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# Kalinago Ethnicity and Ancestral Knowledge

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The *Kalinago* of Dominica have engaged in various efforts at cultural renewal in the past three decades. In this paper I examine one particular activity, recreated traditional dancing, and analyze how performers combine current and past cultural practices from their own community together with knowledge garnered from other indigenous groups to reinvent dance performances. Such performances represent a recent manifestation of successful cultural renewal in which community members use known resources to re-imagine and recreate meaningful tradition(s). Analysis of recreated traditional dance performances provides insight regarding how some members of the Kalinago community think about and utilize the ancestral knowledge base that forms the wellspring of their identity and reveals the regional and global exchanges that contribute to and enrich processes of cultural renewal. Performers interpret this type of cultural borrowing as a positive strategic maneuver because situating the community in a regional indigenous context bolsters claims to a strong, vibrant Kalinago identity. In this context, both the act of borrowing and the final product are expressions of indigeneity.

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Protected from the heat of a Caribbean afternoon by the steeply-pitched roof of an open-sided longhouse, three traditionally dressed dancers from the Carib community in Dominica move across the raised stage as they perform a series of dances. Four additional individuals, dressed similarly, ring the back of the stage providing musical accompaniment on drums, a mounted piece of bamboo, and a *shak-shak* (similar in function to maracas). The director of the ensemble, dressed in western-style clothes, introduces the group and each song to provide cultural context. The performance, staged for the benefit of French tourists visiting the *Kalinago Barana Autě* (Kalinago cultural village), concludes with a song during which audience members are invited to dance on stage with the performers.

A remarkable feature of this event staged in summer 2007 is that as recently as thirty years ago traditional dancing was not performed in the community. Traditional dance performances constitute evidence of ethnic renewal in the community. Members of the Karifuna Cultural Group (KCG), whose dances are the subject of this paper, are some of the most self-consciously indigenous members of their community, indicated in part by their preferential use of the term

"Kalinago" in place of "Carib" when referring to community members and their identity. A primary objective of KCG and its members is to promote awareness about and pride in Kalinago history and culture, particularly among community youth. Reclamation of traditional dancing and the teaching of it to youth (generally aged 16-22) who perform it publicly is one specific activity resulting from this goal. KCG members recreate dances and, to a lesser degree, costumes, by examining historical documents and the traditional practices of regional indigenous populations, a fact often noted by the emcee during his introductory comments at the beginning of public performances. Members interpret cultural borrowing associated with recreated dances as a positive strategic maneuver bolstering claims to a strong, vibrant Kalinago identity and reject the notion that such borrowing should be interpreted as evidence of diminished indigeneity. Closer examination of performances reveals that although dancing is newly recreated, some performative aspects, such as musical and narrative elements, exhibit continuity in the community, showing up in a variety of other contexts. Dancing, then, constitutes a recent manifestation of successful cultural renewal in which community members use existing forms and known resources as creative building blocks to re-imagine and recreate tradition. Embedding borrowed cultural elements in a local framework reinforces claims about the indigenous nature of Kalinago identity.

Heritage can be defined simply as the contemporary use of the past (Graham et al. 2000). KCG uses dance performances as a self-conscious display of heritage aimed at insiders and outsiders alike. This type of public cultural performance creates an interpretive framework for lived experience and constitutes social interaction at local, national, and global levels. Both the public admission of borrowed elements and the use of practices (dormant and active) from within the community are meant to heighten awareness of the indigenous nature and quality of Kalinago identity – a signal meant to be received by insiders and outsiders alike. Through such performances, KCG members reify their sense of self, their sense of community, and their understanding of their place in a global context.

### **Background**

Dominica is a small island in the middle of the Lesser Antilles. The majority of the 74,000 inhabitants are of African descent; the Kalinago represent the largest minority and constitute approximately 4% of the total population. Most Kalinago reside on five square miles of land owned communally by the group. This land, known as the Carib Territory<sup>2</sup>, was granted to them in 1902 through the British administrator of the island, Henry Hesketh Bell<sup>3</sup>.

The Kalinago community both self-identifies and is labeled as a distinct community within the larger nation state of Dominica. Salient symbols of identity, identified through a series of semi-structured interviews conducted from 1996-1997 (Hudepohl 2002), some of which were also noted by earlier ethnographers (e.g. Layng 1983; Owen 1974), include: a sense of shared history, the land, the office of

the chief, phenotype, and handicrafts. This list represents only the attributes most frequently cited by informants in response to questions asking them to identify important symbols of Kalinago identity. Additionally, community members' opinions do not exhibit uniformity in terms of the relative value of each quality. For instance, although nearly 90% of informants mentioned that "looking Indian" was valued by "some people" in the community, many denied the importance of this attribute for determining ethnicity. Community members did agree that "Indian" phenotypic attributes include, in order of importance, light skin color and straight hair. Examination of each symbol, even the controversial quality of phenotype, reveals that connection to indigenous ancestors, in action and/or appearance, is an important core quality. The rhetoric and symbolism of ethnic groups often reference links to the past, functioning both to prove ethnic heritage to outsiders and, equally important, to heighten the emotional investment of insiders (Cornell and Hartmann 1998; Nagel 1997). A shared sense of tradition can be a powerful force promoting social unity and social action.<sup>4</sup>

For instance, one attribute cited by many Kalinago as a marker of community identity is a sense of shared history with an emphasis on group struggle. The Kalinago are proud of their ancestors' defiance of European domination and the current community's present-day resistance to assimilation into larger Dominican society. Often emphasized in discourse on this shared sense of history is the parallel circumstance of struggle for survival, physical and cultural, faced by ancestors and descendants alike. This situation creates a bond among living Kalinago and enhances the feeling of connection to ancestors. For example, in memory of the quincentenary of Columbus' arrival in the region, the Kalinago painted slogans on buildings in their community stating "500 years of Columbus a lie, yet we survive." This public display of their collective memory and experience of persecution and defiance illustrates John Gillis' discussion of commemorative activities as being both social and political in nature (1994:5). The slogans constituted a statement by at least part of the community for the entire community about their understanding of their own past. In addition, the slogans represent a type of discourse between the authors and the larger national and global society about persistent falsehoods surrounding activities of an internationally known historical figure and those of the less well-known Kalinago population.

The fore-grounding of ancestral ties is expected as an attribute of ethnic symbols, but, for the Kalinago, proving connections to indigenous ancestors competes in importance with the cultural behavior itself. Consideration of the social context of the community within the larger nation state provides insight regarding the necessity, or at least the perception of the necessity, to reaffirm and to prove indigeneity to community members and outsiders alike.

The status of the Kalinago as a viable indigenous group has been challenged periodically by the state in part because Afro-Dominicans, also called Creoles, would like to farm or otherwise develop parts of the Carib Territory. For instance, land disputes between Creole and Kalinago farmers are pronounced on the southern and western boundaries of reserve lands and were the basis of community land

rallies in the 1990s. Additionally, some past national-level political regimes have taken the stance that citizens should be Dominican first and any affiliation with alternative identities has been viewed as a threat to national sovereignty (Smith 2006; Eguchi 1997; Layng 1983).

Creole individuals and the Dominican government justify their challenges to Kalinago ethnicity based on the degree of culture loss suffered by the group. Despite having retained aspects of ethnic identity, the Kalinago have lost elements of their traditional culture and are, in some ways, a microcosm of the larger society. They no longer speak a traditional language; instead, like the larger population, they communicate in English and French Creole. According to national census data, sixty-five percent of Kalinago claim to be Roman Catholic and thirty-five percent claim affiliation with some sect of Protestantism; a pattern mirrored in the larger society. In terms of subsistence, the Kalinago rely on banana production for export as their main source of cash income, as does the larger population. And finally, even in terms of phenotype, Kalinago run the gamut from looking “indigenous” in their features to looking “African” in their features.

