CULTURAL CREOLIZATION

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Abstract: The central effect of globalization is cultural convergence. The notion of "cultural creolization," amplified from creole linguistics, offers a model wherewith to understand the cultural convergences of Europe and the rest of the postmodern world. *Creolization,* like *diaspora,* is a word with a history that is relevant to cultural analysis. Despite the claims of other terms like *acculturation, transculturation, mixing,* and *hybridization,* I advocate creolization to remind ethnologists of the decisive power differences that are always present when cultures converge. Creolization also denotes the creation of something discontinuous and new, which could not have been predicted from its origins. I sketch the relation of this concept to history, sociolinguistics, communication theory, anthropology, and religious studies, in the light of definitive linguistic research.

Keywords: creolization, sociolinguistics, folkloristics, globalization, syncretism, Indian Ocean

> My Castilian is a bastardized Castilian. This language reflected only part of me, and therefore I could make it mine while inventing it daily. Because, besides being an orphan, I spoke both Spanish and Catalan. I have always said that this linguistic orphanhood, this having a stepmother as my mother, is in the end a great creative outlet (AMAT 2001: 193).

The Catalan novelist Nuria Amat says that multilingualism is creative. In fact it always has fostered creativity. The nineteenth-century Russian peasant was exposed to three or four languages at the same time. Each had its distinct function. The peasant made creative choices among the available codes, on the basis of what function needed to be performed. Tolstoy's and Turgenev's upper-class characters speak French whenever they can. In the twenty-first century, my native language has become newly fertile. "Up against standard or 'BBC English,' as it is commonly called, we find very diverse forms: the Englishes of Aberystwyth (Wales), of the Bronx (U. S. A.), of Hong Kong, Jamaica, or north London present differences so important as to interfere with comprehension" (CALVET 1981: 10). Important enough, too, to take a central place in the literary creativity of the Nigerian Amos Tutuola, the Trinidadian Samuel Selvon, the Indian Arundhati Roy, or the British Zadie Smith. Varieties of literary language have been created for the novelist by vernacular speakers, who continually subject their languages to change. Folktale performers (especially those of African extraction) exercise the same choice to switch codes–

whatever their language–that the Martinican Patrick Chamoiseau does (FINNEGAN 1970: 383–386; DORSON 1972b; GÖRÖG 1991: 40–43; CHAMOISEAU 1997). Inhabiting concepts like "world languages," "minor literatures," "ethnicities," and "folk groups" are people speaking more than one language and participating in more than one tradition.

How can ethnographers comprehend these phenomena? Fortunately, creole linguists have supplied terminologies and hypotheses, which extend well beyond linguistics. The appearance of an expanded translation of the definitive book by Robert Chaudenson makes these readily available to a reader of English (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001). This author is the leading authority on the French-based creole languages of the Indian Ocean and elsewhere, which are analyzed in the journal he founded, *Études Créoles*. He directs the Institut d'Études Créoles et Francophones at Aix-en-Provence. His book sets these languages in their sociocultural context and applies linguistic theory to other provinces of culture. Most important, it implies that the notion of cultural creolization offers a model wherewith to understand the cultural convergences of Europe and the rest of the postmodern world.

To honor and build on Robert Chaudenson's work, I review the linguistic parentage of cultural creolization. Then I sketch its relation to history, sociolinguistics, communication theory, anthropology, and religious studies. Going beyond what M. Chaudenson might be expected to approve, I suggest that inherently, ethnology and folklore are creolizing disciplines. What one comparative literature scholar has said about comparatists is true for folklorists: they "should be compulsive poachers. Border transgressions and forays into uncharted lands are in fact the essence of their calling, which is the discovery and constant renewal of cultural relativism ..." (FEUSER 1988). Such poaching is the true interdisciplinarity of folkloristics.

1. A QUICK DEFINITION

Definitions vary. By creolization Robert Chaudenson means "sociolinguistic processes peculiar to the development of societies which were born out of seventeenth-century European colonization." The language systems that emerge from it he asserts to be new, autonomous, and specific (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 162). As a metaphorical way to identify creole languages, Robert Chaudenson invokes the three unities of neoclassic criticism:

> *unity of place:* they emerged typically on islands;
> *unity of time:* they developed typically within approximately a century;
> *unity of action:* they evolved in colonial slave communities (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 34).

I see the phenomenon more broadly, in the light of history's many cultural convergences. Creolization is the kind of mixing that occurs when peoples of different

traditions and languages come together. So many times, throughout history, a ruling minority has effected a contact situation between themselves and a subjugated population. From that situation develops a language of intergroup communication, characterized by borrowing and remodeling: a *pidgin* or a *creole* (POLOMÉ 1982: 246; HYMES 1971). Many factors affect the development of this new language: the type of political system that follows a conquest, the numbers of the two groups, the movements of population; wars, invasions, and trade; the reinforcement of language loyalty by religion; the centralization of authority, or the lack of it (POLOMÉ 1982: 261–262). Both Chaudenson and I, having studied the islands of the Indian Ocean, apply our conclusions about linguistic creolization there to other cultural systems[1].

In a region like the Southwest Indian Ocean, political forces, numbers of people, economic inequalities, and intergroup conflicts strongly affect–indeed they generate–tales, proverbs, riddles, and folksongs. Consequently such islands, where diverse groups have been brought together by coercion, offer students of culture a laboratory for understanding creolization. In a multicultural island state like Mauritius, multilingualism is normal.

> The university lecturer addresses his students in Kreol; the clerk addresses his subordinate in Kreol but his boss in French (and possibly his mother in Bhojpuri); the Franco-Mauritian housewife addresses the Sino-Mauritian shopkeeper in Kreol, but would speak French with the attendant in one of the posh shops of downtown Curepipe (ERIKSEN 1998: 87).

Such creolized societies merit examination for what they can tell us about the renegotiation of culture everywhere. If language is fundamental in creating cultural practice; if "culture is located in concrete, publicly accessible signs, the most important of which are actually occurring instances of discourse" (URBAN 1991: 1); then it is reasonable to look for "creolized" cultural practices that are analogous to the vocabulary and grammar of creole languages.

2. THE LESSONS FROM LINGUISTICS

> D. E. The meeting was a decisive one for you?
> C. L.-S. It was enormously important. At the time I was a kind of naïve structuralist, a structuralist without knowing it. Jakobson revealed to me the existence of a body of doctrine that had already been formed within a discipline, linguistics, with which I was unacquainted. For me it was a revelation (LÉVI-STRAUSS and ERIBON 1991: 41).

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[1] Examples: HARING 1993, 1992a, 1991, 1985, 1999b.

Back from Brazil, temporarily exiled, Claude Lévi-Strauss met Roman Jakobson, in company with other intellectuals, at the École Libre des Hautes Études de New York. He wanted to learn from Jakobson a suitable notation for Brazilian languages. Instead, listening to Jakobson's lectures on "sound and meaning" in 1942–43, he encountered the principle of studying the relations among terms in a linguistic system. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* followed from that revelation (LÉVI-STRAUSS 1969). Visualizing the role Jakobson assigned to phonemes, Lévi-Strauss sculpted his conception of incest prohibition and marriage rules. These revealed their meaning when they were seen as mutual oppositions. Whether Lévi-Strauss understood Jakobson properly, or even whether Jakobson was correct, has no importance: what was achieved was the connection of two apparently separate domains, linguistics and anthropology (LÉVI-STRAUSS 1978).[2] Of the two, linguistics held the greater power. Its gospel catalyzed the inception of structural anthropology, first in kinship, then in interpretation of the South American oral narratives that Lévi-Strauss calls "myths." At this stage, there was no thought of cultural mixing, only of diffusion. Later, it was creole linguistics that had something to teach to folklorists.

It is easy to accept this possibility because of the many historical parallels between linguistics and folkloristics. Both have tried to use a "family tree" model, in which "a 'parent' language gives rise to two or more 'offspring,' which are seen as having developed from it through more or less natural processes ..." (SEBBA 1997: 9). The model enabled linguists to comprehend linguistic change (SEBBA 1997: 9–10, 72). Similarly, especially in Europe, folklorists relied on the model of the "life history of a folktale" (THOMPSON 1946: 428–448). A tale had its "original form," which the scholar must reconstruct; it underwent inevitable changes, which produced different versions like offspring. In another parallel, linguists assumed that contact between languages would have no effect on "the 'true' or 'fundamental' character of a language" (SEBBA 1997: 10), and folklorists sought to repel the contaminating effects of "nonfolk" forces and defend authenticity (BENDIX 1997).

Other parallels too encourage the ethnologist to "poach" from creole studies. Both ethnologists and creole linguists have sometimes subscribed to theories that traced every item to a single origin (monogenesis) or multiple origins (polygenesis). Also, both disciplines speculated about universals (HARING 1999a), as well as biologically conditioned limits. Are there constraints, for instance, on how much new language an adult can learn, or on "the permissible relationships betwen form and meaning" (SEBBA 1997: 96)? Is there a limit on how many tales a repertoire can sustain, or on the range of "allomotifs" available for one tale (DUNDES 1980)? Then too, there is the revelation that for creole societies–those that come into a colonized, multiracial existence for the benefit of a European minority–efficiency in communication means ambiguity and plural meaning. These strategies take on new importance when languages and traditions converge.

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[2] The connection seemed theoretically new, but earlier in the history of anthropology, when Franz Boas incorporated his philological heritage into his teaching, pupils like Edward Sapir and Alfred Kroeber virtually created anthropological linguistics.

