

Creolization and Cultural Globalization: The Soft Sounds of Fugitive Power

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In this article, I provide a comparative discussion of Creoles and creolization. The core concept centres on the cross-fertilization between different cultures as they interact. When creolization occurs, participants select particular elements from incoming or inherited cultures, endow these with meanings different from those they possessed in the original cultures, and then creatively merge these to create new varieties that supersede the prior forms. While discussions of creolization are common in linguistics, studies of popular culture, and historical studies of certain plantation societies, I use the notion here as a contemporary and general sociological term. I argue that creolization is a key aspect of cultural globalization and provide more detailed discussion of new understandings of creolization in Brazil, South Africa, and the US. I contrast manifest and strident forms of ‘monocultural’ power in the reassertion of nationalism, narrow ethnicities, and religious affinities with the more subtle but pervasive forms of ‘fugitive power’ found in the construction and affirmation of creolized identities. Creolization is only one aspect of fugitive power, but it is one with an intriguing past, an increasingly visible present and, I will suggest, a promising future.

En este artículo, planteo un tema comparativo sobre los criollos y la criollización. El concepto primordial se centra en el intercambio de diferentes culturas cuando interactúan. Cuando ocurre la criollización, los participantes seleccionan elementos particulares de culturas inherentes o de afuera, los dotan con significados diferentes de aquellos que poseían en las culturas originales y luego los incorporan creativamente para crear nuevas variedades que reemplazan a las formas anteriores. Mientras que los debates sobre la criollización son comunes en lingüística, los estudios sobre la cultura popular y los estudios históricos de ciertas sociedades de las plantaciones, yo uso aquí la noción como un término contemporáneo y sociológico general. Sostengo que la criollización es un aspecto clave de la globalización cultural y que provee más argumentos detallados de los nuevos entendimientos

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de la criollización en el Brasil, Sudáfrica y los EE.UU. Yo establezco un contraste entre las formas manifiestas y estridentes del poder 'monocultural' en la reiteración del nacionalismo, etnicidades estrechas y las afinidades religiosas, con las formas más sutiles pero persuasivas del 'poder fugitivo' hallado en la creación y afirmación de identidades criollizadas. La criollización es solamente un aspecto del poder fugitivo, pero con un pasado intrigante, un presente cada vez más visible y yo sugeriría, un futuro prometedor.

As a concerned citizen and a social scientist, it is difficult not to be troubled by the destructive effects of a resurgent nationalism (for example, in the US), an unyielding ethnicity (as in the Balkans, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka) and fundamentalist religious affinities that have the effect of pouring gasoline on the already incendiary politics of places like the Middle East and the Sudan. It may be, however, that these manifestations of what is sometimes called 'primordialism'¹ do not tell the complete story.

First, it is common to find dogmatic assertions and extremist attitudes in the face of a subterranean shift in reality. At a surface level, a resurgent and implacable US nationalism seems to have been signalled with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the declaration of a 'Long War' against terrorism, especially Islamic *ihadists*. Harvey (2005) calls this 'the new imperialism'. However, some of the cracks emerge on closer examination. The US is overextended militarily; its share of global GNP is declining; its erstwhile allies (like Germany and Turkey) are not so compliant; its enemies (like Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela) are openly defiant; its trade and fiscal deficits are massive; it is facing sustained resistance in Iraq; and it has lost the soft war (the power to persuade) in many parts of the world. US nationalism is thus better understood not as the emergence of a new species, but as the thrashing about of a dinosaur, though one with plenty of life in it yet. Similar arguments can be mounted in the cases of at least some other strident expressions of nationalism, ethnicity and religious zealotry.

Second, by contrast, we easily miss subtle, discreet but undeclared social changes that slowly but cumulatively generate major shifts in social conduct, opinions, and consciousness. Behind the deafening nationalist, fundamentalist, and monocultural noises are the soft but pervasive sounds of diversity, complexity, and hybridity. The globalization of military, financial, and economic power is paralleled by forms of cultural globalization (I focus here only on creolization), that are less visible but provide a radical and subversive alternative to other forms of power. This is akin to what Bauman (2000, p. 14) described as 'the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive and fugitive power'. In contrast to the naked, brutal, heralded power (say, of the Pentagon), fugitive power stresses the hidden, subtle, sub-rosa, elusive (i.e., difficult to catch or detect) forms of power found in collective shifts of attitudes and social behaviour.²

Cultural Globalization and the Importance of 'The Third Paradigm'

Though studies of cultural globalization cannot compete in volume with the cascade of studies on other aspects of globalization, a pioneering discussion was initiated by Robertson (1992). He argued that the idea of the inevitability of global cultural integration was flawed in that local cultures could now see themselves in relation to other cultures and to a global whole. This element of reflexivity could result in a negative assessment of global culture and a re-evaluation

and re-assertion of the local, often in complex ways. Tomlinson (1999, pp. 29–31) adds that in this process the groundedness, fixity, and location of cultures become disturbed. Historically, the evolution of particular cultures had often rested on the territorialization of meaning. Material culture affirmed and extended these meanings—we need only think of the Zimbabwean ruins, the Wailing Wall, the Ka'bah at Mecca, and the Great Wall of China. By deterritorializing and dislodging such symbols of fixity, globalization has revalorized old 'travelling cultures' and created new intoxicating mixtures.

