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Author(s): Grey Gundaker
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GREY GUNDAKER

Discussion: Creolization, Complexity, and Time

Well before their widespread use in historical archaeology, "creole" and "creolization" had become stock and sometimes confusing terms in other fields. In the academy often they referred to the interaction of previously divergent trajectories of language, culture, and history. In many geographic regions they referred to people born in the Americas rather than in Europe or Africa. Added complexities of usage arose because of the power imbalances and pressured intercultural contact that figure in most if not all creolizing circumstances regardless of working definition. As a result, it has not been possible, and probably never will be possible, to talk "just" about creolization. Inevitably, important metadiscourses frame the discussion. This has meant that the tone of debates about what creolization means or should mean tend to be contentious and the stakes high in arenas ranging from national politics to standards for success and failure in school.

It was surely no accident that creolization and creole linguistics gained currency in the 1960s and 1970s. These decades saw heated debate in the social sciences about the limitations of linear, reductionist models borrowed from the natural sciences, about the centrality of formerly excluded groups, and about the politics of research practices. Creolization offered a way to talk about populations, behavior, and speech that earlier generations of scholars had dismissed as marginal and impure. Interest in creole languages made the tensions among multiple voices built into supposedly pure languages and cultures all the more evident. Even icons of Englishness like Shakespeare and Chaucer revealed polyvocality. During the same decades former colonies in Africa and the Caribbean were also gaining independence and striving to fashion unified citizenries out of diverse ethnic and class groups. The label Creole made past mixture into a basis for shared contemporary identity.

All these factors render any usage of creole or creolization indexical of a political stance. As researchers' accounts proliferated so too did Either/Or outlooks. Some work foregrounds disjuncture like M. G. Smith's pluralism while others call for unity like proponents of francophone Crealité. These views competed with Both/And conceptualizations like Brathwaite's prismatic creolization and Drummond's intersystems formulation, and continue to do so today.

Scholars' writings have registered all these trends. Over the past 30 years some have employed creolization to stand for the "birth" of "new" languages or societies; others for new mixtures of the "old"; others for generational changes; others for negotiation of identity; and still others for sustained conditions of intercultural complexity and instability.

The papers in this issue of *Historical Archaeology* take advantage of this array of options. The latter stance, focused on sustained complexity, draws on Brathwaite (1971, 1974) and Drummond (1980), and has proved most helpful as it is clear that plural personas, command of multiple communicative registers, and mobile social forms like style and code-switching have persisted throughout the history of the Atlantic world. Like Groover's (this volume) comparison with jazz, the guiding premise of Drummond's (1980:34) stance is "that internal variation and change, rather than uniformity and synchronicity," are key features of languages and cultures (and, one might add, definitions of creolization). "Cultures are neither structures nor plural amalgams, but a . . . set of intersystems" (Drummond 1980:34) that shape lived experience as participants reconfigure relationships among intersecting, interfering, and often hierarchical cultural systems to fit changing circumstances. The weakness of Drummond's formulation is its lack of attention to power relations, crucial factors in intersystems' possibilities and constraints (Williams 1991).

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When Africans from different regions and ethnic groups encountered each other and Europeans in Africa and later in the Americas, they often made the most of similarities and redundancies among cultural systems in order to communicate. At the same time, however, they also selectively loosened objects and activities from their moorings in these systems, treating them as resources to draw on as new situations warranted. As a result, intersystemic creolization is less concerned with origins than with configurations and functions; activities and objects combine continual innovation with highly patterned behavior in ways that vary from one context and one moment to another (Abrahams and Szwed 1983:2-42).

Creolization is also inclusive. Ruling nothing out a priori, the openness and striking juxtapositions of creolizing processes may become culturally systematized, sought and appreciated by participants (Benitez-Rojo 1992; de Landa 1997; Szwed 1997). African diaspora religious practice, visual art, performance, and music often combine tradition with the latest technology.

This discussion essay loosely adheres to intersystems usage. The aim is exploratory, not prescriptive. Some comments may fall wide of the mark for historical archaeologists because the author is a cultural anthropologist, but others will hopefully be useful due to a shared concern with culture and material life in the African diaspora.