Peter Hulme states that “...the theme of impending disappearance” has been associated with the Kalinago since colonial times (1993:30). In addition to popular views, culture loss and assimilation has been a common theme in scholarship about Kalinago ethnicity (e.g. Baker 1988; Layng 1983; Owen 1974). Scholars working in the 1970s (e.g. Layng and Owen) were influenced by the then still-prevalent theory about ethnicity that was based on ideas about primordialism and inevitable assimilation after culture contact. Consequently, even though the Kalinago have successfully maintained a distinct identity solidly grounded in the previously mentioned symbols, the attention by outsiders to lost traditional practices fuels a need to prove indigenous identity. In this light it is not surprising that new efforts undertaken by the community as part of ethnic revitalization, such as traditional dancing, continue the pattern of highlighting connections to ancestors as a fundamental goal of the activity.

### **Ethnic Renewal and “Traditional” Dancing**

Partly as a result of fears of continuing culture loss and partly in response to challenges to identity, various subsets of the Kalinago community (e.g. Ocean 4, an environmentally conscious youth group; and Waikada, a community-based NGO) have engaged in sporadic efforts at cultural revitalization since the 1980s. Many of the activities have focused on both retaining and reclaiming traditional knowledge, and ties to ancestors are often explicitly emphasized as proof of an enduring, vibrant identity. Joane Nagel (1997) uses the term “cultural construction,” broken down into four specific processes, to describe such actions. Her definition includes both newly invented and historically based practices (Nagel 1997:46-48). According to Nagel, the major forms of cultural construction include revival, restoration, revision, and innovation. Revision and innovation refer to alteration in meaning of existing forms and creation of completely new forms, respectively. Revival and restoration involve

reintroduction of forgotten or infrequent cultural forms. An excellent example of “cultural restoration,” the specific process of cultural construction in which fading knowledge is reclaimed, was the Carib Cultural Preservation Project undertaken in the early 1990s. The project involved interviewing community elders to document their knowledge on a variety of topics including traditional food processing, little-remembered myths, and uncommon handicraft production techniques and styles. Some of the interviews were videotaped and stored, along with other data from the project, in the Chief’s office, a central location meant to enable community access. Unfortunately many of these resources have “disappeared” into individual households. Waikada supported construction of a community-run radio station as a means to build community and instill pride in Kalinago culture and heritage. Supporters completed the building, located in Crayfish River and referred to locally as “the platform” for its street-level covered platform, but were never able to secure a broadcasting license. Currently, KCG members currently use the platform for meetings and practices. Other efforts at cultural construction include reclaiming, to the point of recreating, lost practices; defined as a “cultural revival” in Nagel’s (1997) schema. Her term closely parallels the concept of “invention of tradition” discussed by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). Both terms refer to newly created practices, or at least those with an uncertain historical pedigree, that become established and, through real or imagined connections to the past, help to build social cohesion. Recreation of traditional dancing by KCG constitutes an example of cultural revival. KCG<sup>5</sup> originated in the 1970s as a Catholic youth group and evolved into an ensemble dedicated to preserving Kalinago culture. In interviews and casual conversation the Kalinago community identifies long-standing KCG members, members who determine most of the group’s activities, as important community leaders. Additionally, some past and current members have served as Carib Chief and/or Carib Councilors. KCG members today meet regularly to plan activities, discuss Kalinago culture and history, and practice dance performances. The group is primarily associated with dancing, though it also engages in other projects related to cultural renewal such as *larouma* cultivation for handicraft production. In fact, the group views dancing as much as a fundraiser to sponsor other activities as a creative expression of identity used to educate each other and their audience.

KCG usually open their performances with “*Nou se Kalinago.*” The title of the song, also the refrain, combines Dominican Creole (Kweyol) with traditional Kalinago vocabulary and translates as “we are Kalinago.” When performed for non-Kalinago audiences, the emcee often introduces the song by first teaching the audience words from the nearly forgotten, traditional language such as *mabwika*, which means “welcome”. The dance performance, through words and movement, describes ways that the community sustains its ethnic identity: Kalinago still maintain traditional practices such as herbal medicine, they cultivate an intimate connection with nature, and they continue to produce traditional handicrafts. This dance utilizes Kweyol and traditional Kalinago vocabulary as a tool to highlight ethnic distinctiveness. The sentiments expressed include a simple yet powerful

assertion of identity particularly evident in the title and song refrain. Less obvious to the outsider is the significance of the use of Kweyol, as this is not explained by the emcee.

Karifuna members self-consciously utilize Kweyol (a form of French Creole) throughout many songs. Islanders, Kalinago and non-Kalinago alike, generally grow up learning Kweyol and English in the home, though English is the official national language and used almost exclusively in formal settings such as school, the workplace, and in legal proceedings.<sup>6</sup> Several informants, including former Chief Hilary Frederick, stated that a distinguishing feature of Kalinago culture is that Kalinago use Kweyol more frequently than other Dominicans. It was not uncommon in the recent past to meet Kalinago community elders who, due to their limited interaction with (and perhaps limited access to) formal settings in larger Dominican society, including school, never became fluent in English. The perception of the community about the relative importance of Kweyol conveyed in interviews was confirmed in a focus group (Chambers 1994). For this reason, Kweyol is an important symbol to the community of its recent past and its long history of social marginalization. In addition to Kweyol, KCG members make an effort to incorporate into performances vocabulary from their nearly-forgotten traditional language. It is fascinating to observe a case in which an indigenous population, nearly devoid of its traditional language, still recognizes and exploits the power of language – indigenous and non-indigenous – as a cultural symbol to highlight indigeneity. And to see Kweyol used side by side with traditional lexical items makes the situation that much more striking. That being said it is common when speaking to any Dominican that in one sentence they switch back and forth between English and Kweyol. Karifuna members are thus utilizing a familiar pattern, choosing to substitute traditional language elements and pairing them with Kweyol, rather than English, because of its closer association with the historical social context of the community.

Another dance that asserts a forceful statement about Kalinago identity is the “War Dance.” Several explanations provide insight to why this title is in English. First, an aspect of many ethnic displays is that they are meant to convey information to insiders as well as to outsiders. In that light, it is not surprising that Karifuna uses English to convey information. In point of fact, Karifuna does choose to perform at times for outsiders and not only includes some English in their repertoire of songs but also uses an emcee to ensure that the audience understands the meaning embedded in specific dances and songs. The group clearly states that part of their goal is to enlighten outsiders about Kalinago culture and history. Secondly, one Karifuna member observed that the languages in the songs aptly reflects the history of individual members as indigenous citizens of a country that was at different times through history a colony for France and Britain until its independence in 1978. It was not clear from his comments if this was a deliberate plan by the group from the beginning, or if he reinterpreted already established practice. Finally, at least for now, the community does not have sufficient knowledge to compose and sing entire songs in the traditional Kalinago language.

During the “War Dance,” performers brandish bows and spears and thrust them menacingly at the audience. Compared to the other dances, this performance is aggressive, rough and intimidating. When performed for tourists, the emcee introduces it by stating that although today they are welcome guests, if they had come uninvited (as white people had done in the past), they would have met an unpleasant welcome. The emcee emphasizes the point that the Kalinago people were never conquered by the invading Europeans, effectively linking the dance to one of the salient symbols of Kalinago ethnicity. As with the use of Kweyol in songs, the significance of this aspect of the performance is not fully apprehended by outsiders in the audience, but it does resonate strongly with community members attending the performance.