This is where creolization or hybridization (usually used synonymously)³ enter the picture. As Pieterse (2004, pp. 41–58) insightfully argues, hybridization is the third of three dominant paradigms situating the relationship between culture and globalization. The first, a primordialist outlook, is predicated on territory, language or biology and leads to the idea of the inevitability of conflict, as immutable (or certainly very rigid) cultural entities play out their divisions. While the diacritica might in fact subtly change (for example from race to religion, or nation to civilization) the assumption of rigidity and irreconcilable difference remains. This supposition provides the underlying rationale for Samuel P. Huntington's (1996) idea of a 'clash of civilizations', which retains its credibility, despite his many critics (for example, Said, 2001). The second paradigm is predicated on the idea that growing connectivity will lead to standardization and uniformity, a cultural detrition that covers the world, while we all bow before American-led consumerism. The McDonaldisation thesis is an example of this paradigm.

As Pieterse (2004, p. 56) observes, while Barber's (1995) much-cited account pits the first paradigm against the second (in *Jihad vs. McWorld*), he completely misses the salience of the third paradigm of cultural globalization, namely, hybridization. By accepting the idea and reality that cultural boundaries are fuzzy and indeterminate and embracing the notion of 'travelling cultures', hybridization and creolization have become potential subversive concepts. They are subversive of race and ethnicity because they point to the existence and growing numbers of people of mixed heritage. They are subversive of territorial and language-based notions of nationalism. They are subversive, thirdly, of religious fundamentalisms as they stress the syncretic nature of belief systems rather than their supposedly divine origins. Even as religious leaders stress purity, consistency, and adherence to strict doctrine, hybridized and creolized practices present anomalies in social behaviour and belief systems.

To appreciate the potential paradigmatic power of creolization in particular, I turn next to its origins and comparative manifestations.

Etymology and Implications of 'Creole' and 'Creolization'

The terms 'Creole' and 'creolization' are used in many different contexts and generally in an inconsistent way. It is instructive to start with the origins of the root word. It was probably derived from the Latin *creare* ('create') (Cashmore, 2004, p. 94). The more situated meaning was 'to create anew'. This can be seen in the most common historical use—the Spanish term *criollo*, which described the children of Spanish colonizers born in the New World. The Furetière dictionary (1690) uses the word *criole* in this way. The French transformed the word to 'créole' and, Jolivet (1982, 1993) argued that it become synonymous with any white person born in the colonies. However, the racially exclusive definition, which confined the term to whites, had been challenged as early as 1722 when in a four-volume travelogue by a French missionary, Father Labat, a distinction was drawn between 'Créole slaves' and 'traded slaves' (Jolivet, 1982).

The implication was clear—‘Creole’ referred to something or someone that had foreign (normally metropolitan) origins and that had now become somewhat localised. There is a further implication, though this was less explicit. There would have been no point in distinguishing a ‘Creole’ from a ‘colonizer’ if there were no perceived differences between the two. The Creole had become different, taking on some local ‘colour’, a word that I use deliberately to suggest a figurative and emotional relationship with the local landscape and a social and sometimes sexual relationship with the local people. You will notice we now have a trichotomy (an insufficient description, but it will do for now). First, we have the colonial, born in the metropole, or anchored there psychologically and affectively. Next, we have the Creole, born in a new place from foreign parents, who nonetheless identifies with his or her immediate surroundings or is so identified by others. Finally, we have the indigenous people whose had lived there for so long they are assumed to, or claim to, ‘belong’ to the land.

Language and Linguistics

In social science the word ‘Creole’ is principally used in the study of language and linguistics. A Creole language usually refers to a European language that has been blended with a local or other imported language. Often the additions of local or other imported words are so great that, for example, French-based Creoles may be mutually incomprehensible and difficult for a native French-speaker, while Creoles based on a French lexicon may be unintelligible to those using other imported lexicons like English, Dutch, Spanish or Portuguese. There is an important distinction between pidgins and Creoles. Pidgins are often used for ‘vertical’ commands—a superordinate group requires communication, but has little interest in reducing social distance. Creoles are ‘horizontal’ languages that become mother tongues, languages of intimacy. As Mesthrie (2000, p. 297) explains, ‘creolization is in some ways the opposite of pidginization, since it is a process of expansion rather than reduction’.

Creoles are often denigrated through an inappropriate comparison to their lexifier (normally the language of a colonial power). Structurally and in their tense systems they are often complex, carry ‘covert prestige’ and sometimes owe more to their substrate (usually the language of a subordinated group) than to their lexifier. I have simplified the difference between pidgins and Creoles and sidestepped an interesting debate in linguistics as to whether it is possible to have Creoles without prior pidgins. As in other languages, Creoles are under a continuous process of change in response, for example, to educational policies, identity politics, and social status. Sometimes a Creole will become ‘deep’, as in London Jamaican, thus moving further towards its substrate (the basilect); sometimes it will move in the opposite direction, to its lexifier (the acrolect).