The comments here explore two broad issues germane to any form of intercultural research: approaches to *complexity and reduction*, and to *time and timing*. Overall, these issues may be more interesting than specific terminology. Terms like acculturation, assimilation, hybridity, and creolization have all been used to organize both structurally similar and structurally different arguments. Looking closely, the reader will notice that some work done a generation ago under the acculturation rubric represents the multiplicity of intercultural processes more successfully than some work presented under the creole banner today.

Complexity and Reduction

For researchers the problem is that, according to that mainstay of natural scientific explanation, Occam's Razor, all things being equal the simplest explanation is likely to be the most accurate. This assumption remains alive and well in all of anthropology's subfields. What happens when creolization meets Occam? For in creolization all things are never equal and the most accurate explanation is likely to be the one that can accommodate the greatest complexity up to, and maybe beyond, the borders of cognitive dissonance.

For example, imagine three scenes set in, say, 1803. In the first, a Georgia plantation mistress plunges into the babble of familiar voices and local gossip at a neighbor's teatime soirée. In the second, a Scots-Irish wife in southwestern Virginia walks into the clearing where her husband, son, and their slave have begun to build a log cabin. In the distance she hears the echo of an ax mingling with wind and birdsong. In the third a manacled African woman descends into the hold of a slave ship anchored in the Bight of Biafra. As she staggers against the tightly packed bodies she strains to hear a familiar word amid a din of dialects and distressed cries. In each of these scenes a newcomer enters the kind of material and behavioral environment that scholars two centuries later will plumb for evidence of the inhabitants' life worlds.

From the standpoint of much contemporary research on American material culture, each scene also reflects a descending scale of complexity from opulence to deprivation. The salon sets a high water mark for elite America, replete with status markers and consumer goods of every sort. The second scene, the cabin, offers a sparser material baseline for the emerging middling sort. The third, the hollow vessel of the middle passage, represents the extremity of material and personal deprivation.

Consistent with this assessment, several papers in this collection mention reduction explicitly as an aspect or stage of creolization. Several other papers take reduction as a tacit premise with the consequence that reduction of objects, kin connections, and institutions during the bodily displacement of enslavement leads to reduction of cultural and linguistic material that subsequent generations will replenish or reinvent.

Reduction arguments seem beholden to at least three reinforcements. The first is the conflation of political and economic domination with cultural domination (Ewen, this volume).

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Abrahams and Szwed (1983) have pointed out that this conflation is fundamental to those acculturationist and functionalist theories in which social institutions are viewed as the primary producers and repositories of culture. An alternative position keyed to more complex relationships among economy, politics, and culture requires the researcher to pay as much attention to vernacular practices as to institutions. More importantly, it also involves shifting referents for "culture" from the level of items, contents, and elements to that of configurations, patterns, and processes. To deterritorialize culture as a unitary construct envisions a world in which contact and variation are not aberrations from norms but, rather, givens against which human strivings for stable and recognizable realities constantly pit themselves. From this perspective one might see creolization as a "borderland" (Cusick, this volume) in motion, but one embedded in events rather than located in space. Diana Loren's (this volume) diagram of race, ethnicity, and gender converging on objects in use tackles this idea aptly. She accommodates cultural complexity and emergence by leaving her conclusions open-ended, like the phenomena she is trying to describe.

The second, related element of some reduction arguments is an impoverished but influential notion of consumption as the central issue in material culture study, instead of one factor among many. All too often a consumption continuum from wealth (many goods) to poverty (few goods) also results in a conflation of material possessions with the degree of owners' or users' acculturation to European-oriented norms. For example, one might argue that the more matched versus unmatched china, the greater the affluence and acculturation [or (de)creolization] of the owner. This argument depends on risky inference from one domain of activity to another and on potentially ethnocentric presuppositions about values and aesthetic preferences such that more is preferable to less, and similar is preferable to different.

Some researchers also seem to act on, if not spell out, an analogy between the reduction of goods and institutions during relocation and the reduced grammar and lexicon of pidgins: languages that emerge in interlinguistic contact zones and that (according to some theorists) precede the emergence of a creole. This analogy breaks down because by definition pidgins are *not* speakers' native languages and therefore not their *only* languages. Pidgins always coexist with other languages and speakers of pidgins often know several "full" languages as well. Focusing on the pidgin or the creole alone–or the supposed creolized entity alone–and not the larger context, inevitably results in distortion.

