc. that may affect human life.

The fundamental difference between television and Annancy storytelling lies in the way in which stories are used in both media. We know, for example, that with the Annancy stories these are usually socially bounded, evolving from a 'local' situation with strong historical connections. And like all history, the effectiveness of Annancy stories depends on their being repeated. The strength of television on the other hand, depends on its universal appeal; its

stories are not only those which may apply to the Jamaican situation but the world at large. Derrick de Kerckhove writing on "The New Psychotechnologies" (1991, p. 268) states quite appropriately that:

On television, the images that normally constitute and explicate meaning do not come from our personal experience, memory, storage, and retrieval strategies, but from a collective, standardized production process strongly influenced by incessant probing into a collective, not a private, modality of consciousness.

Television is, therefore, not as didactic in the same way as Annancy stories, and it is not helpful to the analysis of problems at hand. It is designed to be heterogeneous, revealing not just one single issue (at a time) but encapsulating a variety of issues common to the general public.

It seems that the only way television could merge effectively with storytelling at the social level is if new approaches are taken towards television production. This could make television much more indigenous in style and programming to local annancy tales. If possible, a good start would be to make television more culturally-bounded, that is more relevant to problems in the local community. And, of course, outside the social arena we could make other

areas of television hospitable to Annancy storytelling: reception, performance, and language are three key areas. These, I will discuss briefly, beginning with the latter.

It is generally known that television assumes the language of its audience; the same is true of storytelling. Both rely on the standard or 'common' discourse in society to convey their messages. In this way, the two media serve a communicative function by drawing on the language of the people. In the case of Annancy stories, the storyteller narrates in the voice of the less affluent of the Jamaican society, in conversational creole. Television conversation, however, is well-bred, brief, concise, and allows a 'balance' of points of views consistent with the repertoire of the medium. This is different from what one would normally encounter at a storytelling session where order and brevity are unheard of. Here "using the voice, making noise, is regarded as taking one's place in the group. There is no necessary requirement that when one person speaks, all others listen. Only the most charismatic of speakers, and only on set occasions, command such listening, and then it is not generally silence that is called for but continuative noise" (Bauman, 1983, p. 127).

To bring this kind of interactive 'disorder' to television would be quite a challenge. Obviously, storytelling cannot be conducted in the same manner. Adjustments would have to be made both in terms of the

language of the media and the way in which this language is performed. In which case, performance would require some alteration as well. Similar to language, performance is a spontaneous action which is strongly influenced by one's cultural experience.

The bulk of what we view on television is pre-recorded, (in most cases "alien") raw-material. It does not matter where we are at the time of viewing as long as we are in a comfortable position to receive television's messages. No physical demands are necessarily made on ourselves except for the use of our eyes, ears and minds. Indeed, these are needed as well in storytelling but in addition, the use of the body (gestures) and one's voice are essential.

Bauman pinpoints a very distinctive aspect of storytelling performance. He notes that each person (in the performance environment) "is expected to participate in at least a supportive way [and] procedures exist so that the role of the local performer is passed from person to person" (p. 123). Thus, people in the environment are both performers and audience. We are all fully aware that with television, the majority of the time we assume the role of audience. There is no 'live' interaction with television (unless you are on camera). We must, therefore, expect that if storytelling is merged with television, 'performance' could take on a complete new meaning.

Reception would probably be the most difficult area

when it comes to merging the two media. On the one hand, television is the so-called "window on reality," and, on the other, storytelling is mainly a fanciful version of reality with little or no truth to it. The attitude with which we approach the two media is therefore crucial to their convergence. But going on the assumption that we have all more or less learned the conventional devices of the media in question I believe such knowledge could help us to be more tolerant and accepting of the merging of the imaginative and the real. After all, it is already being done in science-fiction films.

However, the crucial question is, to what degree, and on what levels, would television and storytelling change if they were to be merged together? On the basis of their differences pointed out above; changes are most likely to occur along those lines. I will begin with television. With respect to language, I foresee television adapting the Jamaican Creole language consistent with storytelling. "Standard-English" would therefore have to be abandoned. In terms of performance, the practice of brevity and rapid camera movements may have to be sacrificed to longer takes and perhaps more spontaneous response on the part of camera operators. This may be necessary in order to reproduce the gestures and interaction between audience and performer. Television may also have to entertain interruptions from (what would be) a 'less passive' audience (at home) who

would be encouraged to participate by telephone, mail, and so on.

Reception may require similar, if not more adjustments. The task, (and obviously a difficult one) would be to convey the imaginative, fanciful nature of storytelling without disrupting or devaluing its social and cultural messages. Television in this respect would not be able to transmit storytelling as a representation of reality. It would have to devise ways and means of preparing its audience to accept storytelling's fictions while maintaining its own credibility. I speak here of television's pretence of being a "window on reality."

I have already hinted at some of the ways in which storytelling could change if adapted to television. But here I wish to be more specific about the types of changes that may be required. Above all, what is at issue is how to maintain the traditional/cultural aspects of storytelling (i.e. orality and interactivity) in the event of its adaptation to television. I have forecast some of the transformations television may have to undergo to assist with this venture. But what of the changes in storytelling? No doubt, storytelling may have to compromise on the level of orality generally practiced in face-to-face performance. This means that the majority of the storytelling audience would have to adjust to having the voice of the storyteller amplified through television speakers. They would also have

to adjust to seeing the image of the storyteller instead of the live person. However, some measure of orality could be maintained by having the storyteller narrate his or her story to a live audience on camera. This could be an in-studio operation, but it would be, I believe, far more authentic if done out-of-doors, perhaps in settings where storytelling is normally staged.

Interactivity (which entails the performance of the storyteller and his/her interaction with the audience) would require no less of a compromise. Storytelling would have to rely more on the participation of on camera audiences; the creative manipulation of television cameras, and other information systems like the telephone, instead of the usual impromptu response which would come from a more intimate audience. This of course, is not all bad. Television is known for its socializing function in which case it could open up storytelling to a much larger audience. In so doing it may stimulate more input from a wider section of society. Convergence therefore, may reduce face-to-face interaction but if encouraged, it could also stimulate public participation in terms of comments and story contributions. This leads us to the question of reception and how this may change in storytelling. How could storytelling be adjusted to television and still satisfy the audience's taste for the 'ludicrous' and gross exaggerations intrinsic to stories?