Although I want to take this discussion quite far from the linguistic use of the term, the debates of the sociolinguists are pertinent and instructive insofar as they explicitly recognise the complexity of intercultural relations, address the issue of power between those who are drawn to the basilect or who are awed by the acrolect and, finally, have evolved sophisticated morphologies to understand and analyse the many points along the Creole continuum (the mesolect). This elaborated scholarship is more sophisticated than the sociological and anthropological discussions of creolization and anticipates many of the problems, while showing many of the advantages, of adopting this core idea into new contexts and paradigms.

Creolization in Popular Culture

I will refer briefly to other uses of the expression ‘Creole’, in food, music, and religion and elsewhere. I say ‘briefly’ because, although such uses are important aspects of a general study of popular culture, these facets are not the primary purpose of this paper.

Food

‘Creole cooking’ alludes to a mixture of elements and traditions—usually a mixture between tropical and European products and cuisine. It is often used, for example, to describe cooking that blended African and French elements in the American South and particularly in Louisiana and in the French Antilles. It is interesting that Creole cooking is often described as ‘authentic’, claiming an indigeneity that could not strictly exist in such a setting, where all were relatively recent migrants.

Music

Jazz emerged as a fertile dialogue between black folk music in the US, often derived from the plantations and rural areas, and black music based in urban New Orleans. The field hollers met parlour music. Negro spirituals met those who liked the opera. Those who played low-down blues met those who danced the waltz, the mazurka, the polka, and the quadrille. In the parades, the funeral dirges, the popular songs for picnics and parties, jazz developed as a Creole music *par excellence*. The honky tonks, the brothels, the picnic grounds, parks, and the streets of New Orleans were the testing grounds for a music that first captured the American South, then generated what is probably the world’s most powerful music form since the development of European classical music (Collier, 1978, pp. 59–64). The recordings made by Joseph ‘King’ Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band in the early 1920s were one of the most influential founts of jazz, which subsequently spread to other parts of the US before spreading worldwide.

Religion

The expression ‘syncretism’ is used more or less similarly to the idea of creolization by anthropologists studying the mixing of African and European elements in the popular religions of Haiti, Cuba, and Brazil, the three countries of the New World that have been most intensively studied. New sets of religious beliefs—like Voodoo in Haiti, Santaria in Cuba, Shango in Trinidad, and Candomblé in Brazil—draw from at least two prior religious traditions, but cannot be reduced to either. That these new religious expressions are definable only in their own terms, and have sustained and evolved over time, make these Creole religions analogous to Creole languages: they have become like mother tongues, not pidgins.

Extending the Scope: Creolization in Brazil, South Africa, and the US

Whereas creolized popular cultures, syncretic religions and Creole languages have been studied for decades, new understandings of creolization have emerged more recently in sociology, anthropology, and the study and practice of cultural politics. This has led to a renewed interest in recognised Creole societies in countries as diverse as Sierra Leone, Nicaragua, the Guyanas, the Cape Verdes, the Caribbean islands and coastal zones on the edge of the Caribbean Sea,

Réunion, Mauritius, Liberia, and Nigeria. More ambitiously and controversially, social diversity in Brazil, South Africa, and the US has been re-examined using the lenses of creolization. I discuss these three examples below.⁴

Brazil: Official and Subversive Creolization

In the case of Brazil, Wagley (1952, p. 143) maintained that ‘By the end of slavery the intermediate freeman class made up of people of Negroid, Indian and Caucasian racial stocks, and of a wide variety of *mestiços*, was numerically more important than the white elite or the Negro slaves’. Subsequent census data in Brazil use the categories *branca* (white), *preta* (black), *parda* (brown/*mestizo*), *amarela* (yellow/East Indian), and *indígena* (native/indigenous). In the 2000 Census, 66 million (of the total of 169.7 million) described themselves as *parda* (39%) compared to 8.7 million *parda* of the total population of 41.2 million in 1940 (21.1%) (Sansone, 2003, pp. 22–24).

Sansone’s (2003) innovative account of ‘blackness without ethnicity’ in Brazil starts with the observation that many social scientists studying Brazilian society have been highly sceptical of the official, elite, and popular celebrations of hybridity and mixture—where, in effect, creolization has been reconstituted as the national ideology. Such scholars are determined to reduce the Brazilian experience to the terrain of ethnic segmentation familiar to the pattern of Anglophone race relations. Brazilian society comprises, they say, Afro-Brazilians, Italian-Brazilians, Japanese-Brazilians, and so on. Such views, Sansone argues, are erroneous, because Brazilian forms of ethnicity are constructed only fitfully, episodically, and situationally. In Brazil ethnicity is never ‘strong’ or determinant, and certainly never is primordial.

He also has reservations about the idea of a ‘pigmentocracy’, a colour continuum with many intervals, but with the high-ranking whites at the top and low-ranking blacks at the bottom. The statistics of self-identification still confirm a general aspiration to whiteness or lightness, but this does not mean that a positive idea, image and imaginary of blackness in Brazil are not salient. Sansone suggests that in the past blackness was associated with those locked into a diasporic tradition, asserting their African roots and ‘with closeness to nature, magical powers, body language, sexuality and sensuality’ (2003, p. 12). Now, however, black Brazilian culture is reaching out to modernity and even globalisation via the intermediation of Jamaica, the US, and rest of the ‘black Atlantic’. (As the last expression indicates, Sansone is influenced by Gilroy (1993), who he acknowledges fulsomely.) ‘Black’ has become revalorised among the young, the better educated, and those plugged into international youth and musical currents. Other affirmative aspects of black culture include the elaborate Angolan-derived martial art *capoeira*, the syncretic religion Candomblé, and the famous Carnival. These have all created ‘black spaces’ that invert and subvert the pigmentocracy.