Another reason the pidgin analogy breaks down is because an individual's material world (mystical experience aside) is ever-present; it always exists in some form. No matter how sparse or dense, it remains a kind of ecosystem, a mobile network of givens and novelties. The material world is also inherently social (and thus complex) because nobody is solely responsible for his or her conditions of existence. Whether the setting is a rainforest or a desert, a palace or a prison cell, the physical relations of bodies, objects, and space remain crucial constituents of "reality."

When a dearth of possessions becomes equated with a reduction in cultural resources in the African diaspora, despite good intentions to the contrary, the discredited notion of cultural stripping during the middle passage slips in through the back door. Current interest in creolization among anthropologists owes much to the efforts of linguists like William Stewart and J. L. Dillard, along with folklorists like Roger Abrahams in the 1960s and 1970s, who turned to creolization as a means to refute claims that black inner city children were "culturally deprived" and that African American Vernacular English (AAVE) was a form of "broken" language. Arguably the most valuable legacy of sociolinguistics to creole studies seems underutilized in archaeology: concepts such as the calque, loan translation, remodeling, code switching, and so forth, that deal with mixed and multi-leveled phenomena.

To return to the three scenes at the beginning of this section–as a group they could be used to illustrate consumption-based reduction. They point just as readily, however, in a different direction, if, in addition to goods, one pays attention to the tension between familiarity and novelty in each scene from the point of view of the participants. This experientially and contextually oriented alternative is indebted to pragmatists like Dewey, Mead, James, and Pierce; phenomenologists like Schutz and Merleau-Ponty; and to Volosinov and Vygotsky via Russian

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semiotics and cognitive psychology. It does not conflate one's material world with one's property or lack thereof. Rather, it treats person-in-world as a continually reworked field of relations. One's "material culture" begins with whatever impinges on one or more interactants' attention within a social world.

This view of the material world is not especially congenial with many of the linear forms of argument that seem to dominate archaeology, despite efforts to strengthen alternative approaches. In practice, linear argument often constitutes a third kind of reinforcement for reductiveness that obscures creole variability because it aims to demonstrate predictability, an invariant connection between a "cause" and an "effect." It also often involves inference "up" from a single domain to claims about culture and society as well as inference across domains such that, for example, if cultural mixture seems evident in ceramic styles it is assumed to occur in similar proportions in other material forms as well.

This sort of inference is often unreliable and misleading where creolization is concerned. Under sustained and unequal conditions of contact, changing contextual identities and multiple cultural resource pools make it impossible to predict, based on linear hypotheses that who or what someone or something "is" now is who or what he or she or it will be later, or elsewhere, or from a different point of view. If one attends instead to networks of associations, to intersystems, it becomes easier to see how participants orchestrate shifts of identity and interpretive framing.

The African American writer Daniel Webster Davis explored such shifts in a poem called "Signs" (Figure 1). The narrator's daughter, a model of elegance in her high button shoes, leghorn hat, and leg o'mutton sleeves, had been to school and claimed that she did not believe in the signs respected by her "superstitious" elders. As the illustration shows, however, there's a gap between talk and action.

The illustration also reminds us that the "mixing" in creolization often consists of pointed contrasts rather than meltdown of elements into new (chemical-like) solutions. This means that one cannot look at an Afro-Atlantic crossmark inscribed on the ground and infer whether or not its inscriber was an educated fashionplate–*or*

FIGURE 1. Illustration accompanying Daniel Webster Davis's poem "Signs" (ca. 1903).

vice versa. Scholars who fail to recognize this fact may seriously underestimate the range of knowledge of the people they study and the cultural flexibility on which creolization depends.

The search for a distinct culture tends to mean seeing *either* the fashionplate *or* the crossmark and labeling only the latter "African American." This type of reductiveness facilitates classification (and stereotyping); it also fits into the material culture *of* material culture like storage compartments, drawers, and plastic bags. Such distinctness probably owes much of its ostensible clarity to erasure of the very complexities that characterize creolization in the first place. To the degree that a style or object seems "distinct," it is probably more accurately *contextual and local*. Academic classification systems and

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abstractions have not (yet) obscured the specificity of "real life."