First, it is important that these characteristics

of storytelling remain intact for not only do they make storytelling entertaining; they also contribute to its didactic function. For example, a spider (Annancy) gaining control over a lion and a snake may appear impossible to the average ear. Nonetheless, such triumphs are amusing (especially in the way they are accomplished). They also, in an indirect way, reinforces social values about the weak and the strong, and provides an opportunity for Jamaicans to enjoy vicariously behaviours which the weak often must suppress. Therefore, when it comes to relaying stories on television the storyteller now confronted with an audience generally trained to see portrayals of reality, may have to make a conscious effort to prepare his/her viewers to receive stories via television screens in their mythic form. This could be done in a two-minute dialogue between the storyteller and the audience as he/she sets the stage for the performance of the story. Perhaps some visuals could be used at this point - it all depends on individual creativity. I estimate that after a while, people would begin to accept storytelling as it is - a myth - on television. As I argued before, we have to bend or curve the conventional rules of television to our own needs.

Now that we have examined the issues involved in reconciling television and storytelling in the Jamaican society, it is time to link these observations and predictions with a few theoretical analysis conducted by

other scholars who have shown interest in the relationship between television and narratives. This is not a very detailed discussion (the space here does not allow such depth of inquiry). I hope, however, that by illuminating some of the more important points raised (in theory) with respect to television's structure I may be able to identify its relationship with the structure of storytelling. Even more importantly, I may be able to determine if the above Jamaican case is at all practical.

The Structure of Television and Storytelling

There is general consensus among a number of media scholars that television is indeed a storytelling medium. Most theories of television structure (see Ellis, 1982, Fiske, 1987, Silverstone, 1987, Kozloff, 1987) are based on narrative theory. In one of their earlier works, Fiske and Hartley, (1987) refer to the structure of television as an 'oral logic'. This is a very fitting description in retrospect, looking back at the whole evolution of narrative theory.

Narrative theory, Fiske (1987) informs us, "is derived from the folk tale with its emphasis on common structure and conventions that relate directly to its social context" (p. 148). Overlaying all this, and most important, is language, which forms the principal roadway to a

commonsense understanding of society. "Commonsense" (to borrow a word from Roger Silverstone) is the knowledge that informs everyday life (Silverstone, 1988, p. 36).

Thus, both narrative (or 'oral' referents depending on the choice of word) make use of the same verbal or literal logic embedded in storytelling. This is a logic used to interpret our day-to-day activities or the so-called realities of life. Fiske explains and perhaps at the most simplistic level that: "oral logic...suggests that television's meanings are arrived at through the devices of spoken discourse fused with visual images...a process which offers us myths with which we are already familiar, and seeks to convince us that these myths are appropriate to their context" (1978, p. 112).

Similarly, in his analysis of television's narrative, Silverstone identifies its principal elements as logic, chronologic, myth, mimesis, story and argument (p. 33). There is much to be said about these concepts in terms of how Silverstone views them, but there is not enough space here for detailed descriptions. Suffice it to say, narrative logic, in Silverstone's eyes, is the events or circumstances out of which stories evolved - usually as a means of resolving the dilemmas of social life. Chronicle, on the other hand, is the logic of the individual story, how it is put together, the beginning, the middle, the end and so on. The concepts of myth and mimesis have to do mainly with the

structure and content of television text, especially its need to present reality. Finally, story and argument which cannot, by any means, be considered linear routes, are paths that draw on, and draw in the mythic and the mimetic (Silverstone, p. 34-35).

Evidently, this is a more extensive exploration of the way television narrative works to generate meaning. But there is no doubt that both Fiske and Silverstone agree that television is a visual and aural continuum of human experience.

In the words of Silverstone: "television as a story-telling medium [is] a contemporary expression of a persistent dimension of human culture: as that which is preoccupied with the core concerns of daily life entertaining, reassuring, defining, translating, controlling, pleasing in the re-emerging oral culture of the mid and late twentieth century". Later in the same paper, he states that:

the skills it requires, the particular character of its communication, its ephemerality, and its displacement through image and story of customary perceptions of time and space identify it as a 'oral medium, par excellence' (p. 20-21).

No doubt, this phenomenon - television as

storyteller, is far more complex than it appears. At a deeper level, there are several considerations to be taken into account with regards television's function as a reflection or expression of society. First and foremost, it is important to understand that television is oral in a different way from the orality of preliterate societies. Its orality is compromised by centuries of literacy and print which make it a much more sophisticated, technological extension of storytelling. That is to say, similar to storytelling, television function as a medium which passes information from person to person but it does so by more mechanistic means influenced by the development of printing (and other technical instrument which draws in, or upon this technology, for example, the camera). The universal set of practices by which raw materials of oral culture are transformed into television is a set which derives from literature - the text, myth, language, and reception (to name the essential ones). This said, in order to understand television's role as a storyteller in contemporary society there are at least three key points which needs to be discussed (a) the disparities within the text itself; (b) the emergence of the text in relation to myth and discourse and; (d) the reception of the text and its ideological relations with society.

These issues are obviously immense and difficult to tackle in a short chapter such as this. However, I want here

just to sketch their basic principles which informs the function of television - the storyteller. It is important to note that my approach is modeled on Silverstone's analysis of the medium, as I find his work to be the most informative on the subject to date.

Text

The text, as mentioned earlier, is made up of images, words, sounds, etc. Accordingly, we have to think in terms of the social significance of these varied inscriptions, that is, how does a reader derive meaning from the text? According to Silverstone, there are "parallel dimensions of mediation: from society and the individual to text; and from text to society and the individual" (p. 31). This means that the materials found in the text are inevitably taken from social experience and fed back into it, in which case, both the material and the social are interdependent, thus enabling us to interpret and negotiate meanings.