Pidgin and creole linguistics provide a new model for understanding that rene-gotiation. Throughout the world, these types of languages have developed within specific situations of social contact, often very unequal in power. According to Robert Chaudenson, those situations must be reconstructed for the language to be comprehended. Creoles and pidgins are built up from previously existing languages, but they are new languages in both structural and functional terms. Moreover, creolized and pidginized languages are not "hybrid," "broken," or inferior to some established and "pure" national languages. Rather they are emergent, historically discontinuous and autonomous. Finally–a critical feature–these languages have new social and linguistic functions, which grow out of the new communities in which they are formed (HYMES 1971; TODD 1990). What appeared to be rather strange linguistic phenomena, specific to an eccentric set of circumstances, are in fact part of all language change and development.[3]

Several hypotheses follow. (1) Situations of cultural convergence produce their own cultural expressions. (2) Such "creolized" folklore has a new artistic shape, as well as new social and linguistic functions. (3) "Creolized" folklore is not something deteriorated from an earlier, purer state; it is new or emergent in important ways. (4) Its ways of newness require attention to "context," the social setting of folklore (DUNDES 1964), especially to the power differences between dominating and dominated groups. Rather than seeing creole folktales, for instance, as versions of European tale types, or proverbs, riddles, costume, cookery, or architecture as misunderstood derivatives, they are "better understood as converged and reassembled" congeries of symbols, "products of the joining together of two or more historically distinct [tale traditions] under very pressurized circumstances such as colonization or slavery" (SZWED and MARKS n.d.: 3). In creole societies like the island of Réunion (a central place of Chaudenson's research), a basically oral literature coexists with a very divergent, highly codified written literature, in this case French. The written literature is learned largely by formal education, which enjoys a prestige denied to its oral cousin. Like language in creole communities, the repertoire and performance style is "a new and emergent product" (SZWED and MARKS n.d.: 4). Often it is impossible to pinpoint the specific relation of creole tales or houses to their historical sources (BARAT 1993).

When folklorists take up the linguistic concepts, they may want to poach also from literary theory. The problem of textuality, which occupied literary critics in the 1980s, is available, "the tendency of language to produce not a simple reference to the world 'outside' language but a multiplicity of potentially contradictory signifying effects that are activated in the reading process" (JONES 1993: 641). It is a tendency often noticed by folklorists. The American Alan Lomax, for one, uses an emotional

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[3] New research continually challenges prevailing linguistic theories. A forceful study of a Canadian "mixed" language rejects them all, starting with the "family tree" model. It has no similarity to the contact languages studied before, and it challenges psycholinguistic and linguistic theoreticians to the point that the author knows "several professional linguists who contest its existence since it does not fit into their model of how a language, or a mixed language, should look" (BAKKER 1997: 4).

contradiction to explain the hold of the ballad "Barbara Allen" on American imagination.

> Barbara Allen ... is frigid western woman humbling and destroying
> the man whom she sees as her enemy and antagonist. That she dies
> at once of remorse, immediately frees her and her sisters of the
> guilt of hard-heartedness (Lomax 1960: 171).

The ballad heroine embodies contradictory qualities; the hearer, especially a woman, is invited to identify with the opposites.

Folklorists like Lomax and creole linguists like Chaudenson perform historical labor when they replace textual ambiguities in a sociohistorical setting. From Africa, the most striking example is the "defiant girl" tale, which is available for a limitless number of interpretations, each with its local habitation. In this tale, a defiant young woman refuses eligible suitors in favor of a handsome stranger. Presently her new husband is revealed to be an ogre or an animal in disguise. Then she must ask herself a question that even the most happily married woman sometimes asks herself: "How can I escape from this marriage?" The answer comes often from her birth family: a brother or sister effects her rescue. In many versions, the murderous, man-eating ogre-husband is punished. The defiant-girl tale is known all over Africa, where its variant forms are the object of an exhaustive study (Görög-Karady and Seydou 2001). From there it was carried to Seychelles, the Comoros, Réunion, and Mauritius. Interpreters find in this multivalent piece the same "multiplicity of potentially contradictory signifying effects" that literary critics find so problematic (Seydou 1994; Biebuyck and Biebuyck 1987). Those effects result from and exert influence on the enormous variety of social settings where the story is told. Thus the concept of variant forms, which underlies all folktale study, expands to include variant tellers, audiences, sociocultural assumptions, and meanings.

3. BOUNDARY DISPUTES

The French are famous for rejecting encroachments into their language from English. Not long ago, a distinguished linguist saw multilingualism as threatening the sovereignty of the language of La Rochefoucauld and Mme de Sévigné. English, he said, must be halted in its advance towards dominating international communication (Hagège 1995). A sense of difference between "native" and "other," which European ethnology has often endorsed, always plays out in quarrels over language. In the past, ethnology, emerging in tandem with the colonial project of the European powers, had to respond to European consternation over the loss of linguistic and cultural purity. As Europeans had to acknowledge difference in Asia, Africa, and the New World, they also had to acknowledge the reality of a cultural self, for themselves and others. Concurrently, under the project of democratization, they felt a need to circumscribe a popular, cultural basis for emerging nation-states that were

calling themselves democratic. The result was an effort to establish cultural purity. Almost every nation, indeed every ethnicity, imposed its idiosyncrasies on the ethnologic disciplines. Yet consistently, in the efforts to delineate cultural wholes, the political and the scholarly march hand in hand. The result is a strongly reflexive attitude about one's cultural heritage, which has erected a barrier between ethnology in Europe and ethnography in the colonies (CUISENIER 1990).

National traditions exemplify the conflict of intellectual currents. In Hungary and Bohemia, a political goal, "the search for a national ideal and national characteristics," effected a literary focus "on the common people and the peasants" (KLANICZAY 1982: 169–170). No one can doubt the growth and prosperity of the folkloristics that resulted in Hungary under the impact of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (DÉGH 1949). In Bohemia, the "national awakening," which spotlighted Czech and Slovak languages, impelled the study of folklore. The opposing force there was mandated primary education, which led towards a Germanization of Bohemia. In response, Czech traditions were "sacralized" and an imagined community was created, the new product of the interplay of converging forces (HARTWIG 1999: 67). Even the emergence of M. M. Bakhtin in Soviet Russia looks like a hybrid product of the conflict between humanist literary aesthetics and the formalist school. Unpredictable, indeed subversive, were Bakhtin's statements that literary art (in Rabelais, for instance) depends crucially on folklore. Folk laughter was the greatest weapon against the repressive monologism of the Stalinist state. And Bakhtin was the greatest defender of hybridization (BAKHTIN 1981a: 305–331). But Bakhtin would probably laugh off my attempt to integrate him into my case for cultural creolization.

After World War Two, European ethnology tried to maintain its old definition. It would study the culturally whole and the linguistically circumscribed. European ethnologists today practice folklore, *Volkskunde, folkliv, ethnologia europaea*, cultural and social anthropology, *empirische Kulturwissenschaften*, cultural sociology, and aspects of social history–not to mention the faddish "cultural studies" they have imported from Anglo-America. Amongst this diversity of names, the scholarly effort becomes a political tool of reification of culture, always driven by a constant fear of losing one's heritage. Scholars published collections of national epics, narrations, and song; folklife museums were created to represent the culturally typical, especially that which could be presented as antedating the present era. Consequently, a large part of the role of European ethnology has been to stand guard over the national and the pure.[4]

At the same time that some ethnologists tried to keep custody of the national and pure, others looked around them and asked new questions. What happens culturally, for instance, when people from southern Europe, Turkey, Greece, and North Africa immigrate to central and northern Europe (PFAFF 1981; HINES 1991)? Multi-

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[4] My former colleague Regina Bendix contributed much of the substance of these paragraphs.

lingualism comes into play, as a new word for an old fact. In response to their his-
tory, German ethnologists redefined their object of study; they created a tool for
multicultural understanding. The "Falkenstein formula" was hammered out in re-
sponse to the corruption of the idea of *Volkskunde* under National Socialism. The
word *Volk* had to be cleansed of its deadly associations. So the formula declared,
"*Volkskunde* analyzes the transmission of cultural values (including their causes and
the processes which accompany them) in their objective and subjective form. The
goal is to contribute to solving sociocultural problems" (qtd DOW and LIXFELD
1986: 2). If the mutual incomprehension of guest workers and host citizens is such a
sociocultural problem, if the wearing of a head scarf by a high school girl makes
trouble for her, if postmodernity changes the labels but not the realities of orders
that are now in conflict (KÖSTLIN 1999), the "Falkenstein formula" supplies what an
ethnographer needs to understand what happens when cultures converge, for in-
stance in touristic dance performances at beach hotels (CHAUDENSON and
MUFWENE 2001: 200–201). Thus it provides a base for Chaudenson's extrapolations
from creole linguistics to cultural systems like music, folk medicine, cookery, and
oral literature (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 194–302).