Kamau Brathwaite (1977:51-52) gives an illustration of local reframing of words and objects during the 1831-1832 slave revolt in Jamaica led by Sam Sharpe, a mission-educated mulatto who cast his lot with the more African-oriented black slaves.

> Sam Sharpe could read . . . He was also a deacon in the Baptist church, which gave him an even more intimate relationship with metropolitan values. But . . . [h]e was one of the "ingrates." . . . And when he used the press or print, he used it not to browse or graze but to *confirm*: "Sharpe said I know we are *free*, I read it in the English papers." . . . So that the *ship*, which was used . . . to identify [the masthead of] a particular newspaper, was also the *freedom ship* . . . bringing the Freedom Paper from [the British government] and is the same ship that the present day Rastafari know will come to take them back to Ityopia. Here, in other words, was subversive material that couldn't be charged with seditious libel; which couldn't even be controlled. . . .

The rebels' creolization of English newspapers had subversive power activated in a moment, at a glance, yet outside the oppressors' field of vision. The transformation of the masthead into the freedom ship also recurs–noticed anew–over the generations. In this way Brathwaite's (1977:55) "prismatic" view of creolization encompasses unintended consequences, non-evolutionary reversals, and shifting allegiances over time.

> The idea of creolization as an ac/culturative, even interculturative process between "black" and "white," with the (subordinate) black absorbing "progressive" ideas and technology from the white, has to be modified into a more complex vision in which appears the notion of *negative or regressive creolization*: a self-conscious refusal to borrow or be influenced by the Other, and a coincident desire to fall back upon, unearth, recognize elements in the maroon or ancestral culture that will preserve or apparently preserve the unique identity of the group. This quality of consciousness is recognized in all modern societies as one of the roots of nationalism [emphasis in original].

Contexts that foster distinctness–including nationalistic contexts where participants foreground difference over similarity–necessarily also generate ambiguities about what is distinct, widespread, or universal. To create the exotic, the other, and the stereotype: all involve pushing distinctness to a divisive extreme, codifying some indices of distinctness at the expense of others, and overlooking intercultural similarities. *It is one thing for researchers to point out how participants make distinctions–and one of anthropology's most valuable contributions–but quite another for researchers to ascribe distinct qualities to the people they study.* To take just one instance, some scholars have called "improvisation" a defining feature of black American culture. As Wyatt MacGaffey (1978:18) has pointed out, however, turning improvisation into a "specific characteristic" is "unjustifiable" because it implies other groups do not improvise as well. It also treats improvisation–an open-ended and speculative approach to cultural materials–as a virtual trait or attribute. Rather, what may be especially salient about African diaspora improvising are the participatory dimensions: a widespread appreciation and systemization of creolizing activities such as juxtaposition, reinterpretation, ambiguity, and experimentation whether these result from accident or design, necessity or repleteness.

In any case, weighing in against the ascription of cultural distinctness, at least in much European-oriented thought, are supposed universals that "make us all human," etc. Not surprisingly, these often serve the interests of economically and politically dominant groups. For example, Levi-Strauss can find bricolage everywhere but also more or less of it, leaving room to privilege and position himself within the rationalities of European science. Focusing on either distinctness or universality can obscure important contextual information and purposeful ambiguities.

On the frontlines of intercultural mixing (whatever term is chosen to describe it) ambiguity, polyphony, and polyvalence mark the struggle, as Bakhtin (1981) might put it, of plural voices clamoring to have their say. As Karl Reisman (1965:34-35) pointed out decades ago, the force of creole languages among enslaved people and their descendants "from the beginning of our records made those who wished to communicate with the slave populations feel the need to adjust to it even while [it belonged] to a powerless section of the population." Crucially, he noted that, "syncretisms increase the area of conscious or unconscious double statement and the possibility of symbolic play." Given this open-endedness, "explanation" depends on mapping

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networks of resources and aspires to plausibility, not proof.

Although ambiguity and complexity mean tough luck for hypothesis testing they do not mark a dead end for research. As stressed throughout this section, the sensible solution to the problems of ambiguity and complexity is not to reduce them away but rather to try to map the networks of associations and contexts from which they emerge. One strategy to this end that historical archaeologists in this collection have employed with some success is to use several types of information instead of just one: material culture, documents, and folklore so that each type complicates interpretation of the others.