Another song, “*A fina gona*,” commemorates traditional reverence for the moon. According to Karifuna members, Kalinago ancestors believed in nature deities: sun, moon, and stars. The moon was the most important, and during an eclipse, Kalinago ancestors feared the moon would permanently disappear. They danced and prayed that the moon would return. During “*A fina gona*” performers reenact dancing that would have been performed during an eclipse.

All three of these songs implicitly or explicitly demonstrate a thriving ethnicity with strong connection to ancestral ways. To outsiders they communicate KCG’s ideas about Kalinago identity. To insiders they say, know about and take pride in your heritage, its roots and current state. The meaning transmitted to insiders is not just intended for audience members. In learning the dances for performances, the youth who join KCG simultaneously learn aspects of their culture and history that they may never have encountered elsewhere. In this intense form of experiential learning, empowered youth take ownership of and authority over powerful ideas about identity.

These first three dances also illustrate a fundamental property underlying both the songs and the dance moves: they are oriented to the group, not the individual. There are no solo performances. Performers move and sing either in unison or in complementary ways. This quality, above all others, was derived primarily from knowledge about performances of other indigenous groups. For instance, in describing a dance she choreographed, one community member described watching women in a Venezuelan village sitting together while processing manioc (an edible tuber). This experience, coupled with the knowledge that manioc was a traditional staple food of her ancestors, led her to develop a dance centered around mimicking women’s movements when processing this food.

The final dance analyzed here returns to a property derived from an unbroken traditional practice – drumming. The dance, “*Son tomboula*,” refers to the sounds of the drum. According to Karifuna members, drumming exhibits a continuous history in the community, and, with the exception of Karifuna performances, drumming is primarily heard in the community at Carnival when bands travel up and down the road singing and playing instruments. One informant, the current director of KCG, described drumming and playing the flute as forms of meditation, a means by which the Kalinago awaken their heritage. Thus, drums evoke a special

connection between the Kalinago and their ancestors; both the instrument and its music creating a bridge that collapses time, connecting past to present in one moment.

Recreation of traditional dancing is an ongoing effort that involves weaving together knowledge of abandoned ancestral practices and elements borrowed from neighboring indigenous populations with existing practices from Kalinago culture.<sup>7</sup>

One obvious resource for renewal is the cultural practices of other indigenous communities, particularly those in contiguous regional areas who are most likely to be distantly related. In an interview in 1996, then Chief Hilary Frederick stated that contact with other indigenous populations is an invaluable community resource. He further stated that he particularly supported interaction that promised cultural exchange and facilitated information flow that promoted indigenous rights nationally and globally. He noted that the reactivation of the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (COIP) in 1996 presented a tremendous opportunity for exchange. The promise of that event hosted on Dominica was never fulfilled because, despite a successful meeting, COIP has yet to meet again.

Connections between the Kalinago and Native North Americans have existed at least since the 1970s when Hilary Frederick was sent as a boy to be educated in the United States. While in the U. S., Frederick took notice of the North American indigenous rights movement. "Frederick's time in the USA coincided with the growth of the American Indian Movement, and Frederick began to realize what the Dominican Kalinago had in common with other Native American groups" (Hulme and Whitehead 1992:282). Frederick eventually returned to Dominica and served two five-year terms as chief, the first beginning in 1979 and the second in 1994.

The attachment to South America is stronger in terms of its emotional bond. Karifuna members feel they have a connection to all indigenous people, but they consider South America to be their homeland because it is their ancestors place of origin.. To this end, members of the Kalinago community participated in a project in 1996 to sail from Dominica to South America, retracing their ancestors' journey, in reverse, making stops along the way to raise awareness about the Kalinago people. Upon reaching South America, project members planned "...to retrieve and research aspects of Kalinago culture now forgotten, such as language, dance, games and traditional practices" (GliGli Outline and Update: 1996). During a formal speech at the inaugural launch of the canoe used for the project, Chief Hilary Frederick specifically compared the Kalinago attachment to South America as their homeland to Dominicans of African descent looking to Africa as their homeland. The documentary film, "Quest of the Carib Canoe," chronicles the successful journey. Subsequently, there have been additional visits and cultural exchanges between various individuals of the Kalinago community and several indigenous communities in Venezuela. For instance, a couple, each involved in cultural performance groups, has traveled to Venezuela twice to meet with indigenous communities. The woman makes some of the costumes for dance performances and both help develop new dances for their respective groups.

Fewer contacts have been initiated with the Garifuna, a historically related group residing in parts of coastal Central America, though there has been some interaction. Garifuna individuals, as part of COIP, have visited the Carib Territory for meetings. One Kalinago elder, now deceased, was one of the last surviving community members with extensive (though not fluent) knowledge of the traditional Kalinago language. During an interview he recounted a story about working outside his house one day and hearing people pass on the street. It suddenly struck him that he was listening to two people speak fluently in his traditional language. He called out to them, and they identified themselves as Garifuna. In one of my first interviews with Chief Hilary Frederick, I asked him about the potential for cultural exchange with this group especially regarding language and religion. His answer was noncommittal and indicated that purer traditional forms would come from South America. Perhaps this attitude results in part from ideas about the relative value of phenotype in defining indigenous heritage; because of their history, the Garifuna look more African in their features (Gullick 1976, 1985). Alternatively, it may reflect the known fact that the immediate ancestors of the Kalinago migrated from South America. Regardless, clearly there is potential for fruitful exchange to the north as well as to the south. In that vein, a Kalinago canoe voyage to Central America has been proposed, this time with two canoes – the existing GliGli canoe used for the South American trip and a new one to be named *Sisserou*.<sup>8</sup>

The Kalinago community, including KCG members, have also visited and been visited by Caribs from communities in St. Vincent and Trinidad. These exchanges establish important and ongoing relationships but, for the Kalinago of Dominica, have not generated cultural resources for use in reclaiming lost tradition. According to Forte (2005), who has extensively documented the rise of the indigenous consciousness among the Arima Caribs of Trinidad (e.g. 2005, 2002, 1999), representatives from the Kalinago community of Dominica and the Arima have visited each other at least ten times, including a stop during the GliGli voyage.

Chief Frederick's statement about the community looking to South America as the origin place of its ancestors opens consideration of how the term diaspora may apply to the Kalinago population. Neither in casual conversation nor interviews has anyone expressed a sense of displacement from nor a longing for residence in South America, two qualities that Brown (1998) has noted as basic components in some definitions of diaspora. As much as the community understands that their ancestors came from South America, every community member to whom I have spoken describes Dominica, and other islands of the Lesser Antilles, as their homeland, their rightful place of residence. They explain that their ancestors were the original inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles, and in fact community members, including two former chiefs, have argued that because they are descendants of the earliest inhabitants of the region (not just of Dominica), they should be allowed to travel freely to its different modern-day countries without the constraint of having to use passports or obtain visas. Emigration and fantasies of return experienced by modern-day migrants are different types of experience than that expressed by those

community members who identify culturally with the origin place of ancestors. An additional complicating factor is the cultural affinity expressed for indigenous groups residing in locales outside of South America.