Like creole linguistics, the Falkenstein formula illuminates convergences of the
past that were intellectually ignored or suppressed. Take the Austro-Hungarian
Empire, with its bureaucratic efforts to restrain the diversity of Bohemia, Galicia,
Hungary, northern Italy, Croatia, and Slovenia–the multilingualism of the 23,000,000
Slavic speakers, 12,000,000 German speakers, 10,000,000 Magyar speakers and the
other groups with distinct cultures. Imperial interconnection through the police and
bureaucracy assured that cultures would converge under the Kaiser (as they con-
tinue to do under today's governments, where people speak German, Serbo-
Croatian, Magyar, Slovenian, Czech, and Slovak). Nineteenth-century policy towards
this convergence did not always welcome diversity. In Bavaria, at the time

> when 'the folk's' expressive culture all over Europe was enthusiasti-
> cally embraced as a vehicle to regain a lost national soul onto which
> to build a new political future, the Bavarian monarchs sought to
> harness the same sentiment to solidify their shaky monarchy
> (BENDIX 1998: 134).

Thus the revolutionary-romantic exploitation of folklore to move towards de-
mocracy spawned its opposite, an official containment and control that had echoes
in every colony of Europe.

But the reality remained. In the 1950s, one scholar studied a cult that moved
across national borders, in the "wide Danube area" where "old and new cultures
overlap, in which German, Slav, Magyar, and Rumanian nationalities have merged
continually for more than a thousand years" (WEBER-KELLERMANN 1986: 178–179).
What is new is a willingness of European ethnologists to take such movements as an
object of study (BERDAHL 1999; GODDARD, LLOBERA and SHORE 1994; VERDERY
1999); http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~sae/).

Ethnology now re-views world history through this lens of convergence. Take the prodigious conquests of Islam, with their difficulties of communication among the "semi-Christianized Arab tribes" who began to undergo defeat in 633 (LEWIS 1993: 51). The advance of Islam, like the expansion of imperial Rome, meant the imposing of bi- or multilingualism: military conquest carried language. So "to the present day the foothills of Taurus [Turkey] mark the northernmost limit of Arabic speech" (LEWIS 1993: 54). Religion carried Qur'anic Arabic, while spoken Arabic (like the religion) was "subject from the earliest times to external influences" (145)– Persian, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac. Here as in other historical moments, we witness convergence, creativity, and power difference among peoples, and among scholars too.

4. THE LESSONS FROM SOCIOLINGUISTICS

A similar convergence occurred in the United States. There, the history of folk-loristics started in a "confluence of forces and ideas at work during the 1880s, a dynamic time when new disciplines and organizations were being established" (ZUMWALT 1988: 1). To trace that confluence, the historian requires words like *battle*, *bloodletting*, and *struggle* (ZUMWALT 1988: 3). By World War Two, despite the majestic influence of Franz Boas, the discipline had been squeezed into the same marginal position as a creole language (ZUMWALT 1988: 40). Postwar attempts to augment its power base had only temporary success (DORSON 1972a). Then sociolinguistics came along, one of a congeries of popular and intellectual shifts and blends in America after World War Two. People began to notice that boundaries between languages, peoples, and nations were continually shifting. African liberation movements, for instance, began when war experience exposed Africans to ordinary, provincial European soldiers who were obviously no better than they were. The postwar period saw an analogous liberation in the social sciences. There was a drive to expose the disparate and bounded disciplines to one another. Once exposed, they began to intermarry. Fields with hybrid names were born: psycholinguistics, ethno-linguistics, ethnopoetics, ethnomusicology, and sociolinguistics.

Of course this was not the first time scholars expanded their scope beyond the monolingual, enclaved community. There have always been fundamental questions about what happens to a cultural product when it is "borrowed." One answer is that it always deteriorates (DUNDES 1969). Other answers have been subtler. William Bascom cataloged African tales in the New World (BASCOM 1992), Michael Seeger studied intercultural influences in folksong of the southeastern United States (SEEGER 1974), and Alan Dundes discovered African folktales among North American Indians (DUNDES 1973). But in the postwar United States, something occurred that might be called an event. A discipline some thought must be a hybrid, sociolinguistics, took in the study of bilingualism, multilingualism, "standard" and "national" languages, dialect, style, and communicative competence (PRIDE and HOLMES 1972: 7–11; BAKHTIN 1981b). Fertilization from sociolinguistics redefined the object of

folkloristic study. The story of this paradigm shift has been often told by its partici-
pants and leaders (LIMÓN and YOUNG 1986; BAUMAN 1986: 1–10, 1989: ix–xxvii,
1982). One university's story exemplifies the creolization model.

4.1. ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION

In the 1960s and 70s, colleagues and gifted students at the University of Penn-
sylvania in the United States had an unusually rich interchange, initiated by sociolin-
guistic work of Dell Hymes and stimulated by the teaching of Erving Goffman and
Ray Birdwhistell. Goffman, through metaphors he drew from game and theatrical
play, ritual practice, and the framing of art works, revealed that everyday life was a
cultural construction (GOFFMAN 1959, 1967, 1975, 1981). Birdwhistell analyzed kine-
sics (body movement patterns) and the microbehavioral dimension of cultural practice.
Through his ruthless teaching he extended the boundaries of the University's Depart-
ment of Folklore and Folklife (BIRDWHISTELL 1970). The three scholars deeply af-
fected the way in which ethnographic observation would now be carried out, especially
among cultures contacting one another. The "ethnography of communication," a syn-
thesis of sociolinguistics, frame analysis, and kinesics, was born (HYMES 1974a). The
huge area for research it mapped out bore fruit in creolization studies.

To begin with, the new approach broadened the study of language. Speech acts,
we know, include many different kinds of "talking": the passing of information,
surely; the direct expression of affection, impatience, or rage, always; but also pray-
ers, greetings, farewells and oaths. These different kinds of talk, distinct as they
were, needed more precise description. Ethnography of communication moves away
from lexical, syntactic, or suprasegmental studies to take in these other communica-
tive functions.

It had long been unremarkable to distinguish between what is said–the referen-
tial function of language–and how it is said–the expressive function. (1) The refer-
ential function deals with what is being named or referred to–the *topic*, or what the
literary critic I. A. Richards called "sense" (RICHARDS 1929: 175–176). Its literary or
folkloric counterpart is narrative, whether poetic ("Anna Fehér heard tidings / That
her brother had been taken prisoner") or prose ("Once upon a time there lived a
king who owned a beautiful pond") (VARGYAS 1983: 352; RAMSURRUN 1987: 44).
The referential function is what enables a Robert Chaudenson to rely on the account
of an eyewitness like Bernardin de St. Pierre in reconstructing the social setting of
eighteenth-century Ile Bourbon (now Réunion), or the music being played there
(CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 207–208). Linguists generally assumed that the
referential function controlled the organization of language.

Hymes reversed the predominance. People usually pay more attention to ex-
pressive elements, like the tone of someone's voice, than to referential elements like
words. (2) The expressive function of language conveys information about the
sender. Most of the time, the expressive function dominates our interactions. The
reversal was foreseen by the Russian formalist Jakubinski:

> If the speaker uses [the phenomena of language] for the purely
> practical purposes of communication, then we are dealing with the
> system of *practical language* (discursive thought), in which language
> resources ... are merely a *means* of communication. But it is possi-
> ble to conceive and in fact to find language systems in which the
> practical aim retreats to the background (it does not necessarily
> disappear altogether), and language resources acquire autonomous
> value (MATEJKA and POMORSKA 1971: 9).

While poetry is the obvious instance of such a system, creole societies constitute communicative systems (in another sense of that word) in which the multiplicity of codes itself becomes a resource (HARING 1991). To read poetry, Richards divided that information in two. *Tone* is one's attitude toward what he is speaking about; *feeling* arises from one's awareness of a listener and occasion (RICHARDS 1929: 173). Being primarily concerned with the attitudes of the sender, the expressive function finds its literary counterpart in lyric poetry ("I sit in my grief. I wait for morning in my tears") and its folkloric counterpart in folksong ("It's when I'm drinking I'm always thinking How to gain my love's company"). With Hymes's reminder, folklore studies could then ask about what a storyteller is expressing through the sequencing of tales (BAUMAN 1986) and what attitudes are implied through the ambiguities of verbal art (MITCHELL-KERNAN 1973).

Hymes broadened the study beyond referentiality and expressivity by distinguishing five more functions of language: directive, contact, poetic, metalinguistic, and contextual (HYMES 1974a: 23). Thus he created a framework for understanding what happens when different linguistic traditions converge.

(3) The directive function of language focuses upon the receiver and seeks to produce an effect on a listener. Being rhetorical or persuasive, the directive function (Richards's "intention") is paralleled by dramatic poetry ("Call no man fortunate that is not dead"), and in folklore by proverbs ("A bird in the hand is worth ten in the bush"). More broadly, a directive function transpires from folktales that show appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

But these three, Hymes says, are not enough to analyze speech acts. Nor would they be enough to account for what happens when languages come into contact. Four more functions need recognition.

(4) The contact function of language draws attention to the "channel" through which communication occurs: writing, speaking, singing. It took many years for folklorists to begin reconnecting the words of songs with the music that is their channel (CHILD 1965; AUSTERLITZ 1967; LLOYD 1967). From the beginning, scholars translated from the oral channel to the written one. A few pioneers notated the music of African-American slaves; thus did they establish contact with their literate readers (ALLEN, WARE and GARRISON 1951; THOMS 1965). Investigators in Africa were bound to observe the performers' habit of alternating speech and song (BIRD 1972: 289). In situations of convergence or display, the channel draws attention as much as the poetic function (KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT 1998). Now scholars rec-

ognize that creolized societies nearly always multiply their channels of artistic communication (ABRAHAMS 1983; MANUEL, BILBY and LARGEY 1995; MULLER 2001).