In short, if we return to our central concept of creolization, we can argue that creolization has developed in two directions—the first involving a state-led appropriation of ‘mixture’ that is identified with the Brazilian national character and celebrated accordingly. The official tourist board, for example, suggests that while tourists think first of the country’s natural beauty, they discover ‘such hospitality that they soon become enchanted with the mixture of colours, races and cultures of the people, as well’ (<http://www.turismo.gov.br>). The second version of creolization is more seditious. It rejects bland renditions of ‘mixture’ and relies much less on a recovered memory of Africa by a relatively isolated population displaced by slavery. If this current were merely a manifestation of the search for ‘roots’ it would be akin to earlier movements of Black Power in the US or Négritude in the French Antilles—and therefore

could be interpreted as a form of decreolization (see below). However, those who have been marginalized by poverty and cultural alienation have discovered new circuits of cultural capital that they tap into to augment their sense of modernity and involvement in a global consciousness. Such manifestations should therefore be interpreted as alternative and dissident forms of 'black' creolization.

South Africa: from Coloured to Creole

A fundamental reassessment of mixed identities in South Africa has also taken place in the wake of political democratization. The initial claims for re-imagining South Africa as a Creole society centre in the first instance on its large mixed population. In mid-2005, the 'Coloured' population group (a first approximation of those of mixed heritage) numbered 4.1 million out of the total population of 46.8 million. At 8.8% of the total, the Coloured group is just below the proportion of whites in the population (Statistics South Africa, 2005, p. 9). The attempt to enforce racial segregation had to await the coming to power in 1948 of the (white) Nationalist Party, the Population Registration Act, and the elaborated ideology of apartheid articulated notably by Verwoerd (see Cohen, 1986, pp. 1–14). The South African case was particularly absurd in that creolization had reached such a stage of maturity that the mixed population had to be recognised in itself as one of South Africa's constitutive ethnic groups—so the South African apartheid regime distinguished between whites, Bantu (African), Asian, and Coloured—where creolization had been a dominant feature.

In common with the implacable refusal by many intellectuals and political activists in post-apartheid South Africa to accept apartheid nomenclature, biological categories are firmly rejected by Erasmus (2001, p. 22), who insists that 'colouredness must be understood as a creolized cultural identity', an identity, moreover, that is derived not merely from two 'pure' traditions, African and European, but from multiple sources that themselves are impure and contingent:

In re-imagining coloured identities we need to move beyond the notion that coloured identities are 'mixed race' identities. Rather we need to see them as cultural identities comprising detailed bodies of knowledge, specific cultural practices, memories, rituals and modes of being. . . . The result has been a highly specific and instantly recognizable cultural formation—not just a 'mixture', but a very particular 'mixture' comprising elements of British, Dutch, Malaysian, Khoi and other forms of African culture appropriated, translated and articulated in complex and subtle ways. These elements acquire their specific cultural meaning only once fused and translated. (Erasmus 2001, p. 21)

Soudien (2001, p. 123) presents an even more ambitious proposition, suggesting that South Africa at its birth represented 'an embrace of difference. Europe, Africa, and Asia are figuratively assimilated, incorporated and naturalized on the rich soil of the Cape. There is in this figurative construction, in some senses, the notion of the African cradle of humanity receiving back its diasporic seed'. The spirit of reconciliation that marked the foundational moment of the new, post-apartheid South Africa implied that backward glances towards culturally distinct roots were no longer appropriate or necessary. A creolized identity could thus be conceived as the embryonic form of a truly South African, perhaps even a tri-continental, identity. It transcended the claims for primacy, purity, and authenticity on the part of black and white South Africans and fatally undermined the racial categories inherited from the apartheid era.⁵

The US: Heritage and New Multi-Racial Identities

The US South, and more particularly New Orleans, provides a rich array of contrasting experiences of creolization. There, from the eighteenth century, people of mixed ethnic backgrounds maintained a precarious intermediate status, distancing themselves from the black parts of their origins but not being accepted by polite white society. In fact, the social struggle for status revolved precisely around the expression 'Creole'. A section of whites determinedly continued to describe *themselves* exclusively as 'Creole' and authenticated this claim by referring to the original sense of the word, i.e., that they were proud descendants of French or Spanish settlers, but born in the New World. This claim, a form of heritage politics common in the US, was reasserted as late as 1951 in Herrin's book titled *The Creole Aristocracy*. The 'white Creoles' sent their children to Paris to study if they could afford it, continued to speak a version of French, and lionised French culture. However, their snobbery did not extend to their sexual practices where many males found black or so-called 'light' or 'yellow' mistresses, setting them up in the French quarter of New Orleans in bijou houses of their own.

