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Contradiction as insight: autoethnography, narrative inquiry, and decolonizing educational research in Jamaica

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This article explores the methodological possibilities of autoethnography and narrative inquiry in addressing colonial legacies in Jamaican education. Situated within postcolonial theory and culturally responsive teaching (CRT), it examines how reflexive and storied approaches can contribute to decolonizing educational research. Rather than reporting new empirical findings, the article undertakes a conceptual analysis. It draws on autoethnographic reflection and published Jamaican scholarship to interrogate how research methodologies themselves may reproduce or resist colonial epistemologies. Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, which focuses on temporality, sociality, and place, provides a conceptual orientation, highlighting how storied inquiry foregrounds the entanglement of subjectivity, history, and culture. The analysis develops four insights that demonstrate how contradiction can serve as a methodological resource in decolonizing research. Reflexivity situates positionality at the center of knowledge production. Narrative complexity resists reductive simplification and holds tensions within stories. Divergence between theory and practice is reframed as a generative condition rather than a shortcoming. Counter-stories disrupt colonial narratives by affirming cultural identities and resisting deficit framings. Autoethnography and narrative inquiry, when situated within postcolonial and culturally responsive perspectives, operate as decolonizing methodologies. They challenge Eurocentric assumptions, amplify marginalized voices, and embrace complexity. While Jamaica provides the illustrative case, the argument extends globally to postcolonial and marginalized contexts. By conceptualizing contradiction as insight, the article contributes a novel perspective to debates on decolonizing methodology, emphasizing reflexivity, complexity, divergence, and counter-stories as foundations for inclusive educational inquiry.

KEYWORDS

autoethnography, narrative inquiry, postcolonial methodology, postcolonial education, culturally responsive teaching, Jamaican creole, contradiction as insight

1 Introduction

Education in postcolonial societies continues to reflect the enduring legacies of colonialism. Across the Global South, curricula, policies, and assessment systems introduced under colonial rule remain deeply embedded, shaping not only what is taught but also how it is taught. While education is often celebrated as a pathway to social mobility, it also functions as a mechanism of stratification, privileging particular languages, cultures, and epistemologies (Keikelame and Swartz, 2019; Denscombe, 2024).

Jamaica exemplifies this paradox. Despite decades of reform since independence, Eurocentric models remain dominant. Standard Jamaican English (SJE) is privileged over

Jamaican Creole (JC), reflecting long-standing perceptions of JC as inferior (Beckford Wassink, 1999), even as scholars highlight its ongoing evolution as a dynamic language “in the process of becoming” (Bryan, 2004, p. 647).

Attempts at reform, such as the Jamaican Bilingual Primary Education Project, underscore both the possibilities and challenges of institutionalizing bilingualism (Devonish and Carpenter, 2007). Scholarship also shows how English continues to function as a gatekeeper of legitimacy in science education, reinforcing inequities in access and achievement (Lodge, 2020).

Inequities in Jamaican education are well documented (Brown, 2003; Roofe, 2018; Petgrave, 2011). These findings echo earlier work by Miller (1999), who argued that education in the Caribbean continues to reproduce class-based and racial inequalities despite reform, positioning schools as both sites of opportunity and exclusion. Figueroa (2004) extends this critique by demonstrating how gendered expectations intersect with these inequities, highlighting the need to understand postcolonial education in the Caribbean as stratified not only by class and race but also by gender.

What remains underexplored, however, is the role of methodology in either reinforcing or resisting colonial epistemologies. Conventional research approaches often privilege standardized, “objective” methods that reproduce hierarchies of knowledge. This raises an urgent question: how can research itself become a tool of resistance?

This article offers a conceptual response by examining autoethnography and narrative inquiry as methodologies aligned with decolonizing research. Framed within postcolonial theory (Fanon, 1952; Loomba, 2005; Young, 2003) and culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018), these approaches create space for counter-narratives that challenge colonial epistemologies and affirm marginalized identities.

The central contribution of this article is the claim that contradiction, often treated as a weakness in research, should instead be understood as a methodological resource. By embracing contradiction, researchers can illuminate how resistance and reproduction are entangled in educational practice. Four conceptual insights illustrate this argument: reflexivity as central to knowledge production, narrative complexity as something to be embraced, divergence as a generative force, and counter-stories as essential to disrupting colonial narratives. Jamaica provides the illustrative case, but the argument extends globally to postcolonial and marginalized contexts where the challenge of decolonizing knowledge remains pressing.