Brown proposes that definitions of diaspora need to be more flexible and allow for motivations and sentiments other than loss and displacement from place of origin (Brown 1998:294). For instance, in discussing Black Britons, Brown notes that community members don't just think about and look to Africa as a source of inspiration, but they also look to and appropriate resources (cultural and political) from other African diasporic populations, particularly Black America. She asserts that "black communities post-slavery search for freedom, citizenship, and autonomy link them globally" (Brown 1998: 294). Similarly, James Clifford (1994:309) states, "...transnational alliances currently being forged by Fourth World peoples contain diasporic elements. United by similar claims to 'firstness' on the land and by common histories of decimation and marginality, these alliances often deploy diasporist visions of return to an original place..." Solidarity expressed in these terms conveys emotional bonds based on shared experiences and goals derived from a common social identity. When trying to understand and explain feelings of cultural affinity expressed by some Kalinago (e.g. KCG members) to indigenous populations in South America and beyond, it is productive to think of the Kalinago as part of an imagined, global ethnic community. Imagined in the sense that there is no unifying physical space at the global level, though specific population clusters may control their own territory and do develop local cultural forms within the nation-states in which they reside. In his discussion of the Arima Caribs of Trinidad, Forte (2005) proposes interpreting globalization of indigeneity as a "virtual meta-indigeneity" stemming from spread of motifs, practices, products, and ideologies. "Indeed, globalization processes have provided some of the raw materials, conditioning processes, and impetus for developing indigeneity in the Caribbean..." (Forte 2005:220).

Besides contact with extant indigenous groups, another source of information for recreating traditional practices is historical accounts made by Europeans.<sup>9</sup> For instance, several European missionaries working individually in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries compiled detailed records of Kalinago customs, practices, and language (e.g. Labat 1724; Du Tertre 1667; Breton 1665). Another European source of inspiration is historical images made by eighteenth century artist Agostino Brunias who resided temporarily in Dominica (Honychurch 2004). Reproductions of Brunias' work are available from a variety of sources throughout the region including some souvenir shops. Finally, written and visual records made about other indigenous groups provide historical documentation. Upon request, I purchased and delivered two volumes (Hathaway 1990; Naylor 1975), one containing historical photos of Native North Americans and the other Native American designs, to a performer who also creates costumes.

Based on data from the sources cited above, performers (male and female) wear long loin cloths known as *waiuku*; the women also wear a strip of cloth tied across their chests - a non-traditional item added for modern-day modesty. All

performers go barefoot, wear necklaces made from colored seeds, and wear head bands. They also use face and body paints in black, red, and white. Each dancer wears the same basic costume but many add personal elements to express individual style. For example, although use of face and body paints is standard, designs are individually determined.

Consideration of the contents of each song and dance yields several patterns. For instance, the creators did not limit themselves to one type of information. Inspiration for song themes comes from myths, historical events, culture-hero legends, and the value placed on connections to nature. The diversity of topics indicates the level of creativity at work and the wide net cast in search of meaningful content. Furthermore, regardless of the particular source for the themes, they are all Kalinago-specific cultural expressions, not generically indigenous. In other words, elements of the performance, whether they consist of existing features found in the larger community (e.g. drumming) or not (e.g. dance moves), are clearly embedded in a Kalinago context. Thus, new or existing forms of expression in the performance convey familiar ideas, values and images.

It is notable that the audiences for performances may be either community members or outsiders. Karifuna has performed at important community events such as the launch of the Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme (CREP) in the Carib Territory in summer 2004<sup>10</sup> and the annual Carib Week held in Dominica each fall to celebrate Kalinago culture and history. In terms of performances directed towards outsiders, Karifuna members have traveled internationally to perform at festivals as well as performing for tourists in the Carib Territory, such as at the Kalinago Barana Autê (Kalinago Cultural Village). In fact, the audience for most performances is tourists. This need not provoke cynicism as to the cultural legitimacy or purpose of the activity. Decades ago Fredrik Barth (1969) noted that ethnicity often becomes pronounced rather than diminished during interactions with outsiders because it is at the boundaries with other groups that ethnic differences take on their greatest relevance. Indeed it could be said that Karifuna has both a public orientation and a more private one. In a sense, KCG is a self-designated defender and ambassador of Kalinago ethnicity. The more public side brings a movable cultural boundary to the “other” to promote awareness of Kalinago culture. The more private side supports and promotes cultural activities within the community. One community leader stated, “The [Karifuna] cultural group is mainly involved in the preservation, promotion and teaching of Carib culture and traditions. The group also presents the plight of the Carib people or issues which arise from time to time using popular education methods, locally, nationally, and internationally” (Burton 1993:18).

Another element associated with performances is that Karifuna members readily admit that, unlike handicrafts, there is no continuity of practice with dancing. The emcee who introduces Karifuna dances usually states this as part of his remarks at the beginning of each show staged for tourists as a way to give context to the performance. The audience is often surprised to learn that the style and structure of the dances are creations based on knowledge gathered from other indigenous

groups. As part of my research documenting Kalinago ethnicity and efforts at ethnic renewal, I followed the Carib Heritage Tour – a package that includes Karifuna performances – numerous times and interviewed tourists in addition to performers, tour guides, and craft vendors. Tourists invariably enjoyed the performances, but because of the admission of cultural borrowing some expressed doubt about whether they were “real.” From the tourist perspective, the admission of created tradition cast doubt on whether they had encountered the authentic exotic “other” they had come to see.

The topic of authenticity, addressed from a variety of perspectives, appears regularly in scholarship about tourism activities and ethnic renewal. Because of the emphasis on cultural forms, “...ethnic tourism brings with it the special problem of authenticity” (Van den Berghe and Keyes 1984:345). Some scholars, particularly those working early in the history of the topic, focus on evaluating the historical accuracy of cultural representations. Regina Bendix (1989) provides a brief overview of the early history of authenticity scholarship and notes a trend over time that “...shifts the analytic focus from the event [or object] to the agency of those involved in its creation and maintenance” (1989:132). Rather than evaluating the accuracy in replication of historical precedents, this alternate approach emphasizes the choices made by artisans and performers when engaging with, creating, and presenting their culture. In that vein, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and others (e.g. Handler and Linnekin 1984; Jackson 1995; Nagel 1997) assert that invention of tradition is a normal, rather than anomalous, process by which a population identifies and utilizes relevant aspects of its past, real or perceived, in the present. Similarly, Gillis (1994) asserts that memory and identity are fluid, subjective representations of reality constructed in the present for a particular purpose. The following statement by Jean Jackson (1995) about identity provides insight into understanding the cultural legitimacy of re-created traditional practices, such as Kalinago dancing.

It is helpful sometimes to see culture as less like an animal’s fur and more like a jazz musician’s repertoire: the individual pieces come out of a tradition, but improvisation always occurs...This analogy emphasizes the agentive aspects of culture; we cannot speak of a jazz musician as “having” jazz, and, for the most part, speaking of people as “having” culture occludes the interaction between those people and their tradition. The analogy also underscores the interactive aspects of culture; just as a jazz artist’s music depends on engaging an audience and fellow musicians, so does a culture come into existence because a ‘we’ and a ‘they’ interact. This may also prove to be a more genuinely respectful – as well as correct – view of present-day indigenous groups in their struggles to preserve their self-respect, autonomy, and a life with meaning. (Jackson 1995:18)

Insights garnered from Hobsbawm (1983) further elucidate a basis for an alternative criterion by which to evaluate new cultural forms. Hobsbawm points out that “...

invented tradition is based on ideology, not the technical base” (1983:3). Within such a framework, manifestations of tradition have the potential to be infinitely variable in the present because, although influenced by the social environment (context), they are not limited by existing material forms. His assertion echoes Jackson’s (1995) analogy of the jazz musician’s repertoire. The premise for evaluation is not accuracy in replication of past practices – objects or behavior – but rather resonance with current cultural identity and lived experiences embraced by at least part of the community. Daniel (1996) agrees with Handler and Saxton (1988) in suggesting that the performing arts in particular, as opposed to the visual arts, benefit from such an approach because of their fluidly creative nature.