Descendants of such liaisons were Creoles, or 'black Creoles', who were augmented by people of purer black origin, who had nonetheless made a cultural shift into French New Orleans society. In New Orleans there are both black and white Creoles and many who are somewhere between black and white. All 'non-white' Creoles were under threat in the period after the Civil War when the reactionary Jim Crow laws (exemplified in the Louisiana Legislative Code III) insisted that any person with the smallest amount of 'black blood' was to be described as a Negro and to suffer the discriminatory consequences. This is described as the 'one-drop' rule (or, more technically, 'hypodescent').

It is noteworthy that the Creole imaginary was prevalent despite the ideological dominance of biological categories, Social Darwinism, and legal codes requiring that people be reduced to 'races', even where this was manifestly inappropriate. In the context of the US, particularly the southern states, elaborate Creole cultures had already emerged and white power holders, including the Ku Klux Klan tried, with considerable success, to use the period after 1865 to force Creole peoples into the category of 'Negro'. Ringer (1983, pp. 215–384) shows how Supreme Court decisions over a period of 50 years facilitated these assertions of white power. The post-bellum period 'depended heavily on the coercive arm of the law and where necessary a vigilantism of community sentiment; it thereby sought to draw a sharp line between black and white without exception and spread the authority to maintain this line to a variety of public officials, bureaucrats, and ordinary white citizens' (1983, p. 225).

Sadly, people of mixed heritage seemed to get it in the neck from all sides. As David Pilgrim (2000) shows, in popular culture in the US, the person of mixed heritage, particularly if she was a woman, was depicted in tragic terms:

Literary and cinematic portrayals of the tragic mulatto emphasised her personal pathologies: self-hatred, depression, alcoholism, sexual perversion, and suicide attempts being the most common. If light enough to 'pass' as White, she did, but passing led to deeper self-loathing. She pitied or despised Blacks and the 'blackness' in herself; she hated or feared Whites yet desperately sought their approval. In a race-based society, the tragic mulatto found peace only in death. She evoked pity or scorn, not sympathy.

Such arguments were sustained with particular force around emerging iconic figures like Billie Holliday—the great jazz singer—and Dorothy Dandridge, the star of the musical *Carmen Jones* (1954), who was the first Creole actress to appear on the cover of *Life*. Both women committed suicide in despairing circumstance and were poignant instances of the tragedy of creoledom.

While Hollywood often focused on the tragic, beautiful Creole women, it did not fail to remind us also of the case of male and child mulattos, as in the popular film, *Angelo* (released in 1949), who found it impossible to live 'in a *white man's world*' (every emphasized word counts in this description).

As if this popular disdain of mixed heritage people were not enough, black American attitudes were also often hostile. The black leader and founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Marcus Garvey (1977, p. 37), was perhaps the most explicit:

I believe in a pure black race just as how all self-respecting whites believe in a pure white race, as far as that can be. I am conscious of the fact that slavery brought upon us the curse of many colors within the Negro race, but that is no reason why we of ourselves should perpetuate the evil; hence instead of encouraging a wholesale bastardy in the race, we feel that we should now set out to create a race type and standard of our own which could not, in the future, be stigmatised by bastardy, but could be recognised and respected as the true race type anteceding even our own time.

Though an extreme version, such attitudes were common among black leaders in the US. Assertions of purity were also the focus of later political movements—like the Black Panthers—and the more popular expressions of the day like 'black power', 'black pride', and 'black is beautiful'. This counter-hegemonic expression of black self-regard rather than black self-hatred left little room for those who were phenotypically more ambiguous. Any demur was met by the charge that people of mixed ancestry who could not admit that they were black were experiencing denial and betraying their black brothers and sisters. Explanations for this position vary. They include hostility to those who were favoured in the plantation system, the perverse influence of white racism, Social Darwinism and Nazism, and complex psychological and gender tensions. Resolving this question is not particularly relevant to my current argument. What is pertinent is that the effects of this hostility were to force those of mixed heritage into declaring their undivided loyalty to the black 'race' or to join the white 'race' by 'passing'.

It is difficult to date exactly at what moment a third choice opened between these two paths, but one powerful symbolic moment was when the successful golfer Tiger Woods suggested on an Oprah Winfrey show, in April 1997, that he was not an African American but a Cablinasian (a mixture of Causcasian, black, Indian, and Asian). 'I'm just who I am, whoever you see in front of you', he told the talk-show hostess. *Time* magazine recorded that the golfer's remark infuriated African Americans who saw him as a 'sell-out', while no less a figure than the former general and secretary of state for defence Colin Powell, ticked Woods off by announcing that 'In America, which I love from the depths of my heart and soul, when you look like me, you're black' (Kamiya, 1997).

Spencer (2004, p. 369 *et seq.*), who alludes to this episode, argues that the debate around Tiger Woods's statement and other forms of recognition of mixture still often continues to use racial categories, thereby falling into the trap of hypodescent. Indeed, it is notable that US discourse still centres on 'bi-racialism' and the 'multi-racial' experience, rather than the superseding categories of 'non-racialism', used in post-apartheid South Africa, and multiculturalism, hybridity, and creolization, used there and elsewhere. While Spencer (2004) is correct in suggesting this is a real limitation to exploring the complexity of emerging identities in the US, he cites (2004, p. 360) a number of authors, including Rockquemore and Brunσμα (2002), who are developing racially neutral categories like 'border', 'protean', 'transcendent', and 'traditional' identities. Again, Spencer (2004, p. 374) is somewhat scornful of the discovery in popular magazines of the new levels of biracialism in the US, which accept current race labels as

valid (*Time* and *Newsweek* both carried covered this issue at length). He argues that if one were historically informed ‘there are at least 30 million people of [mixed] African, Native American and European ancestry in the United States’. However historically valid such statements may be, self-ascription remains a vital datum. In this respect it is notable that census data shows a quadrupling of children in self-identified ‘interracial’ families over the period 1970 to 1990 (from less than 500,000 to about 2 million). It also is significant that when given the chance to respond to a question about multiple origins in the 2000 Census (for the first time), 6.8 million Americans availed themselves of this opportunity (Table 1).