(5) Also, as poets have always known, language has a poetic function: the form or shape of a message is the poet's special domain. By ignoring the channel of singing, students of ballad and folksong had long scrutinized the poetic function (WELLS 1950; FRIEDMAN 1961; HYMAN 1963). In times of the convergence and conjunction of two languages, the poetic function rises to the surface, because speakers and writers sense that bilingual speech acts have a creative potential. Thus new folklore is created (KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT 1983). The study of creolized folklore will invoke the same methodological principle as the critic Paul de Man extracts from his reading of Hans Robert Jauss: to reveal the "enigma of the relationship between the aesthetic and the poetic ..." by means of "rigorous theoretical questioning". Eloquent poets and artists who produce the artistic communication may not need the rigor of questioning. In Bangla Desh, writes Henry Glassie, "above all, I wanted to record an interview with Haripada Pal .... I had no questions, but rather a few requests, invitations to create verbally.... In response to our requests, Haripada shaped a fourfold statement that met my highest hopes .... First, I asked Haripada to tell the story of his life" (GLASSIE 1997: 320–321). The result is a copious, inspiring statement of the relation of art, life, and God (GLASSIE 1997: 313–351).

(6) In ordinary conversation or anthropological fieldwork, one asks such a question as "How do you spell that?" – a metalinguistic question that asks for information about the code. The metalinguistic function of language conveys information about the language. In folklore, when ethnographers need information about performance, they look for rules. Who is allowed to tell tales or speak proverbs? To whom? Under what conditions (CALAME-GRIAULE 1965)? They look also for ethnic systems of genre (BEN-AMOS 1976). When speakers of different languages try to communicate, metalinguistic questions come up continually. The folkloric analogue would be "metafolklore." Alan Dundes offers one definition of this word as what occurs when one joke, for example, refers to other jokes (DUNDES 1966). His notion of metafolklore has been broadened by another folklorist to take in all "devices which comment upon the narrator, the narrating, and the narrative both as message and as code." These devices of "metanarration" are as much practiced by folk narrators as by such authors as William Gass and Italo Calvino (BABCOCK 1977; HARING 1988). The Mauritian narrator Marcel L'Allouette began one story, "Once upon a time, in a country, guess what there was? There was a king and his queen" – alluding to European folktale conventions his hearer would surely recognize (CHRISTIAN 1980). Coexistence of multiple folkloric codes heightens the likelihood of metafolkloric statements, like what a Mauritian prince character says to his young lady about stories like his: "You know, in everything the princess must get married" (interview with Sydney Joseph, Grand Bel Air, Mauritius, 18 April 1990).

(7) Finally, when Hymes pointed to the context function of language, he forced attention on to the performance of folklore. Instead of the words written down by a tale or song collector, folklorists would now study the performance of the tale or song as a situated interactional communication (BAUMAN 1977). American folklor-

ists quickly began to ask about the effect on verbal style, in one group, of an awareness of other traditions in the midst of converging or clashing cultures (ABRAHAMS 1983; BAUMAN 1986; KOCHMAN 1972; PAREDES 1977). Perhaps the most important of all these effects is the intensifying of sensitivity in creolized societies of the indirect coding of covert messages. In immigrant communities of the New World, where linguistic traditions converge, speakers developed a capacity for indirect coding, which led to continual remodeling and adapting of inherited or "borrowed" materials (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 270–275). In the creolized society of Antigua, sociolinguist Karl Reisman found that speakers in that multilingual island "tend to maximize ambiguities of cultural reference and of expressive and moral meaning and then play with them to hide and manipulate the contradictions in their cultural patterns of value and expression" (REISMAN 1989: 116). In the United States, the immigrant situation itself evoked "a heightened awareness of cultural diversity and ambiguity, a well-developed capacity for reflexivity or self-reflection" (KIRSHEN-BLATT-GIMBLETT 1983: 43). Long a topic in literary criticism, ambiguity finds a new home where a ruling minority has subjugated another population. Africans long ago mastered strategies for hiding their thought and revealing it at the same time; for alluding to delicate, even dangerous matters; for testing their children's intelligence and ability to listen; for creating beauty, humor, and play (CALAME-GRIAULE 1963: 85; REISMAN 1970; HYMES 1974b: 434). Under slavery, whether in Mauritius or Réunion or in America's most strident clash of cultures, the power inequalities became the ubiquitous topic of folklore (ABRAHAMS 1985). An ambitious exploration of verbal ambiguity, rooted in African ways of speaking and American folk speech, became an instant classic of African-American literary criticism (GATES 1988). Once it was understood that people's normal reaction under oppression is to renegotiate culture, ethnography of communication became an indispensable framework for understanding cultural creolization.

Another force was the political winds of the 1960s, which impelled folklorists to look at border crossings. Américo Paredes inspired a generation of intellectual activism among Chicanos in Texas (PAREDES 1993; LIMON 1992). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett spotlighted the release of creative energies resulting from the immigrant experience (KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT 1974). "Folklore" had become a new field with a broader mandate. But only the folklorists saw the innovations. Anthropologists, historians, and literary critics knew only the old and decaying name of folklore. One of them called it "one of the most dangerous words in the English language" (qtd in KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT 1998: 162). American folkloristics had become its own creolized society, oppressed in the intellectual domain and continually poaching on other fields. Perhaps the United States, as a formerly colonized country, carries out intellectual bricolage more easily than a nation-state of long standing (Regina Bendix, personal communication). Whatever the reason, folkloristics remained marginal.

5. TERMS AND STAGES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

For anybody who knows the history of folklore in this country there is no doubt concerning the positive and intellectually invigorating influence anthropology had on folklore (Dan Ben-Amos, personal communication).

Languages, I have said, mix when their speakers come into contact, and change their rules. The master principle that moves cultural goods is the "reinterpretation of borrowed myths [or sayings, or house types, or songs] to fit pre-existing cultural emphases" (Kluckhohn 1965: 168). Ethnicities too are transformed: "New ethnic identities are not ... simply older ones writ large. Where they are not novel constructs, they entail the transmutation of older categories to meet new needs in new ways" (Worsley 1984: 351).

So it is among scholars. Historians and anthropologists have been obliged to transmute their older categories to meet new needs. Historians have shown the inevitable mixings in situations of forced migration (a euphemism for slavery, indentured labor, and displacement), for instance among African-Americans (Genovese 1976; Gutman 1977; Blassingame 1979). From anthropologists come explanations of the structures or functions that have been transmuted in the mixing. The synthesis of history and anthropology had to pass through several stages.

At the outset, Franz Boas, an immigrant to the United States who was himself a notable mixture (German-Jewish-physicist-ethnographer-linguist), proclaimed that American mixing would be ubiquitous (Boas 1974b: 319–321). Yet he was ambivalent. Even while separating "race, language, and culture" in the title of his 1940 book, Boas understood that race was plastic and subject to mingling. Rather than address the mixed culture of the African-Americans living a few blocks away from his Columbia University campus, Boas tended to look to Africa and advocate the redeeming of its glory (Boas 1974a). Inevitably, he knew, race mixing was going to increase; "the most important practical questions relating to the negro problem have reference to the mulattoes and other mixed bloods" (Boas 1974a: 330). Boas's ambivalence was as prophetic as his other insights.

In a second stage, under the influence of Durkheim, Mauss, and Saussure, colonial policy became an issue and colonies brought new perceptions (Clifford 1988: 75–80, 87–90, 168–171). It became clear that Western anthropologists knew almost nothing about contacts among nonWestern peoples. Already in 1935, Gregory Bateson saw that anthropologists were confused about culture contact. Bateson hypothesized that culture contact was more or less equivalent to the way children learn, and later elaborated this argument with the concept of deutero-learning (Bateson n.d.). Meanwhile historians in colonies like Madagascar amassed evidence for internal migrations (Deschamps 1959).

Terms were needed to conceptualize these movements. Every one carries its own semantic freight. *Diffusion* and *dissemination* of "particular cultural traits and complexes" were the first terms to come into use, in Boas's time (Herskovits 1948: 523). They imply a dynamic center and a passive periphery. Then the classic term *acculturation* reflected a new anthropological concern with existing social situations

in the present. It was defined as the "continuous first-hand contact" of people of different cultures, "with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (HERSKOVITS 1948: 523). Anthropologists didn't apply the definition as broadly as its words implied. When representatives of dominant cultures used the word *acculturation*, they tended to imply that a language and its speakers would be contained and minoritized (KEESING 1945).

Then the complexity of individuals began to be noticed. The American anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell noticed that some Native American individuals were mixing cultures within their very selves. Obvious examples, as we look back, were the interpreters and amanuenses without whom the research of Franz Boas and Edward Sapir could not have been done (TEDLOCK 1983: 321–338; SILVERSTEIN 1996). They had many counterparts around the world. Hallowell introduced the term *transculturation* to denote their sort of mixing. It's too bad that a term that seems to describe everyone we know gained so little currency (HALLOWELL 1963).

Without retracing the history of anthropology or the anthropology of history, I can point to one odd query. Only a few years ago, one anthropologist divined the need for the field of folkloristics. Apparently he didn't know it already existed.

> In a multicultural world, a world of multiple epistemologies, there is need for a new philologist–a specialist in contextual relations–in all areas of knowledge in which text-building ... is a central activity: literature, history, law, music, politics, psychology, trade, even war and peace (qtd GEERTZ 1983: 32).

What this anthropologist failed to acknowledge was that a number of "new philologists" were already exploring the contextual relations of expressive culture, calling themselves folklorists and borrowing from literature, psychology, history, sociology, and linguistics.