KCG informants state that inauthenticity is not a valid criticism of Karifuna performances because although the dances constitute an example of reinvented tradition, they are created by Kalinago community members who combine indigenous elements, both from inside and outside of the community, past and present. Community members’ comments indicate an interpretive framework in which the authenticity of performances rests not in perfect simulation but rather in the validity of relying on certain types of knowledge as resources; specifically, the authority/power of a general indigenous body of knowledge that Karifuna members, as indigenous people, claim a right to access as a source of inspiration for new forms. Within this framework, the purpose of explicitly acknowledging recreated traditions (inspired by an indigenous knowledge base beyond everyday practices, but not ideology) of the present-day Kalinago community is to weaken the legitimacy of any doubts about authenticity at the same time that it reinforces the indigenous status of the community on Dominica. Hobsbawm’s and Jackson’s statements illuminate the community’s approach to its own identity and its efforts at cultural revival. Other indigenous groups and their cultural practices are viewed as legitimate sources of knowledge because they are part of an indigenous tradition to which the Kalinago also belong. To put it in Jackson’s terms, “...the ...pieces come out of a tradition...but improvisation always occurs” (Jackson 1995:18).

This is not to suggest that all Kalinago agree with the value of Karifuna performances. More than one informant expressed concern that such performances give outsiders a misleading impression of modern-day Kalinago life. One specific criticism addressed the clothing of the dancers. The body image presented in dances raised fears that the outsider stereotype of Kalinago people as half-naked savages who worshipped nature would be confirmed. Ethnicity, or any type of social identity, is not a monolithic enterprise. The choices made by Karifuna reflect the attitudes and goals of one segment of the community. Lack of universal support within the community is expected because, as noted by Graham et al (2000), heritage is a signifying process that establishes cultural norms within the community. As such, Karifuna performances are not merely recurring ephemeral cultural displays, but they function also as a mechanism by which cultural standards for the entire community may shift or become established. Thomas (1992) presents an interesting discussion about traditions that reify cultural images and stereotypes deemed undesirable by part or all of a given population. Notably, criticisms lodged

against Karifuna performances by Kalinago community members question neither the legitimacy of the process of cultural revival used nor the validity of the final product, but rather express concern about the possible negative consequences of the end product.<sup>11</sup>

Tacit support of the process, if not the end product, by the larger community indicates a shared understanding about sources of ancestral knowledge used for ethnic renewal. During interviews with both KCG members and the larger community, two specific approaches to culture loss and renewal were identified. One is based on the idea that, as the need arises, lost knowledge may be reclaimed, or in some cases, reinvented. From this point of view, ancestral knowledge is never completely lost, but rather it exists in some other place accessible through a variety of mechanisms specifically identified as dreams, meditation, and contact with other indigenous groups. A perfect example of this is illustrated in the Karifuna dance, "Maruka." Maruka is a Kalinago culture-hero, and the dance recounts how he was visited in a dream by a dead ancestor who instructed him about some of the lost traditions of the Kalinago. Upon waking, Maruka shared the knowledge with others. With this type of attitude, there is neither an overwhelming sense of loss nor urgency in preservation. Information merely lays dormant, waiting to be called into action when needed. While explaining the concept to me during an interview, one informant referenced the knowledge to make thread from screwpine and the use of certain types of twigs as toothbrushes to make the point that old ways change as better ways are introduced. However, if the need arises to make one's own thread again, then the old ways can be re-mastered...or recreated...or rediscovered. This also means that information appropriated by outsiders (e.g. missionaries or anthropologists) for their purposes can still be used by insiders. A Kalinago craftsman from the village of St. Cyr makes cassava squeezers using *larouma*. He was the only source for this item in the community. Assuming that he was the keeper of specialized family knowledge, I was interested to discover he had recently taught himself how to make them after seeing a photo in a museum catalogue, which he showed to me.<sup>12</sup> In summer 2007 I met a young woman from Salybia who learned basic clay techniques from a visiting ceramics artist. Her father identified two local sources of clay, and she has begun producing forms and styles derived from photos and drawings in archaeology texts that chronicle the material culture from prehistoric sites in the Caribbean islands. An alternative, more standard approach involves efforts, such as the Cultural Preservation Project, to preserve the existing knowledge of elders as a cultural storehouse for current and future use.

### **Conclusion**

The development of traditional dancing stands as an example of an ongoing effort at cultural renewal engaged in by KCG members. Although dancing can be described as newly recreated, it cannot be labeled as a completely new and original practice. Rather, creators draw from a variety of dormant and extant

cultural practices from within the community and from those of other indigenous groups. Combining these forms in novel ways, performers craft uniquely Kalinago expressions of indigenous experience. In this sense, Karifuna dance performances may be interpreted as a newly created tradition.

Looking to other indigenous groups as a model for behavior is not just about locating resources for lost traditional knowledge. It is also, in itself, an expression of ethnic identity; a conscious act which locates the Kalinago within an indigenous context. Due to a degree of culture loss and their particular political situation on Dominica, the Kalinago are especially interested in proving indigenous connections. The open admission of created “traditional” dancing illustrates a lack of concern about challenges to the authenticity of created practices. How can there be any challenge if the behavior is derived from an indigenous repertoire, even if not their own? Public admission of this type of borrowing - public performance of this type of borrowing - emphasizes the position of the Kalinago as legitimate heirs to indigenous ancestral knowledge. However, this is not performance of pan-indigenous identity because although inspired by knowledge gathered from other populations, Karifuna participants create a culture-specific product by incorporating into their dances elements considered to be relevant to their own experiences as members of a particular indigenous community from the circum-Caribbean region.

Analysis of these global interactions reveals an emerging hierarchy where local groups privilege certain sources of information over others.<sup>13</sup> For the Kalinago of Dominica, the preferential use of cultural knowledge from South America and North America may reflect partiality for cultural forms from established indigenous populations with ample traditional resources as well as preference for information from closely related populations (South America only). However, although the nature of interactions with the Arima Caribs of Trinidad or the Carib community on St. Vincent might be explained this way, the Garifuna of Central America have maintained numerous elements of traditional culture, such as spirituality and language, long absent from the Dominican population. A contributing factor to selective use of materials may be (perhaps unconscious) racialized notions of identity. This is a claim supported by the role, albeit controversial, of phenotype as a symbol of identity. Ironically, as noted by Phillips and Steiner (1999:9), cultural borrowing and the stylistic hybridity of resulting cultural forms “conflicts with essentialist notions...” of, in this case, identity. Another factor deployed in the hierarchical arrangement of cultural forms is noted by Forte who states that “... the dominant representations of indigenous issues and perspectives follow the broad contours of the center-periphery tension in the world system, with those indigenous groups that are active in the core countries (groups with financial resources and access to the international mass media) having a disproportionate prominence” (2005:202). He further notes that, to the degree that either or both of these circumstances (metropolitan orientation and/or racialized notions of identity) exist in reality, they act as hurdles which impede global networking (Forte 2005:212).

Forte suggests that renewed ethnic consciousness among the Arima Caribs, a result of global interactions, unfolds in a way that even as it grants the community a distinct identity, it simultaneously attaches the community to a national Trinidadian identity (2005:183). By contrast, I propose that, for the Kalinago of Dominica, a similar process of ethnic renewal stemming from global transactions with indigenous communities generates, at least for some community members, a sense of identity separate and parallel to a national Dominican identity, rather than nested within it. Davila provides useful concepts when she introduces the terms “cultural nationalism” and “domain of sovereignty” in discussing identity politics in Puerto Rico. Island leaders, thwarted in terms of achieving political sovereignty, turn instead to manipulation of cultural forms as a mechanism for asserting autonomy and difference (Davila 1997). Similarly KCG members establish a domain of sovereignty based on their control and manipulation of local indigenous culture that has been fortified through global cultural and political exchanges with other indigenous populations.