While existing scholarship has examined the persistence of colonial epistemologies in educational practice and knowledge production (Fanon, 1952; Loomba, 2005; Young, 2003; Andreotti, 2011; Keikelame and Swartz, 2019), few studies have treated contradiction itself as a generative methodological principle. This article extends that conversation by proposing contradiction as insight, a framework that understands methodological tension not as failure but as a critical site of reflexive learning. Although grounded in research methodology, the argument also addresses educators who engage with culturally responsive and postcolonial pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018). For both audiences, the central claim is that contradiction reveals how research and teaching can resist colonial hierarchies of knowledge while maintaining methodological rigor. By articulating how reflexivity, complexity, divergence, and counter-stories function as interlocking dimensions

of contradiction, the article positions inquiry itself as an act of epistemic resistance, one that transforms discomfort into understanding and methodological constraint into conceptual possibility.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Postcolonial theory

Postcolonial theory interrogates how colonial domination continues to shape institutions, knowledge systems, and cultural identities in the present. Independence did not dismantle these structures; instead, they often persist through curricula, policies, and epistemologies that privilege European worldviews while marginalizing local voices (Loomba, 2005; Young, 2003). In Jamaica, colonial residues are evident in the privileging of SJE over JC, the persistence of examination systems modeled on Britain, and the continued dominance of European content in curricula (Evans, 2001; Frank, 2010).

Fanon (1952) highlighted how colonialism constructs subjectivities, producing internalized hierarchies of inferiority. This insight has been extended by contemporary scholarship that situates Fanon’s work within ethics of difference (Haddour, 2019), explores the existential dimensions of colonial oppression (Yen, 2013), and examines the ongoing negotiation of Black subjectivity in postcolonial education (Sithole, 2016). These perspectives emphasize that colonial residues in Jamaican classrooms are not historical artifacts but enduring conditions that shape identity and belonging (DePass, 2006; Clarke, 2006). Postcolonial theory thus frames education as a contested space where colonial hierarchies are simultaneously reproduced and resisted.

In this framework, contradiction emerges as a defining characteristic of postcolonial education, where teachers and students inhabit systems built on colonial epistemologies while simultaneously seeking to transform them. The privileging of SJE, the persistence of British-style examinations, and the marginalization of local histories exemplify how Eurocentric epistemologies remain embedded in everyday practice. Yet these same spaces also host acts of resistance, including language reclamation, cultural affirmation, and pedagogical adaptation, which challenge those hierarchies from within. Postcolonial theory therefore not only exposes inherited inequities but also illuminates the creative negotiations through which educators and learners assert agency in Jamaican classrooms.

2.2 Culturally responsive teaching (CRT)

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) offers a complementary pedagogical framework by emphasizing the validation of student identity and cultural knowledge. Building on Freire’s (1972) call for critical consciousness, CRT insists that students’ cultural experiences must be treated as resources in the learning process (Gay, 2018). Ladson-Billings (1995) identifies three central goals: fostering academic success, nurturing cultural competence, and cultivating critical consciousness.

Extensions of CRT, such as Brown-Jeffy and Cooper’s (2011) framework, expand this vision by outlining how student culture can

be systematically embedded in pedagogy. In the Jamaican context, CRT highlights the urgency of affirming JC alongside SJE, incorporating regional texts, and positioning teachers as cultural mediators who resist exclusionary practices.

While Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2018) established foundational models, more recent scholarship complicates assumptions that “good teaching” is automatically culturally responsive (Tanase, 2020). Teachers’ perspectives reveal both commitment to CRT and the challenges of enacting it in practice (Samuels, 2018). Globally, debates continue around what constitutes “culture” in pedagogy and how it should be operationalized (Zyngier, 2015), reflecting the contradictions that Jamaican educators navigate daily.

2.3 Integration of frameworks

Together, postcolonial theory and CRT provide a dual lens for analyzing the contradictions of postcolonial education. Postcolonial theory highlights systemic and historical legacies, while CRT emphasizes strategies of resistance within pedagogy. While this article is grounded in postcolonial theory, it shares decolonizing aims by challenging Eurocentric epistemologies and affirming local ways of knowing; the focus remains on methodological transformation rather than on adopting the distinct philosophical framework of decoloniality. When paired with autoethnography and narrative inquiry, these frameworks support the argument that contradiction is not failure but an essential element of decolonizing inquiry. They illustrate how research can both interrogate legacies and affirm lived realities, ensuring methodologies operate critically while remaining grounded in practice.