5.1. A LINGUISTIC TURN

Borrowing the anthropological term, linguists have pointed to "internal acculturation," the process whereby two languages, such as French and Breton, or two dialects of what used to be the same language, such as British English and Irish English, confront each other. Internal acculturation in Europe took place while French and Spanish were spreading through the New World; the powers at home assimilated or attempted to suppress regional languages. Through the political power of the dominant group, Parisian French came to dominate Breton and Occitan, and Castilian Spanish dominated Catalan (BARTHES 1977). Such attempts at standardizing language and culture – at effecting linguistic engineering or internal acculturation – recur throughout European history. A present-day example is *francophonie*,

the centrally directed imposition of the French language on France's former colonies (ROBILLARD and BENIAMINO 1993).

After World War Two, the areas yielding most anthropological understanding were the former colonies, the "creole societies" outside Europe where peoples and languages exist side by side. So from Jamaica, Edward Kamau Brathwaite offers the term *interculturation* to denote white-black convergences throughout the Caribbean (BRATHWAITE 1974). A more egalitarian model for envisaging vernacular culture or folklore derives from the linguistic term *diglossia*, a relatively stable coexistence of two codes. Arabic, modern Greek, Swiss German, and Haitian creole are the textbook examples of diglossia. Each of these communities has an everyday language; it also has a divergent code, which often is grammatically more complex and perceived as superior. As is obvious from Arabic, this code is likely to be the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community. It is learned largely by formal education, and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes (FERGUSON 1964). Diglossia characterizes creolized societies. In the Indian Ocean island of Réunion, standard French and creole coexist (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 30). The diglossic model helps to understand how formal and informal levels of a single language exist side by side, as in Madagascar (KEENAN 1989). Where there is diglossia of language, there is diglossia of expressive culture, which in colonial and postcolonial societies raises questions of how the societies were formed (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 54). Even in postindustrial societies, the elite culture of symphonies and museums is distinct from the mass culture of popular records and television (BOURDIEU 1984). And distinct from both, for the person with ears to hear it, is a subordinated vernacular expressivity that flourishes "below the level of 'high' or formal culture ..." (BRUNVAND 1968: 1). All three borrow from each other.

What terms like *acculturation* often omit, when anthropologists take them up, is the historical dimension which Robert Chaudenson insists on, especially the socio-economic or politico-cultural conditions "by which the deculturation/acculturation processes of outsiders acquiring the language can be documented" (POLOMÉ 1982: 276–277). This is why I advocate the term *creolization*. It takes account of whatever power relations make it necessary for people to remodel their language and renegotiate their culture. Moreover, it does not disregard two defining characteristics of any culture. One is portability: culture is always available to be carried elsewhere. The other characteristic is adaptability: culture can be changed and modified. Populations who have been forcibly moved display an unusual capacity for adapting their culture to new and oppressive situations. Hence the presence in African-derived cultures, for instance, of creative imitation and "signifying" (multivalence, plurisignation).

One Caribbean island, Trinidad, becomes the microcosm of Brathwaite's Jamaica-based interculturation, through the eyes of one of Herskovits's students, Daniel J. Crowley (a mixture of anthropologist and art historian). His awkward phrase for it is "plural and differential acculturation." Among the 750,000 people of Trinidad, Crowley saw peoples of every group acquiring the ways of other groups.

Seen from the position of the black half of the population, the island possessed some thirteen racial and national groups in a vertical arrangement. But seen through his anthropologist's eyes, the groups were not culturally exclusive. "All the members of any group," he wrote, "know something of the other groups, and many members are as proficient in the cultural activities of other groups as of their own" (CROWLEY 1957: 819). Non-creole, non-Black groups had converged, basically, on language, folk belief, magical practices, mating, family structure, festivals, even music. Sexual contacts among members of different groups produced children who learned the diverse ways of diverse parents. As to religion, most people belonged to more than one organized religious group, Catholic coexisting with Shango, Baptist with Catholic, Christian with Hindu. The magical practices of peoples of African and Indian traditions seemed to agree. The religio-social festivals of various traditions were interpenetrating. Crowley's egalitarian conclusion was that no one in Trinidad was marginal. Everyone acquired some of the ways of other groups and retained the choice when to use them.

Such "plural and differential acculturation," which could equally well be called cultural creolization, was the common denominator of Trinidadians as of other postcolonial peoples. In Madagascar, people's varied ethnicity, geography, dialect, religion, and economic base all affect their perceptions of each other (SHARP 1993: 52–80). In Mauritius, cultural creolization is the rule (HARING 1991). The keenest sense of it comes from people like this 35-year-old Mauritian, interviewed in 1985.

[I]n my social environment, with other components of the creole community, [there are] those who are called–whom some people call Euro-Creoles, a creole bourgeoisie or a creole aristocracy, and I feel totally ill at ease with these idiots, because they identify with a culture, with whites. [As for myself,] there are two definitions. I define myself as a Negro-Dravidian, which means I have two sources ultimately, Africa and India, especially Tamils. But if you like, I accept the term Afro-Mauritian. And it is Afro-Mauritians who are most pressed down in this country (LAU THI KENG 1991: 166).

For this man, politics bears down on culture and identity. Fifty years after Crowley's discovery, plural and differential acculturation appears to be the common denominator of people everywhere. Today all cultures are mixed. Ethnic groups never really assimilate. It is impossible to sustain the long-held notion that "a culture" is something integral and pure (KAPCHAN and STRONG 1999; LIONNET 1989). M. M. Bakhtin is the philosopher of today's assumption, declaring from his study of literature that languages are inevitably mixed. As if foreseeing the ethnic consciousness of the late twentieth century, Bakhtin writes of the "intentional hybrid" in language; literature holds the hybrid with no harmonization (HOLQUIST 1981: 429). Again, folklorists noticed the hybridizing long ago.

As the mixing phenomenon becomes more obvious, more terms come forward. The term *métissage* opens "a space ... where multiplicity and diversity are affirmed." Equally affirmed are "undecidability and indeterminacy, where solidarity becomes the fundamental principle of political action against hegemonic languages"

(LIONNET 1989: 5, 6). Other terms pointing to coexistence, blending, and transmutation are *syncretism*, in religious studies (STEWART and SHAW 1994), and Claude Lévi-Strauss's famous *bricolage*, "the formation of fresh cultural forms from the ready-to-hand debris of old ones" (WERBNER 1994: 215; LÉVI-STRAUSS 1966: 17).

To come back to the Indian Ocean: the key term there among Francophone scholars is *créole* and its derivatives. *Créolisation* is the process; the resultant state of culture is *créolité* or *créolie*, other names for what Crowley called "differential acculturation." The Mauritian poet and literary historian Jean-Georges Prosper names this new state of culture "Indian-Oceanism." Those who see that the five sets of islands (Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius, Réunion, Seychelles) are culturally interrelated, proclaim their shared creativity (JOUBERT, OSMAN and RAMARASOA 1993: 160). In Mauritius and Réunion, identity and culture are sites of continual reinvention and contestation; self-perception and the need for roots are constantly being revalued (JOUBERT, OSMAN and RAMARASOA 1993: 284). Réunionnais scholars Robert Chaudenson, Jean-Luc Alber, Daniel Baggioni, Jean-Luc Carpanin Marimoutou, and Didier de Robillard have labored fruitfully with the variant meanings of the terms (ALBER, BAVOUX and WATIN 1992). Chaudenson's masterly synthesis of linguistics, anthropology, and history erects a theory of regional culture on the historical forces that formed the syncretisms (CHAUDENSON 1992; CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001).

History interwove the islands with one another into a cultural-geographical area (TOUSSAINT 1996; DUPON 1976), with regional interconnections (ALLEN 1987; BARRET 1983). The peopling of Réunion, Mauritius, Seychelles, and the Comoros, and most recently the peopling of Rodrigues by ex-slaves from Mauritius, gave them a common history. Linguistically they are interwoven (CHAUDENSON 1979). As early as 1826, a register of Mauritian slaves showed many minor ethnic categories, which make it certain that expressive culture was carried to Mauritius from Anjouan and Seychelles, as well as from Gorée, Cape Verde, Timor, and Goa. Literary historians also see the interconnections (JOUBERT 1991). Madagascar, with its longer history and distinctive culture, would seem to stand apart. Yet even Madagascar is linked to the other islands through expressive culture. Coastal Malagasy folk culture, especially of the Betsimisaraka, shares much with Réunion, Mauritius, and the Comoros. By comparing riddles in Madagascar, Réunion, Seychelles, and Mauritius, Claudine Bavoux reveals strong interconnections among them (BAVOUX 1993). Vernacular arts take up half of Robert Chaudenson's wide-ranging book: music, cookery, medicine, magic, and folktale (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 194–302). With that history, these islands produced the model wherewith to understand cultural convergences elsewhere.