Time and Timing

In creolization, multiple historical currents intersect across diverse objects and events.

Accounts of creolization involve conceptualizations of activity and objects through long and short periods of time. Now the discussion turns to two aspects of time and timing: first, the relationship of new and old and, second, sequencing, both transgenerational and situational.

New and Old

Influential works on the African diaspora, including those of Melville Herskovits, M. G. Smith, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Orlando Patterson, Sidney Mintz, Richard Price, John Thornton, Philip Morgan, and Ira Berlin, have all taken up the question: When and how was the New World new? Implicitly, then, these scholars have also asked: When and how was an Old world old? And for whom? Mintz and Price (1976, 1992) have taken perhaps the clearest stand on this point, positing the end of the middle passage as a point of "birth" and by implication, a qualitative break with the past. Creolization, in this usage, merges new, dominant social institutions like the plantation with the fragmented, non-institutional remnants of old cultures to form a new culture (Mintz 1970:8). Historically, this formulation also aligned the study of African Americans with the study of plantation slavery at a time when the latter topic was far more securely positioned in academic departments than the former.

More recently, John Thornton (1992) has argued convincingly that the "birth" approach underestimates the many cognate languages and cultures of West and Central Africa, and also ignores the interaction of Europeans and Africans prior to the departure of the enslaved. Paul Lovejoy (1998) has pointed out that usages of creolization that assert the birth of a new culture in the Americas tend to freeze Africa in time, and neglect effects of variations in the slave trade and colonization in different African locales. He argues for a geographically specific, transatlantic outlook involving many diasporas, not just one. Lovejoy also warns against using African ethnic terms (Yoruba, Igbo, etc.) as if they had fixed polities as referents. This point applies to followers of Herskovits as well in their search for "Africanisms."

The guidelines that Thornton and Lovejoy propose are certainly worth bearing in mind if one hopes to tackle the massive task of comparing specific materials from the Americas with "the material culture of Yoruba and Bakongo peoples" (Wilkie, this volume). As publications by Robert Farris Thompson and others have shown, this task involves much more than noting resemblances among widely used design motifs like dots, circles, and chevrons. The project is further complicated by Bantu migration through the forest regions of West Africa (MacGaffey 1988:1), and by the cross-referencing of cosmogram, crossmark, and crossroad associations among peoples from (at least) Senegal south to Angola, as well as throughout the Caribbean and American south (Gundaker 1998:Chapter 4). Pointing out these difficulties does not lead to a denial of parallels, discontinuities, continuities, and resemblances. Claiming one-to-one correspondences like, crossmark = *minkisi,* does more harm than good for trans-Atlantic understanding by making the crossmark into exactly what it is not (including in North America, if fieldwork is any indication [Gundaker 1998]): a unitary symbol, instead of a map of relations embedded in a still larger complex (MacGaffey 1988).

Unlike acculturation, creolization does not sit well with the phrase "culture change," which implies that "cultures" are entities that change

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from "this" to "that." Acculturation tends to normalize or naturalize stasis while treating change as an aberration. The intersystems approach to creolization attempts to avoid reification by assuming that stability is a cultural achievement, not a given, and that the adjectives new and old can modify the same phenomena with equal appropriateness, depending on the frame of reference of the classifier. Creolization involves both innovation and use of historical resources and precedents. No object or event is altogether new; nor is it reducible to its antecedents. As a result, cultural processes resist neat, clearly bounded claims about origins, content, or scope.

Temporal Sequences across Generations

Some scholars, as well as some of the people they study, view creolization as the transgenerational process through which a population of disparate newcomers coalesces into a cultural group. For example, in a recent paper Ira Berlin (1996) uses the term "Creole" to designate a population of mixed race and heritage people who served as brokers, translators, and mediators among Africans and Europeans along the Atlantic littoral. He draws attention to the wide distribution of this group prior to the 18th century and postulates that its survival depended upon the slave trade remaining relatively small in scale. Berlin argues that as the demand for slaves in North America increased, the Atlantic Creole population declined through enslavement and incorporation into the mass of less sophisticated captives from deeper in the African interior. Basing his case on accounts by large-scale slaveholders like Robert "King" Carter of Virginia, Berlin sees this transition as a watershed between generations, with the cosmopolitan demeanor of the Creoles characteristic of the founder generation of African Americans but not the next generation, reappearing only after a new culture emerged on the plantations. The making of the new culture not only involved Americanizing Africans; it also involved relabeling Creoles *as* Africans, suppressing their cultural difference from the enslaved people who succeeded them on the transatlantic voyage. Despite the useful ways that this renaming complicates previous pictures of transatlantic relations, Berlin's account remains in essence acculturationist, with periodization moving from "there" to "here" in a linear, if occasionally bi-directional manner.