As a 'story', therefore, (one which is influenced by reality) the text of today's television programmes invariably attempts to resolve the basic dilemmas of social life: the dilemmas of gender, work, morality and so on. The text also tends to have a beginning, middle and end; the functional logic of hero, of test, of search, of success and

failure. This is consistent with Vladimir Propp's pathbreaking study on the Morphology of the Folktale, (1928) of which he writes:

Morphologically, a tale may be termed any development proceeding from villainy or lack, through intermediary functions to marriage, or to other functions, employed as a denouement. Terminal functions are at times a reward, a gain or in general, the liquidation of misfortune, an escape from pursuit (1968, p. 92).

Thus, similar to a tale, television's text follows a particular structural pattern. But most important, the television text always manifests a concern, both within its structure and within its content for a need to present reality. "Reality" is understood not as a natural and accurate view of live actuality (as it is generally perceived), but rather, reality as a reproduction of the forms of "live actuality." This is evident mostly in dramatic, fictional and factual programming (Silverstone, p. 33). On these grounds, the structure of television's text is linked in obvious ways to that of folktales (except that folktales are more an exaggerated portrayal of, rather than a mechanical reproduction of reality). But what of television's relation to myth, a fundamental aspect of storytelling?

Myth

It is not difficult to see that television, like myth, attempts to identify basic levels of cultural experiences, manifested in words and deeds throughout history, concerned with articulating the core concerns and preoccupations of its host culture (Silverstone, p. 230). Thus, as expressed in forms such as news, documentary, serial drama, and so on, are accounts of the world which aim to provide reassurance and pleasure. Television therefore operates like myth by reinforcing and defining the society in which it exists. Of course, this is true of all forms of culture. However, myth is similar yet different from other cultural forms in that it also helps one to make sense of the unfamiliar by bringing together otherwise incompatible elements (for example, the world of the everyday and the world of the strange) (Silverstone, p. 37).

In storytelling, myths function more or less in the same capacity. Levi-Strauss, in his exploration of the structure of folktales, came to realize that myths among other things (despite their manifest implausibilities) represent above all, a culture thinking about itself. He writes:

each type of story belongs to
a given group, a given
family, a given lineage, or
to a given clan, and is

trying to explain its fate, which can be a successful one or a disastrous one, or be intended to account for the present, or be attempting to validate claims for rights which have since disappeared (1978, p. 24).

It seems that in terms of merging television and storytelling the concept of myth would not present much difficulty to understand or to convey.

Language

The rhetoric (or language) of the medium plays a key role in reinforcing reality: it draws on the common and familiar as a way of inducing response to the text. Television's persuasiveness is based on the fact that it assumes that both speaker and audience share the same orienting assumptions. Hence, what is spoken on television is taken to be true of what is heard in contemporary social life. As was discussed in the Jamaican case, this also occurs in storytelling, except that the language of storytelling is more localized.

Reception

This term, refers directly to the readers's interaction with television's text, which means, at this

point, we must call into question factors such as ideology and hegemony (intrinsic to both reception and production). Evading these issues would be naive on our part. But as a word of caution, I do not pretend to know all the answers to the overwhelming complex relationship between the text and the irrationalities of everyday life. I take this to be the current task of media scholars. Suffice it to say, power is indeed a variable in the creation of television's text. We may not know all the whys and wherefores but it does exist.

The model of storytelling presented in television, which I have sketched out above, depends on the two legs of production and reception, both grounded in the discourses and events of everyday life. In a certain sense there is a dialectical relationship between the "materiality of textual expression and the materiality of quotidian language and social interaction" (Silverstone, p. 40). Both are products of creativity, both are based on the experience of producers and receivers in such a way that, television pretends to be real life - "where 'the people' are 'what the people want'" (Hall, p. 105). Hence, television is more domestic than situational for it must, at all times, address the needs of the majority - the large undifferentiated homogeneous mass of people as opposed to individual groups with minority interests and needs (a fundamental characteristic of storytelling).

Underpinning all this, of course, is the power of

hegemonic forces. As demonstrated with television's text, we have to be equally concerned with the intentions of the networks or individual professionals operating the medium. For television's role as storyteller may be easily hampered or enhanced by the decisions of these giants. They, for example, could insist upon the use of the established conventions of television to the exclusion of other alternative forms of production which would facilitate the transmission of storytelling on television or any other folk media for that matter.

So far, I have traced the various components of television's text with the intent to illuminate its narrative (storytelling) structure. I have demonstrated that the text itself reflects human experience and vice versa; that myth serves as an agent of reassurance and reinforcement of cultural identity; that language is used as an element of persuasion; that there is a ritual dimension to the overall structure of television evident in its social orientation and production; and finally, that reception is based on negotiations between reader and text along with the influence of unsuspecting power relations. These, then, inform television's role as a storyteller in the literary sense.

When it comes to performance, as previously discussed, it is not the same intimate experience in television as it is in oral storytelling. In storytelling,

performance is governed by an assumed responsibility to the audience, evident in the choice of language used to communicate moral or cultural messages.

In contrast, television performance is principally for entertainment. This does not mean that entertainment is not a vital part of storytelling but with television we basically hinge all our expectations on the joy we receive from watching the medium. We are not as particularly concerned as in storytelling with facial expressions, the modulation of voice, hands and body movements as we are with "good visuals" and the rapid fluidity of television programmes. All of these goes into making television fun, but ironically they place us at a distance from the medium. This is, in part, what makes television entertaining - the knowledge that no matter what social dilemma is mediated; as a viewer one is placed 'outside' that immediate catastrophic experience. This is different from storytelling wherein to "the storyteller, it is of the first importance that he/[she] should not distract his audience from his story, the more impersonal he can become the better" (Burrell, 1975, p. 42). Such practice enables the listener to visualize, to see his or her story for him or herself. In this capacity, performance is more experiential and is not as alienating as living out one's experience through television personalities or skilfully laid out visuals which imposes images of one's story upon oneself.

Thus television is very much a 'storyteller' in its own way, but there are certain areas (specifically with respect to performance) in which it diverges from storytelling. Nevertheless, these discussions have provided evidence to suggest that the convergence of television and storytelling may be possible.