The US figures thus show that in recent years the number of people who identify themselves as of ‘mixed’ origins is increasing substantially. This is merely an indicator and prelude to the possible emergence of new forms of creolization that may shape attitudes and social behaviour.

Creolization as an Intellectual Movement

In my introduction I alluded to the soft but pervasive sounds of diversity, complexity, and hybridity, a subtle shift towards a new positive valorization of creolization. We have seen how this process has acquired new significance in three large societies—Brazil, South Africa, and the US. However, the supporting theorization and defence of creolization have occurred elsewhere. First, I discuss the development of a movement for Creolité in the francophone Caribbean, a relatively small setting but one that nonetheless has global implications and resonances. Second, I consider the celebration of hybridity, or at least its recognition, by two eminent post-colonial writers, Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul. (There are others, of course, but I refer here to two prominent examples.) Third, I refer to the increasing recognition of mixed identity categories among official statisticians and the call for the end of ‘raciology’ by certain academics and intellectuals.

Creolité not Négritude

As I have indicated, self-hatred was one of the targets of early expressions of black pride and identity politics. It was at the heart of the Garveyite movement who wanted black Americans to think of themselves as Africans. It also suffused the idea of Négritude, developed by the

Table 1. US Population by Number of Races Reported, 2000

No. of races	Number	% of total population	% of population (two or more races)
Total population	281,421,906	100.0	–
One race	274,595,678	97.6	–
Two or more races	6,826,228	2.4	100.0
Two races	6,386,075	2.3	93.3
Three races	410,285	0.1	6.0
Four races	38,408	–	0.6
Fives races	8,637	–	0.1
Six races	823	–	–

Source: US Census Bureau (2003).

Caribbean and Senegalese intellectuals, Césaire, Damas, and Senghor. As in the US, the fear of the rejection of mixture seemed to underlie some of the Caribbean understandings of their own identities. Take the views of Franz Fanon, himself born in Martinique of mixed origin and highly sensitive to the possibility of dismissal of ‘West Indians’ by Africans. When this happened, Fanon (1970, pp. 35–36) claimed, ‘he [the West Indian] suffered despair. Haunted by impurity, overwhelmed by sin, riddled by guilt, he was prey to the tragedy of being neither white nor Negro’.

Fanon’s insights were based on his background in the Caribbean and experience in Africa, and probably also carry some autobiographical imprint. While Fanon’s diagnosis was accurate, it was left to others in the Caribbean to develop a fully formed alternative to the fear of rejection by those who claimed purer racial origins. Logically, this had to commence, as Burton noted (1995, p. 141) with an attack on Négritude:

Négritude may invert a stereotypical European definition of blackness and black culture, divesting it of its overly racist character and transforming the negative into the positive, yet the underlying structure of that definition is retained. Négritude in this view merely substitutes one alienating definition for another and, to that extent, enmeshes the black African or West Indians still more tightly in the assimilationist problematic or scheme of things even as it seems to release the repressed and repudiated black ‘essence’ within him.

As Burton (1995, *passim*) comments, the appeals of Négritude in the context of the Caribbean were simply not convincing after three centuries of social and physical creolization. Créolité, a cultural and political movement articulated by a number of Caribbean intellectuals, became an explicit alternative. The proponents of Créolité are at pains to include all resident groups—African, European, Indian, Chinese, and Lebanese. The founders of the movement, Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant (1989), produced a compelling manifesto of the movement, arguing (cited Burton, 1995, p. 152) that:

In multiracial societies, such as ours, it is urgent that we abandon the habitual raciological distinctions and that we resume the custom of designating the people of our country by the one term that, whatever their complexion, behoves them: Creole. Socio-economic relations within our society must henceforth be conducted under the seal of a shared creolity [Créolité] without that obliterating in any way whatsoever class relations and conflicts.

Through such intellectual movements, creolization has escaped its colonial cage, a development that was signalled earlier in the work of the Martinican writer and cultural theorist, Edouard Glissant. Glissant was strongly committed to the idea of creolization emanating from the situation of displaced African slaves having to rebuild their lives in new settings and therefore had some differences with the relaxed recognition of diversity promoted by his fellow-islanders. However, he too (Glissant cited in Stoddard and Cornwall, 1999, p. 349) saw the wider implications of creolization suggesting that ‘Perhaps creolization is becoming one of our present day goals’, not just ‘on behalf of the America but of the entire world’. Further, Glissant (in Stoddard and Cornwall, 1999, p. 349) asked whether we should favour ‘An identity that would not be the projection of a unique and sectarian root, but of what we call a rhizome, a root with a multiplicity of extensions in all direction? Not killing what is around it, as a unique root would, but establishing communication and relation?’