Shannon Lee Dawdy's paper in this collection establishes periodization on a different and less reductive basis: the "native terms" of participants. She discerns three generational stages in vernacular usages of "creole" in New Orleans. These stages parallel definitions of "creolization" in the literature of historical archaeology: (1) "transplantation"; (2) "ethnic acculturation"; and (3) "hybridization." Stages 1 and 2 also parallel James Deetz's account of cultural change in colonial New England, but stage 3, Dawdy points out, involves an acceptance of mixture that New Englanders may never have imagined. In New Orleans the third generation is crucial in establishing connection and recognition among creoles through difference, but she notes that British America has no vernacular vocabulary comparable to that of creolization.

This does not seem especially surprising if one recalls Margaret Mead's (1942) observations in her study of American character, *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, and especially Chapter 3, "We Are All Third Generation." Writing during World War II, Mead proposed that "third generation" is as much a stance Americans take toward the past and future as an actuality. Of new arrivals in the United States she remarked, "During the first generation they cluster together . . . to chatter in their own tongue and buy their own kind of red peppers, but later there is a scattering to the suburbs and the small towns, to an 'American' way of life" (Mead 1942:29). Rooted in emigration and shaped through aspiration, the markers of "third generation" consciousness–the hometown (to which one does not wish to return), and the question Do-you-know-so-and-so? (whom one barely knows at all)–help Americans deal with their *mobility*. Encountering each other for the first time, Americans can establish relations of likeness and connection. Elite Anglo New Englanders are exceptions to this rule. Priding themselves on having ancestors who did not move rather than those who did, these New Englanders "find themselves eternally puzzled by this 'home town business,'" of the third generation. Those who claim descent from this group instead see themselves as acculturation's target, what everyone else should become.

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Taken together, these third stages, New Orleanians' "hybridization" and Mead's "mobility," gain an intriguing complementarity. Mead's prose seems dated precisely because her "America" seems untenably homogenous. The broader applicability of the New Orleanians' account of creolization also seems to depend on dispatching the conflation of culture and race implicit in hybridity and expanding the term's geographic range. When diversity and mobility is added to the mixture it becomes clearer that a mythic past may be as important to local discourses of creolization and ethnogenesis in New Orleans as mythic native birth may be in New England. Virginia, for that matter. Is it an accident that the affective texture of a Saturday afternoon in Colonial Williamsburg, stripped of black residential areas as it is, seems more like Woodstock, Vermont or Hanover, New Hampshire than a southern town? Touristic New Orleans is as emblematically "multicultural" as pre-revisionist Colonial Williamsburg was "American." Both are beacons for generational aspirations, one for gumbo, the other for the melting pot.

In sum, like Mead, Dawdy posits a three-part pattern played out locally, within a population for whom certain defining features and not others are relevant. Unlike Berlin, she does not depend on a presupposed timeline and her flexible periodization is more consistent with Lovejoy's call for attention to multiple diasporas and identities.

Situational Sequencing

In intersystemic creolization meanings are open-ended, but also channeled stochastically down some avenues of association and not others, often shifting orientation as an event unfolds. One example of this shifting orientation is known in African American vernacular terms as "getting down." This author heartily agrees with Dawdy that indigenous terms give the clearest account of cultural processes once one learns their referents. Under one name or another, and with varying amounts of sexual innuendo, getting down crops up in many genres, media, and historical periods. Students of African American expressive culture have observed that getting down not only proceeds spatially, as for example when dancers shift their bodies closer to the ground (like in the Charleston and the Twist), but also interculturally. The semantic loading of an event often tends to shift away from a "European" orientation toward an "African" one as activity progresses (Marks 1971; Abrahams and Szwed 1983:29; Pitts 1993). This style shifting involves a dynamic akin to Brathwaite's "negative creolization." To give just one example, in Monserrat