Conclusion

Chapter three has highlighted the problems involved with regards the proposed convergence of television and storytelling. It discusses the similarities and differences in the structure of the two media and presents some hope for their convergence. Evident by this analysis is the need to explore further the conditions required to make the merger of television and storytelling effective in promoting folk culture in Jamaica. The concluding chapter hence serves to explore the conditions that may be necessary.

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CHAPTER 4

THE CONVERGENCE OF TELEVISION AND STORYTELLING: HOPE FOR JAMAICAN FOLK CULTURE

The Convergence Approach

The term "convergence" has been used repeatedly both directly and indirectly throughout this work particularly in reference to modern and traditional media. But I have yet to give a precise definition of the term. The convergence approach, as one may infer from its usage within the domain of this thesis, does not present modern media only as "assassins" of traditional culture but rather assumes the coexistence of the two forms. Such a view is a radical departure from the usual theoretical and methodological assumptions regarding old and new media inherent in the dominant diffusionist and dependency approaches to communication and development. As discussed in chapter one, they maintain that there is an irreconcilable conflict between the two forms. The convergence approach, however, argues otherwise. One may ask, is this a new concept of development theory?

In most scholarship on communication and development one almost never encounters the term convergence. With the exception of Dov Shinar's work on Palestinian Voices I have not discovered to date, any other

direct usage of the term convergence approach (Shinar, p. 169). But there have been other theories developed within the field of communication which borders on the same, if not a similar conceptual framework. Shinar himself cites works done by "Guerreiro Ramos (1970), Eisenstadt (1974), Geertz (1975), Tehranian (1975), and Portes (1976)" (Shinar, 1981, p.11) as examples of theories which can be gathered under the umbrella of the "convergence approach."

Other than the above the only other clearly defined concept describing the enmeshing of old and new media systems is the "Integrated Approach" or "Integration" as it is frequently called, (see Mowlana and Wilson, p.18). The term integration is widely used, especially among Third world scholars advocating the marriage of mass media and folk media. In this respect, both integration and convergence are theoretically synonymous and both are relatively new phenomena when compared to the two long-standing approaches to communication and development.

Convergence, however, is the concept which I hold to be most applicable to the study at hand, mainly because the term itself implies different elements coming together in the presence of change with each maintaining some of their own distinct characteristics or function (continuity), a situation which I hope will be true for the convergence of television and storytelling. The potentiality for transformation with "continuity" (otherwise phrased as

"continuity and change" by Wang and Dissanayake) (1984, p. xxi) is implied in the following words of Shinar which serves as a very concrete description of the convergence approach, one which I strongly support.

...this [convergence] approach views change and development as the "interplay between institutional change and cultural reconstruction." There are no mythical predetermined paths, requirements, or results, as in previous theories... different rates and patterns of change- may emerge out of these interactions, all depending on the ability and the willingness of a society to develop mechanisms for dealing with the symbolic and structural implications of these processes (Shinar, 1987, p.170).

As one can see this analysis places strong emphasis on change which I have already argued is unavoidable when bringing together two opposing elements such as the modern and the traditional. However, what one has to realize is that change does not mean a complete reconstruction of form. Indeed, certain aspects of technology and traditional culture would be altered in light of convergence but we rely as well on a blend of their unique features (which has to be maintained) to carve for us new structures or forces. This is what is meant by "change and development," and the advantage of having new structures- structures which are not

predetermined - is that it leaves the course open to a variety of results which can be harnessed to fit one's communication objectives.

This has some bearing on the proposed convergence of television and storytelling. Obviously, some changes could occur on the part of both media when the two come together. The degree or levels of changes cannot be predetermined. However, what may occur is a partial, not a full convergence of television and storytelling. Because storytelling is so inextricable tied to cultural values and practices it may undergo greater changes than the technologically bounded television. Change, nevertheless is inevitable in both media. The end result could be a hybrid, or new mode of communication which bears the characteristics of the "old" and the "new" but which is different from the original television and storytelling as we know them.

I estimate that it is their structure (the way the media are presented) rather than their cultural or functional values that are most likely to change. For example, the standard format of television broadcasting may have to be altered to accomodate the more oral structure of storytelling. Storytelling, itself, particularly in the area of performance may have to be altered to fit the technical features of television. At the bottom of all this, the type of convergence that occurs (be it a complete or full convergence) depends on the way in which different cultures

or societies respond to the communication and cultural needs of their people. Thus, convergence may be employed differently by different nations. Who does one wish to reach? what information does one wish to relay? what is the purpose of the information? are examples of questions which could determine how convergence may function in a country.

Folk Media

Today the convergence of traditional folk media and modern mass media is being experimented with in many Third World countries. Having realized that "many of the formal mass media have not related to rural peoples, [that they are] written in languages only urban elites understood and about topics that had very little to do with the 80 per cent of the Third World labelled 'peasantry' " (Lent, 1979, p.23), Third World media professionals have sought to adapt folk media to mass media such as radio, television and film. Folk media, according to these professionals are:

Traditionally...theme-carriers, not simply as a form of communication, but as an act of recreating and sharing a common world of emotions, values, ideals and dream. [And] above all...given to creating a face-to-face situation in the field between communication and the receiver of the message, a situation that

augments instant feedback
possibility (Ranganath, 1980,
p.7).

In short, folk media are based on society's socio-cultural values and traditions providing effective face-to-face communication, the benefits of which have been recognized and have stimulated interest in its integration with modern media.

The two most extensive international studies ever to be conducted on the "coalition" of traditional media with mass media occurred in 1972 and in 1974 at two experts' "seminar-cum-workshops on the Integrated use of Folk and Mass media in Family Planning Communication, sponsored jointly by UNESCO and UNFPA (United Nations' Fund for Population Activities)" (Parmar, 1975. p.120). These two conferences were particularly concerned with the process of integration for the purpose of transmitting developmental messages, an objective which has been commonly linked with modern and folk media in almost all developing countries. Additionally, media practitioners/researchers have also become "interested in reviving and sustaining traditional folk media forms as a part of a rich cultural heritage" (Parmar, p.132). But it is, and has been my argument, that the convergence of mass media and folk media could also serve to revive and promote folk culture which in many countries is in danger of extinction. The value of such a

convergence is illustrated in the writing of Ranganath (1980) who stresses the importance of folk culture to society. He writes:

Revival and promotion of folk culture is essential at a time when technological advancement and urbanization are cutting its roots. Cultural tradition is not something obscurantist and something like looking back into the past. Cultural traditions, it is now realised more and more, are at the root of the human mind. Unless the human psyche is continuously watered and fertilised by streams coming to it from our cultural tradition, by the end of this century, we will have a world inherited by neurotics...This is the critical phase we have now entered with the domination of science and technology. With the use of folk media you will be...helping the survival of the human race (p. 9-10).