The universal virtues of Créolité as a form of cultural politics and creolization as a sociological category now become apparent. They allow us to include all population groups, including later migrant arrivals in addition to the original trichotomy (the colonial, Creole, and indigene). They allow us also to escape the political cage and unscientific trap of racial, phenotypical, and

biological categorisations, thereby avoiding such expressions as coloured, half-caste, mixed race, mixed-blood, mestizo, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, *gens de couleur*, half-breed, zambo, griffe, and many other descriptions that are even less flattering like baster (South Africa), dougla/h (Trinidad), mud-people (used by the Ku Klux Klan), or ox-head (southern China).

Rushdie and Naipaul: Prophets of the Impure

The celebration of hybridity and mongrelism, together with an attack on traditional and ascribed social identities, are Salman Rushdie's self-assigned tasks in much of his work, notably in *The Satanic Verses* (1988). Although the professed grounds for the *fatwa* directed at Rushdie after the publication of the book centred on a number of specific religious objections, the more general offence caused by the book amongst some Muslims was its explicit attack on authenticity, on singular and monochromatic identities, and on the ideas of a single Truth and a Pure way. As Rushdie (1991, p. 394) himself says of *The Satanic Verses*:

Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with different cultures will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. *The Satanic Verses* celebrate hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it.

While Rushdie is optimistic about the impure and indeed celebrates it, as Eriksen (2003, p. 226) suggests, a more complex reading of mixed identities is provided by the Trinidadian-born V. S. Naipaul:

Shocked by India, alienated by England, aloof from the Caribbean, Naipaul became a writer about torn identities. Several of his mature, largely tragic novels, from *The Mimic Men* (1967) and *In a Free State* (1971) to *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) and *Half a Life* (2001), are about men (and a few women) who try to be something that they are not, usually because they can see no alternative. It is the dark, unprivileged side of Rushdie's brave new world.

There is a tragic quality to Naipaul's impossible search for belonging and rootedness but, as Eriksen (2003, p. 226) argues, despite his own pronouncements, which remain sardonic and gloomy, 'it can also be said that the tragic grandeur of Naipaul's best books confirm an assumption, which he himself might reject, that exile and cultural hybridity are creative forces'. His poignant novel, which may also be his best, *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961), is said to be based on his father. Biswas emerges as a sympathetic character, despite the author's mockery of Biswas's pathetic mimicry of European ways.

Statisticians and Intellectuals in the UK and US

As I suggested earlier, the categories 'mixed race' and 'mixed heritage' are increasingly recognised in census categories in the US as numbers of citizens refuse to locate themselves in the rigid categories imposed in previous censuses. In the case of the UK the public debate about 'multiculturalism' as a way of understanding diversity in the UK, was led by the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality Trevor Phillips (*The Times*, 3 April 2004). He espoused a belief that the cultural segments comprising British society are no longer stable and that nothing should be done to make them more rigid. Although there is no unanimity on this

question among academics, there has long been unease about how commonly deployed ethnic categories are being decomposed under the force of new patterns of social interaction, new sources of migrants and radical ‘refusals’ by people of mixed heritage to identify themselves using particular ethnic labels. The augmentation of visible minorities (African, Indian, Bangladeshi, and black Caribbean) by other Asian and European migration has also generated a much more complex understanding of the nature of British identity (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002). The UK 2001 census allowed the box ‘mixed’ to be selected for the first time, which partly accounts for the proportion of minority ethnic groups moving from 6% to 9% of the population (UK National Statistics 2003).

Beyond such data about the rising levels of population mixture is a much more telling argument, namely that at the level of popular discourse and practices, purity and authenticity have often been displaced by a suspicion of traditional and ascribed social identities among a significant UK minority. Even some of the historically ‘white’ UK population is also beginning to reconstitute itself as ‘mixed’ or ‘post-race’ (Ali, 2003; Song, 2003). Again, a number of writers and intellectuals have called for the end of racial categorization in social science in favour of more complex and overlapping social categories. Here are just three examples:

- For Stuart Hall (1992) complexity is found by defining ‘new ethnicities’. As he puts it (1992, p. 257): ‘If the black subject and black experience are not stabilised by Nature or by some other essential guarantee, then it must be the case that they are constructed historically, culturally, politically—and the concept which refers to this is “ethnicity”.’
- For Paul Gilroy (2000, p. 339): ‘To comprehend the history of blackness’s appeals to the future and how that history may contribute to the cultural dynamism and moral confidence of a cosmopolitan and hospitable Europe, we need to appreciate . . . phases in the process of dissent from raciology.’
- For Homi Bhabha (1990, p. 210) a dynamic ‘third space’ emerges which both emerges from two original moments and recognizes that those moments are themselves unstable. Thus ‘the act of cultural translation . . . denies the essentialism of a prior given or original culture’ and allow us to see that ‘all forms of culture are in a continuous process of hybridity’.