6. CREOLIZATION IN ISLAND ARTS

For each group of settlers–European, African, Indian, Chinese–the sensibilities they brought to the islands were the starting-place.[5] Plural and differential acculturation created new and unpredictable styles. Musical and dance creolization in Seychelles, for example, has been prominent since the beginning of its history (SZWED and MARKS 1988: 31). Coming there from diverse origins, young slaves and liberated Africans were exposed to "the variety of European culture extant in Seychelles from their masters, employers, and peers" (BENEDICT and BENEDICT 1982: 142), and used them as material. A contemporary historian sees transformations of the African trickster Sungula through Seychelles history (SCARR 1999: 146–147). The creolizing initiated at the outset is still going on; it means rapid change in such a touristed place. Within a fifteen-year span, the African-derived *moutya* had been supplanted by the Mauritian *sega*, whereas the *sokwe*, a dance supposedly of African origin heard in 1960, had disappeared.[6]

In Réunion, dance and music are creole products in both senses–adaptation and creation. The adaptation is heard in the island's instruments. The violin already had a privileged place in 1812. Later the mandolin and banjo came in, followed by the most prominent creole instrument today, the accordion (*diatonique*). Testimony from 1862 indicates seven coexisting types of music performed by distinct social groups: wealthy whites; *petits blancs* and mixed-race freemen; former slaves; Indian, African, and Malagasy indentured laborers (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 213). Performance styles, already creolized, were scorned by the French sensibility as slapdash (*sabreur*). "Indeed," one settler wrote, "they appear to be slashing [*sabrer*] the music by playing in jerks and jolts" (qtd LA SELVE 1995: 120; CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 215). European dances too were adapted: the quadrille, polka, mazurka, waltz, and *scottish*. Equally available for regional adoption are "creole forms of music and dance that are most clearly not European" (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 218). Tradition sets in place the models that make new creations possible. Songs for work and dancing, political songs, and the popular songs of Georges Fourcade (a Réunionnais Stephen Foster or Irish songwriter), have proliferated, until now, the huge number of compact discs that Réunion produces every year is the best evidence that creolization means creativity (LA SELVE 1995: 157–224).

Creolizing, incidentally, also means multiple meanings for the names of the favorite genres. *Sega* means several different kinds of music and dance in Seychelles and Réunion (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 216–217). In Mauritius, the

[5] I echo Roger D. Abrahams and John F. Szwed's insistence that in the New World, African sensibilities were the starting-place for the slaves' remodeling of imported European culture (ABRAHAMS and SZWED 1983: 47–48).

[6] In the medical realm too, Seychelles pharmacopoeia illustrates the creativity of a creole society. Not attributable to either Africa or Europe, it is a new product, "an indigenous amalgam of the two," based on a meticulous knowledge of local plant remedies (BENEDICT and BENEDICT 1982: 146; ROSALIE 1994).

storyteller Nelzir Ventre, whom I knew and recorded, referred to his kind of *cante-fable* as *sega*. Creolized societies will use such a name in enough different denotations to confuse the outsider. A person unfamiliar with its sources can go so far as to make up an origin that turns the musical history of a colonized island into a European child's piano lessons (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 216–219). But in a creolized society, genre names don't need to be any more fixed than performances.

Then there is verbal art.[7] Réunionnais folktales characteristically are mixed. Different traditions came together, power was unequally shared, and new sets of norms were created through borrowing and remodeling. Many of Réunion's settlers came in the seventeenth century from western France, knowing Sleeping Beauty and Bluebeard. Among these classic tales, written and oral, they brought with them the best known of all, Cinderella, long assumed to be of European origin. Later, scholars dug up her ancient roots in China and discovered her modern shoots in Africa and the New World (DUNDES 1988). In our time, Africanist scholars have discovered something about her that the French colonists didn't need to know. What ensured that Cinderella would take root in Réunion is that she conforms closely to a classic African plot. A girl who has lost her mother is mistreated by her stepmother, who makes her perform menial duties. She makes herself useful to an animal, who rewards her with beautiful clothes and eventually a rich marriage (PAULME 1980; CALAME-GRIAULE 1989). When Africans were brought to the Caribbean, Réunion, or Mauritius, and the Europeans who imported them introduced Cinderella to them, the tale sounded echoes of what they already knew from home. In Madagascar too, it was remodeled into an authentic-sounding Malagasy story, which Gabriel Ferrand collected on the east coast in the early 1890's (FERRAND 1893: 123–129). In each place, the inherited sensibility was the starting-place.

The Mauritian Cinderella from 1888 is a fine example of creolizing a folktale (BAISSAC 1967: 118–129; 1989: 100–107). It has several bits a European reader will recognize–a fairy godmother, a discovery by the prince, and a proof of the heroine's identity. But the Mauritian Cinderella has no glass slipper. She has a lecherous father who wants to marry her. He immigrated from India (THOMPSON and BALYS 1958: 420). (His illicit desires remain unpunished at the end.) Instead of a cruel stepmother and sisters, the unfriendly, distant female of the tale is her future mother-in-law–just as in any Comoran tale, the mother-in-law would be a woman's main adversary (BLANCHY 1986). A European reader, perhaps remembering the Constance of medieval romance, might be struck by the patient persistence of this well-behaved Mauritian heroine. She never initiates anything. Instead, the sexual symbolism is more obvious than in Europe: only the heroine can pull a ring out of the hero's throat. In another regional touch, the heroine disguises in an animal skin.

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[7] Whereas Robert Chaudenson uses the term *oral literature* to denote folktales, I use the American term *verbal art* to cover not only tales but also the proverbs and riddles he calls marginal (BASCOM 1955; BAUMAN 1977; HARING 1992c). His interesting comparisons of Martiniquais and Réunionnais proverbs would benefit from formal analysis of their folkloric structure.

By doing that, she reenacts a favorite Malagasy motif, the disguised flayer who puts on the skin of a person he or she has just killed (K1941 in THOMPSON 1955–58: 4:457). Introducing the tale, Baissac saw creolization in narrative as well as he saw it in language: "The reader will see in this tale better than in any other, perhaps, what singular amalgams are produced in the creole memory" (BAISSAC 1967: 128–129). The Indian Ocean Cinderella exemplifies the new kind of cultural product that is created when peoples of different traditions and languages come together.

Indian Ocean folktales are not all typologically similar, as creole languages are, but they can be grouped into thematic or formal subtypes (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 294–295; HARING 1982), which facilitate comparison with their parent repertoires. They don't all belong to one tradition, as creole languages do according to Chaudenson. Whatever the shaping influence of Bourbonnais creole on other island languages (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 53–141), eighteenth-century European tales from Ile Bourbon (today's Réunion) did not provide the basis for the Mauritian creole tales Charles Baissac published. Rather, folktales are separated by language and ethnicity; they overlap through reciprocal influences. Their basis came from Africa and Madagascar (HARING 2002). For Indian Ocean slaves as for their New World counterparts, "African sensibilities were the starting place" (ABRAHAMS and SZWED 1983: 47–48).

On the same reasoning, whites (such as the *petits blancs*) and Indian laborers did not simply preserve their older plots and characters but rather added newer patterns. The Cinderella case is one example. Others come from the extraordinary Réunionnais performer Gérose Barivoitse, who often elaborated the Kreol closing formulas that Baissac recorded in nineteenth-century Mauritius. In his formulas, "not only irony and the desire to criticize turn up, but also pure playfulness, unintentional humor, wit, and comic contrast for its own sake" (LÜTHI 1984: 52). His inventiveness, energy, and synthesizing power add up to a style thoroughly traditional for a creolized society. "The dynamic nature of the story itself enables story-tellers to accommodate much more easily than 'learned' writers to the presence of foreign elements in the local reality" (CHAUDENSON and MUFWENE 2001: 261–262).

6.1. CREOLIZATION, MODERNISM, POSTMODERNISM

Other parts of the postmodern world also practice artistic creolization. Take the United States. Beginning from their African sensibilities, African-American composers and instrumentalists remodeled many different forms of dance from European forms. Jazz became the arena in which these set forms were carried to their greatest heights. A most prominent creator was Jelly Roll Morton, whose multisourced music displays great formal complexity (SZWED and MARKS 1988: 33–34). Or take South Africa, across the globe. The history of South African jazz is complexly interwoven with American jazz history. Even in the darkest days of apartheid, recordings of American jazz enabled aspiring performers to learn from master musicians and "creolize" their music (MULLER 2001).

Of course creolization in the arts is not new. At the earliest stage of European intellectual history, there were pidginization and intergroup contact (WHITTAKER 1998). Well before linguists began to pay attention to creole languages, twentieth-century high modernists like James Joyce knew the processes of borrowing and re-modeling. Joyce experienced the convergence of English, Irish, and innumerable other traditions. He knew he was a colonial, from a country occupied for four centuries. At one stage, his hero Stephen Dedalus claims silence and exile as his first weapons against oppression (JOYCE 1976: 453). But later, the author, speaking and writing many languages, living most of his life in Trieste, Italy, and Switzerland, borrowed from all of European literary culture.

7. CREOLIZATION AND POSTMODERNISM

The modernist or postmodernist literature of our time has drawn energy from postcolonial liberation movements, for example in Africa. Take the Ijaw-influenced English of the Nigerian novelist Gabriel Okara: "Why did you a bad man's side enter? ... Are you a stranger man be? ... There he remained talking with his inside [instead of *mind* or *spirit*] until sun down" (OKARA 1970). Similarly, the acclaimed "African English" of Amos Tutuola counterposes the speech of colonial officers against vernacular Nigerian English (TUTUOLA 1953). All over the world today, new literatures like these develop out of the convergence of diverse traditions of language and culture.

If people's shift from subsistence agriculture to a plantation economy was the major reason for creolization in the past (BENEDICT and BENEDICT 1982: 148), then economic shifts from industrialism to postmodernity make creolization look a lot like postmodernism. The colonial perspective makes them postmodern:

> Postmodernism in fiction paradoxically uses and abuses the conventions of both realism and modernism, and does so in order to challenge their transparency, in order to prevent glossing over the contradictions that make the postmodern what it is: historical and metafictional, contextual and self-reflexive, ever aware of its status as discourse, as a human construct (HUTCHEON 1988: 53).