This view clearly supports my point that the cultivation and utilization of folk media with modern mass media is crucial to the survival of folk culture in Jamaica, an island which struggles under the bombardment of foreign television. As a means to further illustrate the importance of the convergence approach to cultural continuity in Jamaica, I will outline some of the successful experiments that have resulted from convergence within the international

arena. This will be followed by an examination of the conditions in Jamaica which could facilitate convergence. I will conclude with recommendations for combining modern communication technology with folk media to enhance traditional cultural expression within Jamaica and the Caribbean as a whole.

Modern And Traditional Blend

The use of indigenous media with modern media systems has been extensively documented in cases of communication research in India, Rural Asia, Africa, Japan and Iran (see Lent, 1979, Valbuena, 1987, Wang and Dissanayake, 1984). Documentation has also been presented in one or two cases of cultural development in the Caribbean. We will proceed to look at each country\region respectively.

First, it is also worth noting that Katz, upon discussing the marriage of folk media to broadcasting pinpointed four reasons why they often do not blend well. He states that the reason could be because, 1) in the developing countries traditional arts were already dying before the impact of broadcasting, for example, Iranian storytelling, Thai classical dance-drama and the Kabuki actors in Japan. In some respect tourism is also blamed for the decline of folk media, 2) Traditional forms have a limited repertoire that is easily exhausted by radio or

television, 3) Open, village square settings do not adapt well to tiny in-house broadcasting, 4) Because of the festive and occasional character of most folk performances it is difficult to make them into regularly scheduled programs.

It is clear that to be successful at bridging the gaps which exist between modern and folk media, the nature and resilience of the folk form, especially its adaptability to broadcasting systems, must be carefully assessed. We can assume that these factors (and perhaps others) have been examined by the aforementioned countries\regions for despite what seem to be formidable obstacles, they have been successful in welding folk media to mass media formats.

In the case of India, various forms of Indian music, puppetry, dance and drama have been adapted to modern media. Lent informs us that with respect to music the "Bangalore Centre in India, in its research, concluded that traditional song patterns can be adapted to broadcasting but that visual art forms demanded considerable care. The Bangalore researchers said that the messages are more credible if the folk medium is performed in its natural environment, not in a radio or television studio" (1979, p.42). This is one example which demonstrates the importance of maintaining out-of-doors performance and indigenous styles to promote the continuity of folk forms on television. In one experiment with televised puppetry in

Taiwan (Wang, 1984) the merger of modern and folk media lost its earlier popularity because traditional bag puppetry became completely removed from its cultural moorings. Every production of the televised series was done in a studio; not only that, but changes were made at the expense of the original features of bag puppetry. In Thailand, the most recent traditional art form to be successfully adapted to television has been the Lakon Saw, or sung drama, of northern Thailand. This televised version of the sung drama proved to be very effective in disseminating development-oriented communication messages. The co-ordinators of the experiment found that the choice of traditional media performing groups or artists was critical to the success of the project. They also concluded that "regularly televised Lakon Saw had a strong impact on the village elders" (see Valbuena, 1989, p.28-29). It is evident by this example that one has to rely on the input of traditional sectors of society. The marriage of folk and mass media cannot be restricted to only those who work in the field of television production.

Finally, in Japan and Hong Kong (two fitting examples for the present study) "traditional story-telling techniques have been applied to broadcasting. Kamishibai, the traditional Japanese story-telling technique which normally uses 12 pictures with a dramatic script read by a narrator, and which depends upon repetition of message, has

been used on television to teach Bible Stories" (Lent, 1975, p.43). This shows that by careful and creative means folk forms (stories) can be adapted to television. Perhaps in some cases, for example, Hong Kong (Ka-fat Pang, 1984) storytelling themes may have to adapt to contemporary issues more suitable to the dramatic nature of television nonetheless, their basic form should remain.

Recently, two Caribbean islands, namely Guadeloupe and Trinidad, have made attempts to bridge the discordance between modern and traditional folk forms. This approach to broadcasting, however, is still at the embryonic stage within the region. The benefits of using folk media as independent systems in developmental communication have rapidly caught on in most, if not all, Caribbean islands, but these islands are still lagging behind in recognizing the benefits of converging folk with modern media systems.

In Trinidad, where "convergence" is slowly being cultivated, Banyan Productions Ltd. has been successful in producing a weekly-half-hour television programme entitled Gayelle (the traditional arena for the cockfight) that preserves local folklore and looks at social reality in Trinidad and Tobago (Nettleford, 1989, Lent, 1990, Brown and Sanatan, 1987). Also, we are informed that in an effort to "preserve the authenticity of the steel band, a group in 1980 persuaded Trinidad and Tobago Television to film the steel band concert outdoors, not in confining studios"

(Lent, 1980, p.292). This proves once more the benefits of outdoor production, but more importantly, it demonstrates that one has to choose carefully the type of folk form most appropriate to one's objectives (whether it may be the preservation of culture or as a means for social comment). The cockfight, in this case, serves as a good vehicle for social criticism.

The Guadeloupean experiment with marrying traditional structures to broadcasting is different from what we have thus far discussed, but it highlights an important point quite relevant to television production. Guadeloupe does not utilize a specific folk culture as such, but rather takes an ideological position in utilizing the traditional Creole language in the context of a radio programme called Radyo Tanbou, developed to promote the Guadeloupean cultural identity. As Alvina Ruprecht describes it,

[T]he journalist shares his voice with the collective listening voice, he also shares his act of speaking...This collective subject has specific characteristics which are defined by the information content. It confirms its Caribbean cultural Identity by rejecting expressions of French national culture. This means it recognizes the ideological function of the imposition of a national language, so it talks creole

and refuses to talk French. It refuses a homogeneous national culture of European origin and affirms itself as a culturally syncretic subject by emphasizing the traditions of the various ethnic groups which make up the population of the island: East Indian, Middle Eastern, African and European (p.127).