3 Methodological reflections

This article positions autoethnography and narrative inquiry not as empirical tools for generating datasets but as conceptual resources for rethinking methodology in postcolonial education. Both approaches are storied, reflexive, and relational, making them well-suited to contexts where colonial hierarchies of knowledge persist.

3.1 Autoethnography

Autoethnography situates the researcher’s lived experience within broader cultural and historical frameworks. By linking memory to collective history, it demonstrates how colonial legacies shape subjectivity and identity (Ellis, 2004; Adams et al., 2017; Poulos, 2021). Writing thus becomes a method of inquiry that connects the personal with the systemic.

In postcolonial contexts, this reflexive mode of inquiry underscores how seemingly individual experiences, such as linguistic identity or classroom interaction, are deeply embedded in colonial systems. Autoethnography challenges the binary of researcher and researched, insisting that personal narratives are themselves critical data for understanding structural inequities.

Although sometimes dismissed as overly subjective or “navel-gazing” (Ellis and Bochner, 2011), such critiques reflect positivist

assumptions that privilege detachment. From a postcolonial perspective, subjectivity is not a weakness but a marker of positionality and accountability. Reflexivity therefore becomes an ethical imperative in contexts where researchers are entangled in the very systems they study. Acknowledging vulnerability and subjectivity makes visible the conditions under which knowledge is produced, affirming that neutrality is neither possible nor desirable in postcolonial research.

As Creswell (2013) notes, narrative and reflexive approaches sit within a broader constellation of qualitative traditions that challenge positivist hierarchies of evidence. Patton (2002) similarly emphasizes that inquiry rooted in personal and cultural context is not a methodological limitation but a pathway to deeper understanding.

3.2 Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry complements autoethnography by treating stories as data situated in time, relationships, and place (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Rather than seeking raw content, it prioritizes meaning-making (Riessman, 1993), showing how individuals interpret their experiences.

In the Jamaican context, published research illustrates how teacher and student narratives function as counter-stories that disrupt deficit portrayals of education. Petgrave (2011) foregrounds teacher narratives to reveal the everyday complexities of classroom practice, while Roofe (2018) highlights context-responsive teaching rooted in the lived realities of educators. Together, these studies show how narrative inquiry illuminates resilience, creativity, and cultural affirmation in settings often overshadowed by structural inequities.

Critics argue that narrative inquiry lacks generalizability, yet this critique reflects the tension between positivist traditions that value universality and decolonizing approaches that value particularity. Here, contradiction itself becomes methodological insight because in postcolonial contexts, what matters is not abstraction but the contextual richness of lived experience. As Butina (2015) observes, narrative inquiry enables “meaning-making through story,” affirming that accounts of Jamaican education are not data points to be standardized but situated testimonies that reveal inequity and possibility.

3.3 Methodological synergy and postcolonial orientation

Together, autoethnography and narrative inquiry generate a methodological synergy that is reflexive, relational, and critical. They create space for contradictions, divergences, and counter-narratives to emerge rather than be silenced. This synergy aligns with decolonizing aims for methodologies that disrupt Eurocentric hierarchies and center local knowledges across education and global research contexts (Hafez et al., 2025; Omodan, 2024). By recognizing researchers as participants rather than detached observers, these approaches enact the principle that knowledge is always relational, contextual, and accountable.

In practical terms, autoethnography and narrative inquiry can be integrated into educational settings through structured reflection and storytelling. Teachers might maintain reflective journals that link classroom experience to broader cultural histories, invite students to

compose autobiographical or community narratives, or use bilingual storytelling as a form of inquiry into language and identity. Such activities position educators and learners as co-researchers who analyze their own experiences within historical and cultural frames, translating methodological principles into everyday pedagogical practice.