The resulting dance performances function as more than entertainment sold to tourists. First, the research involved in creating and learning the dances serves to heighten performers’ awareness of their own identity. Additionally, community members constitute the audience for some performances. Karifuna performers’ vision of Kalinago culture is not uniformly accepted, so each performance is an opportunity to influence the community. Even when performed for tourists, art as education is a primary goal. For that reason, Karifuna members structure performances to enhance audience understanding about aspects of Kalinago culture and history. In turn, most tourists I interviewed indicated that they chose to take the Carib Heritage Tour or to visit the Kalinago Barana Autë to learn about one of the last remaining indigenous populations in the Caribbean. Finally, as already mentioned, the Karifuna Culture Group engages in a variety of practices separate and apart from dancing. As with many cultural practices, the significance of dancing to performers and the larger community has multiple dimensions - economic, cultural, and political - and open admission of the use of borrowed elements stands as a symbol of identity in the same way as the dancing itself.

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## Notes

1. My experience while conducting research in the Carib Territory over the past thirteen years is that most individuals refer to themselves as Carib, not Kalinago. However, a growing handful of Caribs, particularly when discussing their ethnic identity, pointedly refer to themselves as Kalinago. For instance, a Carib cultural center once located in the capital of Roseau was called the Kalinago Centre, and an exhibit at the Native American Heritage Museum in Washington, D.C. refers to the Caribs as Kalinago. The term Kalinago may eventually replace the term Carib, much like the Black Caribs of Middle America have become known as Garifuna.
2. Until the mid-1980s the Carib Territory was known as the Carib Reserve. The Caribs asked that the name be changed because they felt it sounded like they were animals in a zoo.
3. There is an ongoing debate between the Kalinago and other Dominicans as to the exact boundaries of the Carib Territory. The Kalinago believe that the boundaries were changed when the first government took office after national independence in 1978. See Hudepohl (2002) and Layng (1983) for details.
4. See Cornell and Hartmann's discussion of ethnicity in terms of "reciprocal fluxion" (1998:72) and "constructed primordialism" (1998:90). The latter term is somewhat similar to the Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) use of "invention of tradition."
5. Karifuna is a term from the traditional Arawakan language that refers to the ethnic group. Other groups also use the term. The complete name for a community organized NGO, WAIKADA, is Waitukubuli Karifuna Development Agency. Waitukubuli (various spellings), the traditional Kalinago name for Dominica, translates as "tall is her body." As previously noted, a historically related group in Middle America, once known as Black Caribs, now refer to themselves as the Garifuna. Note that [k] and [g] are both velar sounds; one voiced, the other voiceless. Some state that Karifuna is a gender specific term (masculine) and prefer to use the term Kalinago instead to refer to the entire group.
6. In the past, Kweyol was looked down upon as the language of the uneducated. However, in the past seven to ten years there has been a growing national movement to value it as a symbol of national identity, and although English is still the language of official business, Kweyol is increasingly used in newspaper reports and radio shows (Paugh 2001).
7. The use of extra-local cultural resources as a resource for creativity and/or to strengthen identity is not unique to the Kalinago community of Dominica. See for example Kline-Silverman (1999) discussing the art forms in the Sepik River Valley, Niessen (1999) discussing Toba Batak textile repertory, and Brown (1998) discussing cultural forms of Black Britons. Mato (2000) discusses exchange between indigenous organizations, and Quinn (2005) examines how event organizers utilize extra-local connections.
8. Each canoe is named for a bird. The GliGli is a mythical bird of prey; the Sisserou is the common name for an endangered parrot indigenous to Dominica.

9. See Peter Hulme and Neil L. Whitehead (1992) and Hulme (1986) for discussions about and a starting place for source materials of various visitors to Dominica.
10. CREP is a stakeholder-based (i.e. “bottom up” model) ecological development program implemented by the Caribbean Conservation Association, authorized by CARIFORUM, and financed by the European Union. The Carib Territory was chosen as the locale for one of thirteen regional demonstration projects.
11. Addressing danger from a different angle, Charles Briggs (1996) discusses how communities might be harmed by scholarship on the concept of invented tradition. For example, people with a particular agenda who misunderstand the scholarly discussion may use the information to justify taking land, or other resources, away from a group by arguing that it’s not authentically ethnic (enough).
12. Cassava squeezers are long, narrow, tubular baskets constructed with a diagonal weave. Each end has strong, looped handles, and one end is left open. These items were used to process bitter manioc, a root food that is deadly if the poison is not leached from it. The root is grated into a mash, the squeezer is compressed from either end to create a wide space to load the mash, and then it is hung from a tree branch, open side up. A weight is often attached to the loop on the other end. The poisonous liquid is pressed out as the basket slowly resumes its original shape. The remaining flour can be used in foodstuffs. Bitter manioc is used by indigenous peoples in South America, and the Kalinago grow it today on Dominica in demonstration gardens - although I don’t know anyone who eats it. It is possible that Kalinago ancestors did eat this tuber and may have had similar baskets for processing it.
13. Brown (1998) discusses a similar hierarchy in the exchange and use of cultural and political forms within the African diaspora.

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# Mobilian Jargon in Historiography: An Exercise in the Ethnohistory of Speaking

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Patricia Galloway (2006: 225-244) made Mobilian Jargon the subject matter of a chapter in her recent book *Practicing Ethnohistory* – with several challenging conclusions about its structure, functions, and sociohistorical contexts that call for a response. My essay addresses fundamental misconceptions about this Muskogean-based pidgin language, while raising some broader issues of documentation and analysis relevant to the historical sociolinguistics of greater Louisiana.

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## **More to a Name Than Meets the Eye**

Throughout her essay, Galloway refers to the pidgin as “Mobilian” without the modifying attachment of “Jargon.” The use of the short form would seem a minor terminological difference, were she not to use the same name in reference to Mobilian proper when discussing the Mobilian Indians’ language. This leads to a fundamental confusion of the vernacular and the pidgin by the same name. As I pointed out (Drechsel 1997: 52, 205, 234), it is imperative to differentiate “Mobilian Jargon” from “Mobilian” (like other pidgins and their source languages such as “Chinook Jargon” versus “Chinook” and “Delaware Jargon” versus “Delaware”) because of fundamental extralinguistic as well as grammatical differences between them (Silverstein 1996, 1997). Mobilian Jargon was a Muskogean-based pidgin with a morphologically reduced, analytical grammar; Mobilian proper a Native American vernacular of so far unidentified provenance, with a full-fledged, synthetic or possibly even polysynthetic grammar and a complex morphology of inflections and/or affixations. To imply that Mobilian Jargon directly related to Mobilian proper misrepresents linguistic and historical facts.

If the name of Mobilian Jargon suggests a direct historical tie to the Mobilian Indians, its actual origin and etymology have remained uncertain; the pidgin’s name could just as well have derived from the French colonial post of Mobile in what is Alabama today. This conclusion holds true even if we were to assume – as Galloway does without drawing on any supporting *linguistic* evidence

– that the Mobilians spoke a variety of Western Muskogean (closely related to Choctaw). However, Muskogean-derived glottonyms, ethnonyms, and place names of southeastern North America, including those of “Mobilian” and “Mobile,” do not provide evidence for linguistic identification, for there were numerous non-Muskogean groups with Muskogean names (Drechsel 1997). Notwithstanding alleged clues for an apparent Muskogean source, the Mobilians likely were non-Muskogean (Drechsel 1997: 205), counter to Galloway’s claims. Any historical references to Choctaw could likewise have been to Mobilian Jargon instead, because the glottonym “Choctaw” extended also to Mobilian Jargon because of its *lexical* similarity to Western Muskogean (Drechsel 1997: 206). Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz, the earliest authority on Mobilian Jargon, similarly referred to it as “la Langue Tchicacha” or ‘the Chickasaw language’ (Crawford 1978). The Tunica-Biloxi Indians of central Louisiana knew Mobilian Jargon by yet another glottonym, the Houma language (Haas 1975: 219, 320). Historical references to Mobilians as Choctaw Indians or as speaking Choctaw have thus proven most unreliable without confirmation by actual linguistic data.