The Guadeloupean case indicates that broadcasting systems, if blended wisely with traditional structures, can be effective in the empowerment of people, and in restoring their cultural dignity. This illustration touches at the very root of this thesis. It reinforces my view that whereas the other orthodox approaches to development have failed, the convergence approach has the potential to promote the survival of the Jamaican folk culture, a process which could prevent the death of Jamaicans' cultural pride.

In my view, the promotion of cultural traditions is essential to a nation's identity, and this is an important aspect of development often overlooked by development planners. With the convergence approach I seek to foster "human development," put differently, self-actualization or the "full-flowering" of human persons. This type of development is increasingly becoming important to the survival of a Jamaican\Caribbean identity as expressed in the words of Rev. Allan Kirton in his address to the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) and the World

Association for Christian Communication (WACC) in their joint regional consultation of Communication for Human Development. He states:

[T]he promotion of Caribbean development [has] to involve attention, not only to the physical and material benightedness which [are] crying out for redress, but even more importantly to the spiritual and rather intangible aspects of the human person. This raised questions concerning human dignity and cultural sovereignty - elements that would also contribute to the development of what we used to call back then 'the new Caribbean man.' In these days we would more wisely say 'the authentic Caribbean person' - a person who can stand erect, walk tall and, with respect for every other person, assert her or his selfhood (Caribbean Contact, 1985, p.9).

In the 21st Century when the Caribbean (and of course, other Third World nations) are recoiling under the attack of Western television we need to embrace the convergence approach as one of the possible solutions to the problem of cultural extinction. The above examples of convergence are in the main positive and supportive of the idea that traditional media can work effectively with modern mass media in different types of developmental projects. I

specifically seek the spiritual development of the Jamaican people, one way of achieving this could be by converging television and storytelling. Not only have these media shown potential to be merged at the structural level but within contemporary Jamaica itself, television and storytelling still co-exist in the Jamaican socio-cultural activities as will be demonstrated below.

The Co existence of Television and storytelling in Jamaica

One of the mistakes Caribbean media scholars tend to make about traditional structures and practices in the Caribbean is that they are unable to survive alongside modern technology. These scholars have been so fixated on the so-called "power" of the mass media that they invariably ignore the assistance informal communication networks give to the mass media within their society. For example, the current scholarship on the function of traditional media in modern day Jamaica and the Caribbean is extremely limited; much more could have been written if more communication scholars (within the Caribbean) had taken the initiative to explore the status of traditional infrastructures in the presence of modernization.

Nevertheless, even with the limited information available on the subject, there is ample evidence to prove that Caribbean people do utilize their informal communication networks along with modern communication

systems. Television and storytelling is a case in point. In studying traditional communication processes in the Caribbean (informal and interpersonal) Lent reports:

When radio and television made their debuts in the British West Indies, social commentators questioned the effects they would have on traditional communication patterns. With television, for example, "will the good conversation in the homes come to an end?" or "will the folktales be dropped by the wayside," they asked...On Trinidad another commentator worried that television's advent would do away with bedtime stories and folktales, and instead, children would fall asleep to the sounds of "Huckleberry Hound" or "Lassie" (1977, p.180).

But Lent further informs us that studies have found that "modern media do not simply supersede or displace other channels; 'rather they link existing networks while giving rise to a host of dependent nets which service, disseminate, and frequently transform their product" (p. 180-81). Storytelling hence has not dwindled in Jamaica since television broadcasting began "it still goes on but now, in many cases, in response to speech sounds emitted by...television amplifiers rather than by human voice boxes" (Lent, p.181).

This is not uncommon. In fact, it is standard practice to find Jamaicans conversing with their television screens or amongst themselves (if in a group) while watching a television show. This practice did not escape Lent during his study. He observed that, "rural people in Jamaica, sitting on the stoops of village shops watching television, will, during the course of a discussion program, argue about what they are seeing and hearing" (p.181).

Alleyne, in his study on Jamaican cultural roots, also noted the ease with which Jamaicans have adapted their storytelling practices to television. He writes:

...in 'folk' tradition, crowds gathered around storytellers actively participated in the performance - they responded at appropriate points in the story, join in singing the songs that punctuated the story, and collectively performed the coda. In the town, this tradition is still not dead. For example, cinema audiences get closely caught up in the films they are watching. They interact with the dialogue and constantly respond to events on the screen...Even television has not completely eradicated this style. Jamaicans sitting in front of their television screens constantly talk back at the performers (Alleyne, p.160).

Indeed, "this tradition is not dead." Jamaicans still have

the impetus to tell stories. Whether seated in their backyards or around a television set, the desire remains the same - it manifests itself in the constant creation of stories (traditional and new) that help to strengthen the Jamaican identity.

But what threatens Jamaicans right now is the loss of this Jamaican identity. We saw earlier (at the structural and now at the social level) that the potential exists to converge television and storytelling. It is my conclusion, therefore, that the two (television and storytelling) can be put together to promote cultural continuity and thus maintain the island's cultural identity. This process is vital not only on the basis of my views but its necessity has been emphasized by observations made by other Third World communicators. For example, at the WACC's congress on communication held in Manila, October 1988, it was said that "much of public's communication in the Third World [Jamaica] takes place in languages which are not understood by many. This tends to relegate the importance of the indigenous languages and dialects, which are rooted in people's culture," a situation which has to be "remedied in order to involve people in the communication process and promote cultural integrity and renewal" (Caribbean Contact, 1989, p.10).

On the basis of this reality (one which Jamaican and Caribbean media professionals refuse to address) if

storytelling is adapted to television, this could be a very good way of restoring some of the Jamaican cultural integrity - an integrity which is constantly being destroyed by the biased Europeanisation and Americanization of the island's peoples and their culture. For storytelling, in its capacity as a popular folk culture, is one of the few traditional forms that has brought respect and recognition to Jamaican patois by freeing it from the place of shame to which it has been consigned over the years. The reason is that, stories and storytelling provide an outlet whereby Jamaicans can display a sense of pride in using their Creole tongue - perhaps the only time they truly ignore its denigration.