4 Conceptual insights: contradiction as a methodological resource

This section develops four interrelated insights, reflexivity, narrative complexity, divergence, and counter-stories, to show how contradiction functions as a methodological resource in postcolonial educational research. Rather than seeing contradiction as inconsistency or error, it is understood here as a condition of inquiry that reveals how knowledge is negotiated within structures shaped by power. In Jamaican education, where colonial residues remain visible in language hierarchies, examination systems, and curriculum design, contradiction exposes the daily negotiations that teachers, students, and researchers perform as they navigate inherited epistemologies (Evans, 2001; Clarke, 2006; Devonish and Carpenter, 2007).

Autoethnography and narrative inquiry bring these negotiations to the surface through story, reflexivity, and context (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Ellis, 2004; Poulos, 2021). These methods make it possible to examine how personal and collective experiences intersect with social systems, allowing tensions to be explored rather than erased. In this framework, contradiction becomes a space for methodological creativity and ethical reflection. Each insight described below builds from existing scholarship while extending it through postcolonial praxis. Reflexivity highlights the ethics of positionality, narrative complexity holds multiple truths, divergence recognizes adaptation as innovation, and counter-stories affirm knowledge rooted

in local experience. Together they form a framework for relational accountability and contextual rigor in decolonizing research. Figure 1 illustrates how these four conceptual insights interrelate within the broader framework of contradiction as methodological resource.

4.1 Reflexivity is central to knowledge production

Reflexivity positions the researcher's and teacher's identities at the center of knowledge creation. It challenges the illusion of neutrality and recognizes that inquiry is shaped by context, history, and power (Ellis and Bochner, 2011; Keikelame and Swartz, 2019). Rooted in critical pedagogy, this perspective aligns with Freire's (1972) call for consciousness that links reflection with action. In postcolonial education, where teachers operate within structures built on colonial legacies, reflexivity enables them to question the very systems they reproduce through teaching.

In Jamaican classrooms, reflexivity takes tangible form when teachers move between SJE and JC. Correcting students to meet formal expectations while personally valuing Creole as cultural identity reveals the dual consciousness described by Bryan (2004) and Devonish and Carpenter (2007). This tension between institutional expectation and cultural belonging illustrates how educators perform reflexivity as lived practice. Autoethnography exposes these tensions as data that connect personal reflection to broader social inequities, demonstrating that identity work is central to methodological and pedagogical accountability. Reflexivity therefore becomes an ethical practice of transparency, compelling researchers and teachers alike to examine how their perspectives shape knowledge construction.

It also aligns with culturally responsive teaching, which reframes culture as a resource rather than an obstacle (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018). By acknowledging positionality and power, reflexivity



FIGURE 1

Contradiction as methodological insight illustrating four conceptual insights: reflexivity, narrative complexity, divergence, counter-stories.

transforms contradiction into insight, showing that self-awareness can coexist with methodological rigor.

4.1.1 Takeaway

Reflexivity turns contradiction into ethical transparency and situates research as an act of acknowledgment rather than detachment, one that values awareness and humility as signs of rigor.

4.2 Narrative complexity should be held, not simplified

Narrative inquiry, as described by [Clandinin and Connelly \(2000\)](#) and [Riessman \(1993\)](#), resists simplification by holding multiple truths in dialogue. [Butina \(2015\)](#) emphasizes that narrative meaning emerges not through coherence but through the coexistence of tension, uncertainty, and multiplicity. This approach is especially relevant to postcolonial education, where contradictions are not anomalies but defining features of lived experience ([Figueroa, 2004](#)).

In Jamaica, educational life is filled with layered stories. A student may be celebrated for academic achievement yet disciplined for speaking Creole. A teacher may advocate cultural inclusion while preparing students for British-modeled examinations. These contradictions reveal how colonial legacies and local agency coexist in everyday schooling. They also demonstrate that postcolonial education is neither entirely oppressive nor wholly emancipatory, but an arena of negotiation shaped by class, language, and gender. Narrative inquiry makes space for these tensions by treating them as integral to understanding rather than as inconsistencies to be resolved.

Autoethnography extends this principle by weaving the researcher's story into those of participants, acknowledging that subjectivity itself holds analytic value ([Ellis, 2004](#)). In contexts such as Jamaica, where identity, language, and power intersect so visibly, narrative complexity becomes both a method and an ethic. To simplify stories for neatness or generalization would reproduce colonial hierarchies by privileging order over lived multiplicity. By contrast, holding complexity acknowledges the full humanity of teachers and learners as they navigate inherited contradictions ([Biesta, 2007](#)).