The oral status of pidgins and creoles has sustained a vital oral literature that equally draws attention to its own status (TODD 1990: 70–81).

Are creole literatures (whether oral or written) postmodern, then, or is the term too vague? "Unfortunately," writes Umberto Eco,

> 'postmodern' is a term *bon à tout faire*. I have the impression that it is applied today to anything the user happens to like. Further, there seems to be an attempt to make it increasingly retroactive: first it was apparently applied to certain writers or artists active in the last

twenty years, then gradually it reached the beginning of the century, then still further back. And this reverse procedure continues; soon the postmodern category will include Homer (qtd HUTCHEON 1988: 42).

Despite Eco's incisive warning, the phenomena of cultural creolization both use and abuse the conventions of both realism and modernism. *Postmodern*, if it means "contextual and self-reflexive," does apply to creole literatures, whether written by an Okara or a Tutuola or orally performed by a Mauritian joketeller (HARING 1992b). In the Southwest Indian Ocean, linguistic creolization is tightly linked to the impact of French colonization on Africans, Indians, and Malagasy. Music, cookery, folk medicine, and oral literature are inevitably contextual and self-reflexive.

A folktale from the small island of Rodrigues illustrates the region's way of remodeling. The tale is The Brave Little Tailor (Type 1640 in AARNE and THOMPSON 1961). I summarize.

As Soudin, an unemployed drunk, lies in a stupor by the side of the road one day, three hooligans pass by. One says, "Let's kill him," but another says no, "Let's take a pencil and write on his shirt, 'Soudin with one pistol shot kills 500,000 men." They agree and inscribe the message. When the king hears about this boast from a passing general, he sends for the drunkard. "You really kill 500,000 men with one pistol shot?" "Yes, king." War is declared, Soudin is signed up.

Five days later they're still waiting for him. "Soudin, aren't you coming?" "Don't worry, king, nothing to be afraid of." The day before the battle, Soudin still has no horse; he chooses a horse with one hoof missing. Passing by a cemetery, he seizes a big cross. Under his other arm he takes a coconut tree. When the enemy sees him coming down, they flee in terror. Soudin takes the flag they have dropped.

The king awards him half his fortune, half the kingdom, and his daughter. "But I don't want to marry," he says. Yet the king insists, so Soudin marries the girl and takes her home (CARAYOL and CHAUDENSON 1978: 104–117).

Drunkenness, hooliganism, unwillingness to attempt equitation, and Soudin's consistent refusal to fit into the authoritarian social system mark this version of an international type as specifically Rodrigan. Parodying by exaggerating the class separation found in French versions (MASSIGNON 1968: 16–19), caricaturing the bourgeois stereotype of the lazy Creole, the storyteller exemplifies the postmodern sensibility. The tale perfectly conforms to the three criteria for creolization: convergence of traditions, oppression of a subordinated group, and an unpredictable novelty.

8. RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM AS CREOLIZATION

To religious people, especially theologians, the mixing that I have been calling creolization is unwholesome. They call it syncretism; they see it as a contentious kind of hybridization (WERBNER 1994: 215; STEWART and SHAW 1994: 1–26). But when peoples of different religious traditions and discourses come together, mixing inescapably occurs, especially when a ruling minority imposes ritual on a subordinated population.

Again the Southwest Indian Ocean islands are my laboratory. At a Hindu temple I sometimes visit in Mauritius, one regular worshiper is also a disciple of a late Indian pundit – the one who changed his name to Osho after he was obliged, by American legal action, to return to India and put behind him his days as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. The worshiper feels no conflict. Farther in the past, around 1690, Père Hyacinthe, who was the curé of Saint-Paul in Réunion (then called Ile Bourbon), regularly said Mass on the same day in each of the three parishes of the colony for the sake of driving away evil spirits. So effectual was the good father's synthesis of Catholicism with local belief that he was soon relieved of his duties (CHAUDENSON 1983: 8). Since then, France has continued to impose Christianity on the Réunionnais, even South Indian Tamils. But few were subjugated in persuasion. They maintain belief in their inherited Hindu gods; their Christianity is merely a public display for the benefit of the authorities (GHASARIAN 1997).

Authorities respond in various ways. To condemn the mixing, as Père Hyacinthe's bishop did, is one characteristic response. He was not ready to tolerate or imagine the plural acculturation Crowley would later observe in Trinidad. Another response is to deny that it's happening; a third is to prosecute it, as the Taliban authorities did in Afghanistan. A fourth response is to appropriate the mix, as Brazilian school officials have done by installing the teaching of Candomblé, the African-derived religion of thirty million Brazilians (WIPPLER 1998: 252). But even in their field, the notion of cultural creolization helps unravel controversies, especially when the power differentials behind these are acknowledged.

Mauritius, Réunion, and Seychelles, say the Catholic authorities, are Catholic islands. One hundred forty years of Church-of-England secularism quite failed to extirpate Catholicism (DUPON 1976: 1290), but it also failed to extirpate inherited patterns of belief and custom. As Crowley found in Trinidad that most people belonged to more than one organized religious group, so in Mauritius, Malagasy, African, and Indian practices coexist and combine with Catholicism, Hinduism, and Islam. For example, since 1857, both Muslims and Hindus, with no fear of compromising their religious identification, have participated in an Islamic festival, the *tajjia*, which memorializes the sufferings and death of the Prophet (EDUN 1984). I attended the festival in 2003.

Every observer of Mauritius notices some kind of creolization, but the religious mixing is the most surprising to me, the American. It doesn't surprise Mauritians. Most of the "creole" population, of African and Malagasy extraction, are nominally Catholic, but "increasing numbers of Creoles have participated actively in the an-

nual, spectacular Tamil Cavadee [*Kavadi*] festival"–which attracts plenty of us. Mauritian folk religion has vigorously remodeled inherited traditions, especially the Christian ones acquired from the dominant Europeans. "Black stone images in Tamil temples," for instance, are "identified as Saint Theresa and the Virgin Mary" (BENEDICT 1961: 40). There is a widespread respect for the power of Christian saints. "Sino-Mauritians," writes one observer, "most of them nominally Catholics, celebrate both the Christian and the Chinese New Year. They perform most of their rituals in church, but on certain occasions they solemnly enter the pagoda in Port-Louis" (ERIKSEN 1998: 92–93).

Don't these people feel any conflict? Not according to this observer: "Hindu women observed at Christian Mass in a south-western village replied, when asked, that they certainly remained religious Hindus. They did not seem to understand my insistent questions about contradicting religious practices." His decisive example is the Tamil women who have converted from inherited religion to Catholicism (one of whom is a friend of mine in Vacoas). These women "always take their sandals off when entering church, sometimes even sacrificing bananas to Christian shrines. Both practices originate in Hindu ritual" (ERIKSEN 1998: 92–93). "I have seen," wrote another observer in the 1950's, "Catholic Creoles fire-walking at Tamil ceremonies, Muslims and Catholics making offerings at a Tamil shrine, Hindus praying in Catholic churches" (BENEDICT 1961: 44). Tamil festivals in Mauritius seem to be modeled on the syncretic Catholicism that has grown up around Jesuit missions in their homeland of Tamil Nadu (MOSSE 1994). In both places people developed a shared religious culture, but in Tamil Nadu the focus was on Hindu gods. In Mauritius, the central cult figure, drawing creolized religion to himself, is a Catholic, Père Laval.

Indeed for all Mauritians, Père Laval is the most saintly figure in history. He was a nineteenth-century French Catholic missionary; the Pope paid tribute to him on a visit in November 1989. The grave is one of Mauritius's two major pilgrimage sites, attracting not only Catholic Creoles and Catholic Chinese, but also Hindus and Muslims. You can pray to the reverend Père Laval, or make offerings for the sake of being healed, whether you are Catholic or not. Then there is the *promes*, another bit of creolization. The *promes* is a religious vow to perform a ceremony or make an offering if your request is granted. It has been taken up across denominational boundaries. The custom may have been brought to Mauritius by orthodox Hindus, but Catholics follow it just as much.

Hindu folk religion, which brought the *promes* to Mauritius in the era of indenture, maintains different beliefs and practices from those in either Hindu orthodoxy or the Arya Samaj (reform) movement. Religion follows the linguistic differentiation of the Indo-Mauritian population. It has developed varieties in Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, and Telugu languages; it comprises a number of subsects (RAMDIN 1984: 110). Among the various creolizing language groups, it is the Telugus about whom most is known. Telugu people in Mauritius have adopted both North Indian and Tamil religious practices. At home they celebrate pan-Hindu festivals: Shivratri, Divali, Ram Naomi, Krishna Jayanti, and Shankantri–but some Tamils question the validity of Shankranti observance by Telugus. For certain festivals, Telugu temples

hold their own prayers, thus maintaining a boundary; others are held publicly, thus they ignore a boundary. Telugus differ amongst themselves: will they celebrate Divali one day with the Tamils, or the next day with the North Indians? When they observe South Indian practices (Ram Bhajan, Ammoru Panduga, Seemadree Appanah Puja, Mounessprince), the Telugus use different practices from the Tamil ones (NIRSIMLOO-ANENDEN 1990: 111–27). It can't be accidental that the anthropologist who gives us these precise details about what creolization of religion really means is also a prominent novelist (DEVI 1992, 1988).