It is this type of uninhibited, proud assertion of one's self and one's culture that Jamaicans need to carry over onto their television screens, so that they can reflect on themselves and in turn have themselves reflected in a process which will continually nurture and strengthen their cultural growth. But there are certain conditions which are necessary to bring about this type of cultural revival via convergence, which I will now discuss.

Conditions For Convergence

In view of all that has been discussed, it is clear that the conditions for convergence do not rest only with

structural inequalities but also with the social structure [ie, the owners and administrators] who govern the function of the media. As such, I will be particularly concerned with issues raised in each chapter which seem to hold both structural and social implications for the convergence of television and storytelling.

Firstly, in order for the convergence of television and storytelling to be successful in Jamaica, the Jamaican government and local media professionals should offer greater support to their traditional folk culture. This important aspect of the Jamaican society should be recognized for the rich contributions it can make to local television productions. Unfortunately, as I have already demonstrated, the Jamaican folk tradition has been "largely ignored" and treated as "frivolous" by the electronic mass media on the island. Convergence is virtually impossible unless such negative attitudes change.

Secondly, for storytelling or any other folk culture to be a vibrant part of television production, producers need to cultivate deeper knowledge of their own folk culture and not only in the traditions and technology of metropolitan broadcasting. That such a knowledge is conspicuously absent among far too many responsible for what goes on the Jamaican television screen, is most certainly a problem when it comes to converging the two media. Jamaican media professionals need to know which folk form can or

cannot mix well with television broadcasting; they need to be able to determine the best way to use the remnants of dying traditions; as well as how to devise effective ways of blending old and new media systems. These can only be accomplished if Jamaican producers are knowledgeable about Jamaican folk tradition.

Thirdly, the Jamaican government, its broadcasting personnel and the people in general should be committed to local productions. Such commitment should culminate in the development of a broadcasting policy which will guarantee the convergence of old and new structures and not just counteract the massive influx of foreign television. Convergence will not last unless some form of legislation ensures that it does.

Fourthly, and most important, if the convergence approach is to make any sense- all those who are called upon to take decisions as to what goes on television should recognize and accept that blending television and storytelling together could bring about the transformation of both media. Thus, the age-old tendency to slavishly follow the metropolitan models of broadcasting has to be abandoned. These models are much too restrictive in terms of developing alternative, or more accurately, indigenous forms of programming that can accommodate the changes that come with converging old and new media. The challenge to Jamaican media people is to discover programs that capture the spirit

of storytelling in the process of its confrontation with television - a confrontation which facilitates change but which does not jeopardize the fundamental characteristics of the two media.

I propose that one possible way of achieving the above is to create a type of Interactive Television, one which draws on some (because it is impossible to use all) of the techniques and social uses of television and storytelling. For example, we could adapt a similar approach to television broadcasting as developed by the Guadeloupean broadcasters in their radio production (Radyo Tanbou). In the same vein as this model, storytelling could be broadcast as a program which caters primarily to the common Jamaican folk, soliciting their views over the screen in creole rather than in English.

Such a program would necessitate conditions that are practical to the performance and filming of storytelling. Therefore, I suggest that filming takes place out-of-doors rather than in a studio. This would ensure a more accurate reproduction of the performance, a reproduction which would capture the impromptu gestures and vocal expressions of both the performer and the audience.

As well, the public should be encouraged to write and tell their stories (original and traditional) on shooting locations. This would serve as an opportunity for them to voice their pent-up frustrations, allowing them to

experience though momentarily and vicariously a better lifestyle. An additional benefit of this kind of open participation is that, drawing stories from individual personal experience (as people tends to do) would never exhaust the supply of stories. As such there would always be a basis for storytelling production which would serve as a social comment as well as a promotional tool for the Jamaican folk culture.

What I have here outlined of course, is simply a suggestion; it does not eliminate other approaches that could be taken towards converging television and storytelling. I hope my thoughts on the subject will serve more as a means to generate further proposals rather than the means to avoid other discussions on the topic.

Conclusion

If government leaders and media personnel are willing to be creative and to take the chance to experiment with new forms, the convergence of television and storytelling can be achieved. Therefore, Jamaica, the Caribbean and other Third World nations have no excuse not to adapt this approach as a way of preserving their cultural identity. On the basis of this view, I make the following recommendations to all those considering the prospect of bridging the gap between folk and modern mass media.

Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the author's own observations as well as the arguments of other scholars who have studied both modern and traditional communication networks. (see Katz, 1977, Lent, 1979, Shinar, 1981, Valbuena, 1989 to name a few). I thus propose that:

1. Caribbean (Third World) nations concerned with the survival of their traditional folk culture and other cultural problems should explore further the utilization of traditional media in concert with mass media in their communication research projects. Research should concentrate on areas such as:
 - a. Traditions and traditional forms. There is a wide range of folk culture like the vigorous popular theatre, folk music etc, which need to be examined to see the level at which they can be adapted to modern broadcasting systems.
 - b. Social structures. Government leadership, symbolic systems, technologies and types of audiences have to be analyzed for their influence on the relationship between old and new media in order to find appropriate ways to erase the conflicts between the two.
 - c. Functional division of labour. Within every society this has to be explored between modern and traditional systems to

determine the level of sophistication at which modern media becomes an alienating factor, and the degree to which traditional input is necessary to resolve the problem.

2. Traditional people in rural and urban areas should be consulted with regards the use of traditional folk performances with modern mass media. Their input can be physical (employing specific skills) written, or verbal, depending on the ability of the individual or groups.

3. Media Institutions should initiate measures to identify and reach out to traditional media performing groups (e.g. Sistren in Jamaica) whose art forms have potentialities for carrying and enforcing messages of cultural dignity.

4. Producers and broadcasters would do well to immerse themselves in their own culture- to observe and record traditional performances in their natural surroundings and, on the basis of the knowledge gained from this exercise, plan schedules and invent programs which incorporate traditional media without harming their cultural tradition.