4.2.1 Takeaway

Embracing narrative complexity honors contradiction as a reflection of lived experience and strengthens the foundation for inclusive, human-centered educational inquiry.

4.3 Divergence generates knowledge

Divergence refers to the space between theory and practice, where ideals of culturally responsive pedagogy meet institutional constraint. Rather than treating this gap as failure, divergence recognizes it as a source of practical knowledge and creative innovation. [Roofe \(2018\)](#) and [Samuels \(2018\)](#) demonstrate that Jamaican teachers often adapt curricula to meet students' realities, using local examples and cultural references to make learning relevant. These acts of adaptation reflect professional expertise rather than deviation from policy.

For instance, a teacher may wish to use Jamaican proverbs or Creole expressions to explain scientific concepts but must prepare students for English-only assessments. To reconcile this tension, the teacher allows discussion in both languages before guiding students toward formal written responses. This practice demonstrates how divergence produces new forms of understanding that bridge cultural identity and academic expectation.

Autoethnography captures these negotiations from within, giving voice to the practitioner's perspective, while narrative inquiry situates them in broader temporal and institutional contexts ([Clandinin and Connelly, 2000](#); [Poulos, 2021](#)). Divergence thus reveals how teachers exercise agency within restrictive systems, transforming contradiction into an engine of pedagogical creativity. It also redefines rigor as adaptability, in essence, the ability to maintain professional integrity while honoring cultural authenticity.

4.3.1 Takeaway

Divergence between theory and practice is a generative contradiction that exposes the intellectual and emotional labor of educators who sustain innovation within colonial structures.

4.4 Counter-stories disrupt colonial narratives

Counter-stories challenge deficit narratives by centering voices that have been marginalized or silenced. Within postcolonial and culturally responsive frameworks, counter-storytelling operates as both pedagogy and resistance ([Bryan, 2004](#); [Roberts, 2008](#); [Gay, 2018](#); [Ladson-Billings, 1995](#)). In Jamaican education, where Eurocentric standards have long defined legitimacy, counter-stories affirm local identity and reframe knowledge as plural and situated.

Teachers who integrate Anansi folklore, for example, to teach ethics or problem-solving use storytelling to connect ancestral wisdom with classroom learning ([Popova et al., 2015](#); [Anatol, 2017](#)). These practices validate oral traditions as forms of knowledge that foster moral imagination and critical thinking. Similarly, bilingual education initiatives that elevate JC reposition language difference as intellectual resource rather than deficiency ([Devonish and Carpenter, 2007](#)). When students reflect on their experiences balancing community speech with school expectations, they participate in acts of epistemic justice that assert belonging and agency.

In research, counter-stories also reshape methodology. Autoethnography places lived experience at the center of analysis ([Ellis, 2004](#); [Adams et al., 2017](#)), while narrative inquiry organizes these stories within relational and temporal frameworks ([Clandinin and Connelly, 2000](#)). Through this dual lens, contradiction becomes not confusion but clarity, a means to see how resistance and reproduction operate together in postcolonial education.

4.4.1 Takeaway

Counter-stories convert contradiction into affirmation, demonstrating how marginalized perspectives redefine what counts as legitimate knowledge and transform classrooms into spaces of epistemic justice.

4.5 Toward a methodology of contradiction

Across these four insights, contradiction operates as object, condition, and method. Reflexivity identifies where contradiction resides in the researcher's and teacher's own entanglement with power. Narrative complexity preserves its texture by allowing multiple truths to coexist without closure. Divergence reveals its productivity by showing how theory and practice interact under constraint. Counter-stories demonstrate its politics by transforming deficit into dignity.

Through autoethnography and narrative inquiry, these dimensions cohere into a methodological stance that treats contradiction as generative rather than problematic. Reflexive writing, narrative interpretation, and contextual analysis turn tension into understanding, making visible the forces that shape education while affirming agency and resilience. This approach redefines rigor as relational accountability, an orientation toward transparency, cultural context, and ethical engagement (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

In Jamaican and other postcolonial contexts, such rigor ensures that inquiry interrogates colonial hierarchies without collapsing into advocacy or detachment. To engage contradiction is to acknowledge that education and research are always situated within unequal histories. When examined reflexively and narratively, contradiction becomes both method and evidence of transformation. It is through this tension that inquiry approaches truth with humility, complexity, and integrity.