Religion in other islands in the region is equally creolized. In Réunion after 1848, indentured Indians converted to Christianity in large numbers, usually by having their children baptized. Later, the forces pushing national unification attempted to suppress Hinduism, which inevitably became a folklorized part of Indian identity (PRUDHOMME 1984: 266). Réunion today comprises Catholicism, Hinduism, and Islam, along with popular French folk religion and healers. Religion in Seychelles (nominally 90% Roman Catholic and 8% Anglican) underwent creolization from the outset, combining African and European beliefs in witchcraft and divination. It has its *dondossia* (big wandering spirits that walk on their heels), its *names* (small spirits that walk on their knees), and its *conans* (bearded spirits covered with feathers), as well as its Tamil and Malagasy *bonshommes et bonnes femmes de bois* (DUPON 1976: 1292). "Most Seychellois," according to Benedict, "see no incompatibility between holding beliefs in witchcraft and considering oneself Christian" (BENEDICT and BENEDICT 1982: 144). In Madagascar, one aged blind narrator, not long ago, was skilled enough at combining religious traditions to connect "the origins of humanity to the genealogy of his clan's ancestors, reinterpreting Bible characters in the terms of Malagasy tradition" (GUEUNIER 1992). Such skilled sages are the unacknowledged legislators of the Southwest Indian Ocean.

It is a habit among oppressed people, especially in Africa, to carry out such religious remodeling (MEYER 1994; KIERNAN 1994). Black South African prophet Isaiah Shembe combined elements of Nguni custom and cosmology with Western mission Christianity into a "religious empire" of women (MULLER 1999: xiii–xix). Their "ritualized performance [became] a mechanism for the enactment and transformation of historical conditions and processes ... [The girls] hold the reins to cosmological communication ... encompass the history of the community ... carry the voices of the ancestors inscribed in their bodies and memories"; they reenact the past and contain the future (MULLER 1999: 194–196). African patterns may well underlie the kind of remodeling found in Seychelles or Mauritius.

Outsiders like me will always be frustrated by trying to identify Mauritians by their religious affiliation (ERIKSEN 1998: 97–101). "It is nearly meaningless," writes the anthropologist Burton Benedict, "to label one Chinese Buddhist, and another Confucian while a third is characterised as having no religion. ... I came across Chinese families in which the parents were 'Buddhists,' one child was Roman Catholic, another Church of England, and a third Buddhist" (BENEDICT 1961: 42). In a hospital in Britain, the Mauritian nurse is only a Mauritian, neither Hindu or Muslim, whereas within Mauritius, the Hindu and the Muslim share "Indianness," in every-

body's eyes. Creoles, Chinese, and Franco-Mauritians share Christian religion, often Roman Catholicism. Telugus and Tamils, opposed in language, share "Dravidian-ness" in opposition to descendants of North Indians. And all three share the Hindu religion.

But to members of a creolized society, religious affiliation means identity. How shall it be conceptualized by ethnographers? As with the Kachin myths studied by Edmund Leach in Burma (Myanmar), each affiliation or each identity is upholding the claim of a different vested interest (LEACH 1964: 264–265). Sociologists, political scientists, and ethnographers may be allowing the question of ethnicity to shrink in importance (ERIKSEN 1988: 187). But ethnicity, caste, and kinship affiliation, like religion, are sites of contestation in Mauritius. The notion of cultural creolization enables us to see such differences of identity as the energy behind the performance of the *tajjia*, the *promes*, or the *kavadi*. The notions of plural acculturation (CROWLEY 1957) and differential identity (BAUMAN 1971) lead to the same conclusion: if Mauritian identity appears to an anthropologist to be nothing but shreds and patches, it is made into a unity by those within it who carry out cultural performances (LEAF 1979: 213).

Are their practices examples of "syncretism" or "cultural renegotiation," or is there a difference? Whatever the label, the mixing conveys authenticity. What is claimed as "authentic" may depend "on the political acumen and persuasiveness of cultural 'spin doctors' ... who convert given historical particularities and contingencies to valued cultural resources" (STEWART and SHAW 1994: 8). But for ordinary folk, "traditionalizing," – agreeing to value certain symbolic behaviors (or categories, or norms) over others – conveys authenticity. Their multicultural situations make it necessary for them to traditionalize. When they do, they exemplify cultural creolization.

9. DEFENSE OF ILLEGITIMACY

In my wittier moments, I like to describe folklore as a bastard field that anthropology begot upon English (COFFIN 1968: v).

> Why brand they us
> With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
> Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
> More composition, and fierce quality,
> Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed
> Go to th' creating a whole tribe of fops,
> Got 'tween asleep and wake?
> ...
> I grow, I prosper.
> Now, gods, stand up for bastards!
> (*King Lear*, 1.2.6–22) (EVANS 1997: 1307)

Admit that creole languages are bastardized, as Nuria Amat says. Yet a good many people–Amat, Brathwaite, Chaudenson, Deleuze and Guattari, and on through the alphabet to Rabelais and Derek Walcott, stand up for them. What about ethnographers or folklorists? Do they also undergo or experience creolization? Don't the various national intellectual traditions of folklore study take shape within specific situations of differential power? In United States universities at least, representatives of established and "pure" disciplines, like history or literature, perceive the study of folklore as inferior. I observe similar attitudes in India and Nepal. From the clash, however, something new and unpredictable can come out, which grows and prospers.

The avenue towards prosperity, I believe, is to imitate the creolizing that thrusts itself on our attention as a worldwide phenomenon. Writing about the United States, Ralph Ellison remarked that any viable theory of part of a culture obligates us to fashion a more adequate theory of the whole of that culture (KRUPAT 1987). Now, any viable theory of world culture obligates us to assemble facts about cultural convergence, transgressing intellectual borders and foraying into uncharted lands. In the spirit of such transgressions, a "creolized" theory of culture will acknowledge the many ways in which "local populations and performers draw on 'global' culture for their own folkloric productions" (Kimberly J. Lau, personal communication) (HANNERZ 1996; IYER 1988).

What about "globalization"? Arjun Appadurai has sufficiently complexified this notion of globalization to warrant its use by ethnologists. He names five dimensions of the global flows of our time: *ethnoscapes*, "the landscape of ... tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers ..."; *mediascapes*, the spread of information media and "the images of the world created by these media"; *technoscapes*, the shape and movement of technologies; *financescapes*, the movements of global capital; and *ideoscapes*, the organization of political cultures around inherited and borrowed concepts (APPADURAI 1996: 33–37). Appadurai gives ethnologists an answer to their habitual fear of standardization and its resultant losses. He asks us to scrutinize a new kind of diaspora: a diaspora of the imagination. He explores the combined effect of media and migration "on the *work of the imagination*" and takes this effect as forming the consciousness of people today. This new consciousness will quickly take media images and appropriate them "into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor, and resistance" (APPADURAI 1996: 7).

Ethnographers learn about these appropriations by watching creolized societies. Already in the Seychelles of a generation ago, "Women [would] eagerly scan the fashion magazines for the latest dress designs, which they copy with cloth bought from Indian merchants in the town" (BENEDICT and BENEDICT 1982: 213). At a wedding, the Seychellois musicians (two fiddlers, a guitarist, accordionist, drummer, and triangle-player) played the Scottish "Auld Lang Syne" at the beginning of the reception. Celebratory recitations memorized from books "ended with a 'Hip, hip, hip' with the guests responding 'hooray à la santé', a curious mixture of English and French traditions" (BENEDICT 1966: 60). As for anger, creole societies express it more than outsiders hear it. *La mor kaf i pas pa a la radio*, A black man's death

doesn't get on the radio, *Kaf na poin la boutik*, Black man has no shop, Réunionnais have been heard to say (DUPON 1976: 1191–1192) (not to cite their saying about shopkeepers, *Sinoi pa dimoun*, The Chinese aren't human) (DUPON 1976: 1170). Humor and irony are the customary language of the calypso artist The Mighty Sparrow, who outraged West Indian intellectuals with a song about a cannibal and missionaries to Africa ("Congo Man") (SPARROW n.d.).

Perhaps we can begin to see the world through the irony, anger, humor, and resistance of the poor relation, if not of the illegitimate child. Like the Mauritian-American critic Françoise Lionnet, "I have become increasingly convinced of the urgent necessity of looking at this New World from the perspective of that small island (and others like it)" (LIONNET 1989: 7). In the 1980s and earlier, that small island situated itself in world politics through jokes. To understand this one, it helps to know that *bomli*, or "Bombay duck," is a small dried fish imported to Mauritius from India.

> There was a conference in the United States where all the countries were represented by the delegates to talk on armament, which type of arms each country has. So the American said that they have sophisticated arms, like the nuclear bomb. The French said that they have the atomic bomb; Russia said it has hydrogen bomb; China said it has hydrogen bomb and India said it has underground bomb. Now the turn of Mauritius comes. What will the Mauritian say? Each country has talked about the efficiency of its arms and their effects. Now is the turn of Mauritius. The Mauritian representative stood up and said, "In my country we have *bomli*" (GALLOB 1987: 288–289).

In the ancient African pattern, a weak character defeats the strong by wit and verbal eloquence. In the setting of Mauritius, where two-thirds of the population descend from Indian immigrants, a small Indian food defeats the nuclear weapons. In a globalized context, folklorists will take in Appadurai's global flows and engage in continual creolizing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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