5. Finally, in order to ensure the above, Jamaica, the Caribbean and other Third World nations should formulate effective broadcasting policies geared towards promoting the convergence of modern and traditional media. Policies of

this type, should determine the way in which the media should be utilized (by owners and practitioners) to eliminate the heavy reliance on mass media - not to mention foreign television.

We are all fully aware that it is easy to make recommendations - most things are easier said than done. Bearing this in mind, I would like to suggest an experimental project which media owners could undertake in their attempt to converge storytelling and television. This experiment could probably be used for other folk forms as well. I propose that a weekly half hour televised series of storytelling be developed and that this (what could be called a) special "cultural segment" be fully funded by the government. This means that there would be no advertising during this show. The government would be fully responsible for the cost of production. Some production cost could be defrayed by calling upon local performing groups and individuals to volunteer their talent. In addition, producers could devise ways in which to be kept informed of storytelling gatherings. On such occasions they could visit and film these performances on location. There would be no need to hire or train new staff for this project, the television station should work with their present personnel. Also, independent television workers and media students could be invited to participate. Chances are these people may be interested in such a venture. If the project is

successful, the producers could then examine other ways of gaining some local financial support without this jeopardizing the style or purpose of the program.

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CONCLUSION

In communication as well as other aspects of development the modernization and dependency concepts which in the 1960's exalted the supremacy of the mass media have been reconsidered during this decade. Today, particularly in Third World countries, mass media systems are geared towards the rural people and the marginalized in society. Traditional forms are now recognized as vital components of communication and cultural mobility. But these media working independently of each other are insufficient in terms of counteracting the problem of cultural imperialism\extinction.

The "Convergence Approach" as one can see by the discussions and illustrations presented in this study offers an effective means of maintaining a nations' cultural sovereignty. It includes a "wide range of patterns, conditions and techniques for the activation of communication networks" (Shinar, 1981, p.16) which can safeguard the extinction of local culture if implemented wisely. The case of Jamaica demonstrates what could be achieved in the area of cultural, and more so, human development through the convergence approach.

For three hundred years the Jamaican society has been conditioned (through the process of 'colonization' and

currently with the help of modern mass media) to reject their own African/folk culture. The influence of colonial domination has lead many Jamaicans to believe in the superiority of British and (in the twentieth century) western culture - to the exclusion of folk forms from Jamaica's development plans. The mass media, principally television, has unfortunately, been co-opted into furthering the entrenchment of foreign cultures and values in Jamaica. Such situations (which have persisted over the years) undermine the force of Jamaica's protestations of "cultural imperialism." It has been found that Jamaica's leaders and media owners have not taken any measures either to promote, or to preserve, the local culture which they are so fearful of losing.

This study has explored the status of folk culture in Jamaica in the context of social change. I have attempted to demonstrate the importance of storytelling (a folk culture) in raising the consciousness of the Jamaican people; and in developing and strengthening their cultural pride. The central argument of the study is that indigenous communication systems are crucial to development and are more effective if converged with modern technology.

The analysis of communication and development in Jamaica reveals a major flaw in Jamaica's development plans in refusing to provide a place for folk culture, and in effect, folk media systems. Upon comparing, what one scholar

defined as a "laissez-faire" response to media policy in Jamaica with Jamaicans' attitude towards indigenous television production it has been found that Jamaicans are very eager to consume local productions when they are available. The responsibility for ensuring the production of local shows thus rests (to a large degree) with the owners and operators of Jamaica's television industry.

Within Jamaica (the Third World in General) there is a chronic problem of dependency on western television - created mainly by inadequate funding for local productions (exacerbated by the inertia of media owners). The convergence approach offers a potential solution to this over-dependency on foreign TV. The Jamaican case and others, reveal that it can be to a nation's advantage to converge indigenous and modern communication systems. The process is not new, nor impossible. It has been proven that Jamaican people desire both change and stability; they are as much attracted by the new as by the old. For example, amidst the most highly technological advancements, Jamaicans still maintain the impetus to tell stories. Storytelling's role as an informal information network is as valuable in Jamaican society today, as it was in the colonial era.

Careful assessment of television and storytelling structures has shown that both media have the potential to be merged for more effective communicative purposes. Will this merger destroy storytelling as we know it? or will it

survive in a somewhat different capacity? Undoubtedly, storytelling could go through serious changes in its confrontation with television. The extent of these changes however cannot be easily determined. Nevertheless, contrary to the beliefs of earlier development communication scholars and researchers, it has been proven that storytelling has not been completely replaced or destroyed by television. Neither has television's popularity changed in its function as a medium of information and entertainment.

What we have witnessed in the case of storytelling, is a hope for future convergence of other folk and modern mass media systems, the benefits of which could mean longer life for traditional folk culture. The type of convergence would largely be determined by policy makers. It is their responsibility to identify their values, the goals of their nation, and the contributions the convergence approach can make toward achieving that end. For example, if a nation is oriented toward information as a means to self-actualization (as is the case here), then the convergence approach should be applied toward that end. The present practice in Jamaica of allowing market forces to determine the values of the nation cannot continue. This only serve (as we have seen) to erode some of the essential attitudes which help to build a society - cultural pride and racial dignity are two typical examples.

Policy makers need to ask what combination of

communication systems best suit their purposes, while contributing to the overall welfare of the society. They need to assess the political, economic and social costs and benefits of blending old and new systems. If traditional media are to meet the challenge of modern technology, policy makers must decide which is more important, the content and form of traditional media or their cultural mediating and interpreting function. Decisions must be taken based on the need of the society or the context within which the information system is to be applied.

Above all the successful convergence of traditional and modern communication systems also depends on a moral imperative: policy makers and members of indigenous networks must first accept the notion of convergence, they must recognize a need for this approach, and they must be committed towards traditional cultural activities. If the importance of traditional culture is not recognized, if human development is deemed insignificant and if there is no will to implement the convergence approach no amount of theorizing, this study itself, would not make much difference to communication and culture in Jamaica, the Caribbean, or any other Third World country. Therefore, if nothing else, I hope that I have inspired other communication scholars and researchers to consider the convergence approach as a 'new' and reliable course to development communication.

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