These sociolinguistic circumstances were by no means unique to the Mobilian Indians; they applied to many other Native American communities of southeastern North America (Drechsel 1997: 318-319; see also Booker *et al.* 1992 and Goddard 2005: 35-41). Historical and linguistic records indicate that numerous Southeastern Indian groups spoke diverse indigenous languages, several of which did not belong to the Muskogean language family; but they adopted the Muskogean-based pidgin Mobilian Jargon no later than the early eighteenth century, as reliably attested in various historical records (Drechsel 1997: 215-232). The only conclusive way to sort out native languages and Mobilian Jargon in historical documentation then is by: (1) actual linguistic, specifically syntactic data; (2) names reserved exclusively for the pidgin such as *anōpa ēla* ‘other/different/strange language’, *yoka anōpa* ‘servant/slave language’, or *yam(m)a* ‘yes, right, alright, indeed; this, that’; or (3) sociolinguistic clues that clearly specify the pidgin as opposed to a vernacular (Drechsel 1997: 205-206).

In contrast, Galloway presents the Gulf region of southeastern North America as an area dominated by Western Muskogean and especially the Choctaw – with Eastern Muskogean (such as the Alabama,<sup>1</sup> Apalachi, Koasati, and Muskogee) and many unnamed non-Muskogean presumably lurking on the distant margins. Not only does Galloway fail to support her claim with actual linguistic evidence, but she identifies this Western Muskogean heartland specifically with the pre-European Moundville peoples – a questionable endeavor in light of the upheavals (including the social fragility of paramount chiefdoms and the spread of epidemic diseases) that Southeastern Indians experienced since their first contacts with Europeans. In an earlier article, Galloway similarly thought that the interpreters of the eastern part of greater Louisiana “had to do with only one major language family” (Galloway 1987: 113), presumably Muskogean or Western Muskogean, and against established linguistic evidence considered Mobilian Jargon as a koiné. In short, a highly skewed perspective on Southeastern Indian languages, distorted by

a focus on Choctaw history, has made Galloway substantially underestimate the linguistic diversity of southeastern North America, the linguistically most diverse area after native California and the Pacific Northwest (see Goddard 2005).

### **Interpreters do not preclude the existence of a pidgin**

Another dubious argument that Galloway presents in her essay on Mobilian Jargon is the contention that historical attestations of the use of interpreters preclude the existence of a pidgin such as Mobilian Jargon and moreover serve as evidence against it. She draws this conclusion on a misguided notion that for their tasks, interpreters relied on vernaculars at the exclusion of a pidgin (Galloway 2006: 226-234).

Galloway criticizes Crawford (1978) for using the presence of native interpreters among various indigenous groups of the Gulf Coast, including Western Muskogean, as an argument against the pre-European existence of Mobilian Jargon, while recognizing the pidgin next to interpreters in colonial Louisiana. Galloway rejects this inconsistency of argument, which in turn supports her line of reasoning against the presence of Mobilian Jargon in early colonial times. But her argument presumes the mutual exclusiveness of interpreters and Mobilian Jargon, as if they were sociolinguistic phenomena that could not exist side by side. Yet historical documentation demonstrates not only the co-existence of interpreters and Mobilian Jargon (Drechsel 1997), but also the actual use of the pidgin by interpreters in Louisiana throughout the entire eighteenth century, as Crawford (1978) recognized. In short, the existence of interpreters was complementary and synergetic with Mobilian Jargon, because interpreters themselves had a need for the pidgin as a medium in the linguistically highly diverse area of the Gulf of Mexico – a fact that also undermines Crawford’s argument against the pidgin’s pre-European existence (Drechsel 1979: 275-282).

The historical documentation that Galloway cites, consisting of a few references to French youngsters learning local vernaculars (Galloway 2006: 233), does not strongly support her argument because it does not provide any actual linguistic or other irrefutable historical evidence against these youngsters learning Mobilian Jargon. On the contrary, her argument fails again on the recognition that glottonyms based on Western Muskogean could have referred to the pidgin in its place. This very situation is relevant in the case of Jean Baptiste Le Moyne (whom Galloway uses as a prime example), who had learned “Bayougoula” from his native guide in less than six weeks and served as interpreter to his older brother, Pierre Le Moyne, in their early explorations of Louisiana in 1699. By speaking “Bayougoula” or actually Mobilian Jargon, the younger Le Moyne could talk not only with the Bayougoula, but also with other linguistically diverse groups (Drechsel 1997).

Significantly, Galloway (2006: 235) acknowledges “repeated complaints in the French records that both missionaries and officers were failing to learn the Indian languages.” She also provides an answer: “the missionaries tended to be subject to transfer at more frequent intervals than the adequate learning of a specific language

would require,” a situation that likewise applied to officers (Galloway 2006: 235) and that again favored the use of Mobilian Jargon. Predictably, “in spite of their acknowledged competence in specific languages, some of these very officers were reported as having used interpreters on important occasions” (Galloway 2006: 236). From the perspective of second-language studies recognizing fundamental grammatical differences between European and Native American languages, we cannot plausibly expect speakers of French to have acquired a full-fledged Native American vernacular within a few months; but within such a period they could certainly have learned at least the basics of Mobilian Jargon (Drechsel 1997: 257-259).

Instead, Galloway prefers to pursue another line of arguments:

[Drechsel] assumed without detailed analysis of ethnohistorical sources that Native diplomatic conventions would accept the *informality* of a pidgin [emphasis added], when in fact their seriousness and emphasis on conventions of diplomatic speech by proxy speakers present serious problems for such an interpretation. He also failed to take into account the tremendous upheavals in Indian life that took place as a result of sustained contact with Europeans, especially after the end of the European colonial period. (Galloway 2006: 228)

To make her case, Galloway (2006: 230) repeats another specious argument against the early existence of Mobilian Jargon, namely that “the early French explorers and settlers remarked on no such pidgin.” The answer to this claim is straightforward: The first European explorers and settlers simply were not in a position to observe any such pidgin, because lacking a comparative understanding of the pidgin and its source languages, they could not make any suitable observations. It is for this very reason that Europeans often referred to Mobilian Jargon by the name of its speakers’ first languages rather than a glottonym of its own and missed recognizing basic sociolinguistic realities. Although these European newcomers inadvertently shared linguistic and social clues about its true role, in their minds the Indians spoke the pidgin as their first language rather than as a second one or as an intertribal medium (Drechsel 1997: 204-206, 215-220).<sup>2</sup> A differentiated understanding of Mobilian Jargon in relation to the vernaculars would come about only with the first descriptions and analyses of indigenous languages, as Le Page du Pratz generated it (see Drechsel 1997: 145-149 and Galloway 2006: 97-108).

Galloway (2006: 230) also suggests that the institution of *fani mingo* or ‘Native ombudsman,’ as observed among the Choctaw and Chickasaw in the early eighteenth century, would speak against the existence of Mobilian Jargon or at least its wide use: While recognizing that a *fani mingo* adopted from a neighboring tribe did not necessarily speak the language of the tribe whom he represented, the author infers that there existed several instances *implying* such linguistic skills – again without providing any supportive evidence. Still, Galloway concludes without hesitation that the existence of native institutions such as the *fani mingo* “demonstrates

the fact that Native cultures, like the cultures of their European contemporaries, provided quite adequate formal mechanisms for linguistic accommodation without the development of interlanguages or pidgins" (2006: 230).