Conclusion: The Creolization of the World

I have sought to establish the heuristic potential of the expressions Creole and creolization used as sociological and cultural terms. While it is true to assert that creolization had its *locus classicus* in the context of colonial settlement, imported black labour and often a plantation and island setting, by indicating that there are other pathways for creolization I want to signify the potentially universal applicability of the term. To be a Creole is no longer a mimetic, derivative stance. Rather it describes a position interposed between two or more cultures, selectively appropriating some elements, rejecting others, and creating new possibilities that transgress and supersede parent cultures, which themselves are increasingly recognised as fluid. If this is indeed happening we need to recast much traditional social theory concerning race and ethnic relations, multiculturalism, nation-state formation, and the like—for we can no longer assume the stability and continuing force of the ethnic segments that supposedly make up nation-states. Likewise, we cannot assume that the nation in international relations has a continuously uniform character. Accepting the force of hybridity and creolization is also to accept that humankind is refashioning the basic building blocks of organised cultures and societies in a fundamental and wide-ranging way.

Mobile, transnational groups are themselves undergoing what has been described as ‘every-day cosmopolitanism’, while dominant, formerly monochromatic, cultures have themselves become criss-crossed and sometimes deeply subverted by hybridisation and creolization. It is this last quality that lends credence to the notion, advanced by the Swedish social anthropologist Ulf Hannerz (1987) that we live in ‘creolizing world’. In his discussion of the global ecumene, Hannerz (1992, pp. 217–263) argues that cultures are no longer as bounded or autonomous as they once were and that complex and asymmetrical flows have reshaped cultures which, given existing forms and meanings of culture are not likely to result in global homogenization. He is clear that ‘emerging hybridized webs of meaning’ (1992, p. 264) are not spurious or inauthentic cultures. While these Creole cultures may be relatively unformed, because they are recent, they can and do take on a complex character, often because the periphery is stronger than it may appear. As Hannerz (1992, pp. 265–266) maintains:

Creolization also increasingly allows the periphery to talk back. As it creates a greater affinity between the cultures of the center and the periphery, and as the latter increasingly uses the same organizational forms and the same technology as the center . . . some of its new cultural commodities become increasingly attractive on a global market. Third World music of a creolized kind becomes world music . . . Creolization though is open-ended; the tendencies towards maturation and saturation are understood as quite possibly going on side by side, or interleaving.

The creolization of the world in the sense described by Hannerz and other writers cited earlier has provided a space for many people to create a new sense of home, a locus to express their uniqueness in the face of cultural fundamentalisms and imperialism. Behind the strident assertions of nationalism, ‘old ethnicities’ and religious certainties is an increasing volume of cultural interactions, interconnections and interdependencies, and a challenge to the solidity of ethnic and racial categories. These are the soft sounds of fugitive power, but you may need to have your ear cocked to the ground, or your finger on the pulse, if you are to hear them fully and discern their influence.

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Notes

- 1 ‘Primordialism’ is used as an epithet rather than a concept by ‘social constructivists’, who now dominate social science discourse. It is rarely respectfully discussed. Hearn (2006, pp. 20–66) takes primordialism more seriously, arguing that there is a coherent body of primordialist thought emphasising common descent, shared language, territorial belonging, a ‘deep’ shared historical experience, emotional bonds, and the evocation of national (add ethnic and religious) symbols to reinforce feelings of attachment to the defined community.
- 2 The notion of ‘fugitive power’ is used by Katherine Farrell (2004) to portray modes of democratic power operating beyond the reach of the law. In developing the concept, she (personal correspondence) acknowledges a Foucauldian analysis on constitutional reform written by her colleague, John Morison. Foucault’s views need more detailed exposition, but in one germane passage he suggests that power is ‘produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it came from everywhere’ (Foucault, 1978, pp. 92–93).
- 3 It is generally accepted that a variety of similar terms—creolization, hybridity, syncretism, métissage, mélange, and others—are frequently used interchangeably. Social scientists need to develop clearer distinctions. Meanwhile, I can

- say that I prefer creolization (because of its links to existing and historical examples and its cultural reference points) and am less keen on hybridization (because of its biological implications). Other scholars have taken a different view.
- 4 There are, to be sure, other countries and particularly cosmopolitan cities that also exhibit emergent forms of creolization as a result of the increasing diversity of their populations. For the UK, see Tizard and Phoenix (2002), while the reader compiled by Ifekwunigwe (2004) provides short but salient case studies from a number of other countries. Hannerz (1987, 1992) makes the widest claims for the concept.
 - 5 I do not want to get too diverted into a local debate, but I need to qualify this celebration of the possibilities of a superseding form of creolization in South Africa. Mandela, the architect of popular post-apartheid ideology, never advocated creolization. He preferred the language of a 'rainbow nation' marked by respect for difference and equality of regard for all 'peoples'. Placing a reconstituted creolized identity at the foundation of the new South Africa would have been threatening to some (by no means all) African groups that retained strong ethnic identities (for example, the Zulu Inkatha movement) and perhaps also to some whites. The African National Congress needed to keep both on board to ensure a minimum of violence. Part of the renewed interest in creolization is the recognition of the limits of the notion of a 'rainbow nation'. An even more ambitious project is to include many white South Africans in the category of 'Creole', with a focus on those who cannot claim rights of repatriation to any European country. This idea was anticipated by the linguist Valkhoff (1966) who was reviled by those who supported apartheid when he pointed to the Creole nature of the Afrikaans language spoken by the dominant section of whites.

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