5 Discussion: implications and future directions

These insights confirm that contradiction is not a methodological flaw but a productive resource. Reflexivity promotes transparency, complexity resists reduction, divergence illuminates negotiation, and counter-stories amplify marginalized voices.

While scholars in narrative inquiry and postcolonial theory have acknowledged tensions and contradictions as part of lived experience, few have treated contradiction itself as the conceptual anchor of postcolonial methodology. This article advances that move by positioning contradiction not as background context but as the generative core around which reflexivity, complexity, divergence, and counter-stories are organized. In doing so, it reframes contradiction as an explicit analytic category, offering researchers a novel lens for examining how colonial legacies are simultaneously reproduced and resisted in educational practice.

Treating contradiction as a methodological resource also reframes the meaning of rigor in qualitative research. Rather than equating rigor with detachment or universality, this approach aligns with interpretive traditions that define rigor as credibility, reflexivity, and contextual accountability (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It does not collapse inquiry into advocacy but insists that all research is ethically and politically situated. Within postcolonial education, methodological rigor therefore demands openness to tension by recognizing how colonial structures, researcher identities, and classroom practices intersect. By engaging those intersections reflexively, autoethnography and narrative inquiry reveal that the task of decolonizing research is not to erase

contradiction but to work through it transparently. In doing so, contradiction becomes both the evidence and the method of transformation.

The prospects for embedding autoethnography and narrative inquiry within teacher education and curriculum design are promising. As reflective methodologies, they can strengthen professional development by helping teachers recognize how colonial legacies shape their pedagogical choices. At the research level, this approach invites teacher-researchers to document and interpret the contradictions that surface in their practice as data, turning reflection itself into a form of inquiry. Within pre-service and in-service programs, guided narrative projects or collaborative storytelling circles can cultivate the reflexive awareness required for culturally responsive teaching. These applications demonstrate that methodological reflection need not remain abstract; it can be practiced as a sustained pedagogical habit that links theory, context, and action.

The implications extend beyond Jamaica. Postcolonial and marginalized contexts worldwide must develop methodologies that avoid reproducing colonial hierarchies. By reframing contradiction as insight, autoethnography and narrative inquiry provide researchers with tools for embracing complexity and advancing decolonizing approaches.

Policy considerations also follow. In Jamaica, legitimizing JC, embedding local histories and literatures, and strengthening teacher development in CRT remain urgent priorities. Such reforms build on earlier bilingual education initiatives (Devonish and Carpenter, 2007) while acknowledging the deeper stratification of Jamaican society (Clarke, 2006). As DePass (2006) reflects, schools function simultaneously as spaces of possibility and exclusion. Recognizing this dual role reinforces the central claim of this article that contradiction is not a limitation of postcolonial education but a generative condition of knowledge production.

The contribution of this article lies in explicitly conceptualizing contradiction as a methodological resource and analytic lens for decolonizing inquiry. This reframing encourages researchers to design studies that are reflexive about positionality, attentive to complexity, open to divergence, and committed to amplifying counter-stories. Conceptually, it expands decolonizing methodology by elevating contradiction into a coherent framework. For future research, contradiction should not be seen as an obstacle to overcome but as a generative space for developing inclusive, reflexive, and transformative methodological practices.

6 Conclusion

Autoethnography and narrative inquiry, framed within postcolonial theory and culturally responsive teaching, function as decolonizing methodologies. By conceptualizing contradiction as a methodological resource, this article foregrounds reflexivity, complexity, divergence, and counter-stories as essential dimensions for rethinking research in postcolonial contexts. Jamaica provides an illustrative case, yet the implications extend globally. For researchers working in postcolonial and marginalized settings, the task is not to eliminate contradictions but to harness them as sites of insight. Approached in this way, inquiry becomes more inclusive, reflexive, and transformative, challenging colonial hierarchies while affirming diverse ways of knowing.

The originality of this article lies in elevating contradiction from a peripheral observation to a central methodological resource. In doing so, it offers a distinctive conceptual tool for advancing debates on decolonizing educational research and for guiding future methodological innovation in diverse global contexts.

In this sense, contradiction embodies both the ethical imperative of decolonizing research and the intellectual discipline of methodological rigor, ensuring that resistance to colonial hierarchies remains grounded in transparency, reflexivity, and scholarly accountability.

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