> *Country dance* orchestras . . . play for social dancing, but the same music is also used for inducing possession on other occasions, called "jombee dances." On these latter occasions quadrille dance rhythms [which spread to Monserrat from Europe] are intensified and gradually "Africanized" in order that individuals may become possessed and convey the messages of the spirits. Secular customs such as suppers for guests are transformed into ritual sacrifices for spirits, and the mundane lyrics of quadrille songs become part of the mechanism for possession. But the ritual occasion has become so "masked," reinterpreted so extensively that the traditional European elements of the dance seem predominant to the casual observer (Szwed & Marks 1988:29).

Such code and style shifts pivot on the contrast between two or more languages, registers or behavioral styles. Although they seem to unfold effortlessly they also embody tensions of class, language, and cultural markedness and may also seem contradictory, oblique, or ambiguous. Hybrid is not the descriptive term because they do not fuse but remain differentiated, like the pointed contrast of styles illustrated in Figure 1 where a woman of refinement gets down and ground-writes a crossmark. In such cases, difference is not only part of the significance of the shift; it also provides an implicit comment on the conditions that gave rise to the difference in the first place.

Consider the following dialogue between a black hotel attendant and a white guest in the 1830s, quoted by a reporter for the New Orleans *Picayune* (Corcoran 1846) in an article entitled *The Shakespearian Boot Black*: the occupant of room 40 says:

No.40—"Aw! Cesaw, is that you?"

Caesar (in a treble bass tone of voice.)—"It is I, my Lord!" But at once assuming his natural dialect—"Doesn't you want nuffin, massa?"

Rather than fusing or mixing his voices, the bootblack purposefully contrasts them through

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tone, vocabulary, and literary mastery. In all three examples–the bootblack story, the quadrille, and the ground-written cross-mark–participants command plural networks that cannot be inferred from each other, though each makes sense in relation to broader patterns of contact, exchange, and oppression.

Although style switching and oscillation often involve language, obviously they do not fit comfortably within the narrower linguistic analogy or model of creolization that Leland Ferguson (1992) has adapted from Charles Joyner's (1984) definition: a European lexicon mapped onto an African grammar (also Burley, this volume). This formulation ignores an important fact about creoles, one that is also fundamental to the intersystems view. Throughout the world, and certainly throughout the Caribbean, creoles always coexist geographically with "metropolitan" languages like French and English, or with forms that *count as* a metropolitan language locally (Sebba 1997:203). Michif speakers are aware of, and to varying degrees able to communicate in French or English, as are speakers of, say, St. Lucian *Kweyol*. When one takes into account the range of variations in register that members of a speech community command, (sometimes called a "creole continuum") the claim that the grammar of a given creole language may more closely resemble that of an African over a European language is an oversimplification that can obscure important aspects of participants' larger sociocultural and material worlds.

Some linguistic and cultural resources become associated with cosmopolitan identities and elite status while others become associated with local identities and authenticity, thus, style and code switching are part of the fabric of prolonged intercultural contact. Acknowledgement of their existence is necessarily contextual because claims of cultural and linguistic distinctness and autonomy have important political and economic implications, as Burley makes clear in his account of Métis ethnogenesis.

In sum, then, scholars of intercultural situations should learn to recognize the *cultural grammar* involved in knowing how and when to use *more than one kind of language, behavioral style, and material repertoire*–the crossmark *and* the leg o' mutton sleeve. For archaeology and material culture studies, oscillation and style/code shifts form coexistent associative networks that channel two or more cultural avenues of design and interpretation. In African Americanist archaeology this seems most obvious with reused and recontextualized objects like pins, buttons, shells, and mirrors that may well remain what they were–so they retain the potency that objects accrue through previous use–*and* what they have become as part of a new configuration such as a divination kit. The combination of Georgian and open features in Métis vernacular architecture also seems to cue different histories and associations. The "timing" of creolization in an enduring population thus involves continually managing and distributing resources, not just "mixing" them once and for all to make "culture."

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GREY GUNDAKER
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM
COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY
PO BOX 8759
WILLIAMSBURG, VA 23187

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