I would not want to question the need for formal adequacy in the institution of *fani mingo*; but I fail to see the logic behind Galloway's reasoning *unless* one assumes that Mobilian Jargon or for that matter any other well-established pidgin by its very nature cannot meet the position's formal requirements, as seems to be the case when she speaks of "the informality of a pidgin" (Galloway 2006: 228). Such an understanding draws on a substantial misperception of Mobilian Jargon in both linguistic and sociohistorical terms: In spite of its extended lexical variation, the pidgin revealed regularity in syntax and an extended grammar over space and time; it exhibited standards of speech, and unlike European pidgins did not display any obvious negative connotations. By *anōpa ēla*, speakers of the pidgin recognized it as 'other/different/ strange language' rather than as a poor or corrupted version of Choctaw or some other Muskogean language, as Galloway would have it. The author thus appears to confuse absent negative connotations with a lack of grammatical standards, for which my extended description (Drechsel 1997: 57-156) has offered no indication.

My 1997 review of Mobilian Jargon's syntax and semantics instead substantiates the claim that from a linguistic perspective the pidgin was sufficiently complex to serve in formal contexts, a conclusion that Galloway (2006: 243, fn. 56) summarily dismisses without linguistic review. As documented in several historical sources, Mobilian Jargon was used in extended negotiations and full speeches on almost any topic of the period, and served as a medium in both hostile and friendly encounters. The variety of topics addressed by its speakers indicates that there were few, if any, restrictions on Mobilian Jargon's use. By several reliable ethnographic-historical indications, the pidgin fulfilled this very formal function at intertribal gatherings such as intertribal dances, games, and religious meetings (Drechsel 1997: 257-264). The discussion of historical sources actually reviews several instances of the use of Mobilian Jargon in *formal* contexts as early as 1720 (Drechsel 1997: 149-156), and the nineteenth French traveler Claude C. Robin explicitly recognized Mobilian Jargon as the Indians' "langue publique et politique" (1807: II. 54-55). For sociohistorical as well as linguistic reasons, the pidgin could then also have served as a suitable medium for the *fani mingo* – a claim worthy of examination in historical documents. For Galloway to presume any less is to fall victim to prejudicial ideas about what Mobilian Jargon could or could not achieve.

The same conclusions of formal adequacy for Mobilian Jargon hold true for the eighteenth-century institution of placing French boys and young men among Indians of Louisiana to make them into interpreters. Galloway (2006: 231) argues to the contrary by drawing on historical evidence, interpretable as Mobilian Jargon, and by introducing yet another non-argument, namely that "so many of them [French boys and young men] also married within their adopted culture and founded métis families." The historical sources that Galloway cites as "Houma"

and “Chickasaw” could again be Mobilian Jargon for the already cited reasons of its identifications with glottonyms, as was true especially for the early colonial period to which Galloway refers. Any suggestion to Houma resembling Chickasaw or Choctaw, upon which Galloway relies following d’Iberville’s journal, proves no more satisfactory due to a lack of actual linguistic evidence. The only available and frequently cited body of Houma linguistic data of any size, by John R. Swanton (1911: 28-29, 291-292), is open to interpretation in terms of either a Western Muskogean language or Mobilian Jargon, and leaves unanswered any question of whether Western Muskogean, if actually confirmed, might be no more than *one* among several languages spoken in what clearly was a multilingual community (see Drechsel 1997: 206, fn. 2; Brown and Hardy 2000; Drechsel in Campisi and Starna 2004: 784-786, and Goddard 2005: 40). The other major instance of “Houma” by the French Jesuit priest Paul du Ru, going back to 1700, is clearly identifiable as Mobilian Jargon on morphological and syntactic grounds (Drechsel 1997: 139, 216-217, 262).

Marrying into native communities provided no better guarantee for European husbands to acquire the community’s vernacular, counter to Galloway’s assumption; instead, these men could have survived speaking solely the pidgin with their wives and children, as we know in fact for other interlingual media such as Cree-based Michif and Chinook Jargon (Bakker 1997, Zenk 1988). Nor does Galloway’s subsequent counterargument hold up: Louisiana Indians required interpreters at the officer rank to reflect their dignity status, whereas the interpreters employed by the French “were of low rank and lived by somewhat questionable trading practices” (Galloway 2006: 232). According to Galloway, the Indians expected their interpreters to be comparable to a chief’s speaker, which effectively excluded a pidgin such as Mobilian Jargon. That conclusion would apply only if again we were to maintain that Louisiana Indians viewed Mobilian Jargon as a “corrupt” or bad form of Choctaw, i.e. of low social ranking – an assumption that does not agree with either historical or ethnographic evidence. For many of the attested Native American speakers of Mobilian Jargon to have held high social ranks within their communities (see Drechsel 1997: 215-249) suggests that speaking Mobilian Jargon was without stigma and may even have carried some prestige.

Nor can Galloway (2006: 232-233) claim that Mobilian Jargon challenged official French colonial policy. Even if the French objected to Mobilian Jargon, they were in no position to determine language policy in a colony in which a few thousand French colonizers faced a majority of many more native peoples from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes; those calling the shots in greater Louisiana through much of the eighteenth century were not the French, but the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Upper Creek, as Daniel H. Usner, Jr. (1992) has convincingly argued. The French could then do little or nothing without the approval by the Choctaw or other Indians of the area, whose power and influence in part was in the very use of Mobilian Jargon. Yet Galloway (2006: 234) maintains that the Louisiana Indians encouraged the instruction of their own vernaculars rather than a pidgin in order to distinguish themselves from other groups, and refuses to

recognize official French efforts “in the spread of Mobilian [Jargon] before 1763” (Galloway 2006: 234). Her conclusion fares no better than the previous arguments for a simple lack of actual historical-sociolinguistic evidence and against plenty of indications to the contrary (see Drechsel 1997: 215-249).

The key issue remains *what* specific media interpreters chose in their interlingual interactions. From a sociolinguistic perspective, there is no *a priori* reason – linguistic, sociohistorical, or other – to presume the exclusion of a pidgin in an interpreter’s linguistic utensils if bilingual situations called for the use of a pidgin, as might have been the case when the pidgin was the only common medium between two parties (including the interpreter) or when the interpreter addressed multiple participants in a multilingual context. That these arguments indeed are perfectly plausible derives from a surprising if revealing observation about the last Native American speakers of Mobilian Jargon: All were fully bi- or trilingual in two or three Native American languages, and in addition spoke fluent French and/or English (Drechsel 1997: 245-246). Mobilian Jargon survived in their linguistic repertoires notwithstanding their other multilingual resources.

### **Mobilian Jargon Beyond Triethnic “Sturm und Drang”**

Instead of recognizing an extended history for Mobilian Jargon, Galloway prefers to view the pidgin as a phenomenon of recent upheavals in southeastern North America and as no more than a medium on the social margins (Galloway 2006: 234-238). In Galloway’s mind, only “Frenchmen who had to interact with Indians on a daily basis and in less rarefied ways than diplomacy” learned Mobilian Jargon, as did de Bienville; but she finds his use of an interpreter to be “clear evidence that the influence of Mobilian [Jargon] did not go very far” (Galloway 2006: 234-235). She ignores the possibility that de Bienville did not speak it fluently during the early periods of his explorations of Louisiana, to which her sources refer clearly, or that the interpreter himself might have used the pidgin as the medium of translation – again major leaps in argumentation without actual documentation! Galloway then decries Mobilian Jargon’s alleged inadequacy in teaching “spiritual subtleties” (Galloway 2006: 235), but once more provides no actual linguistic analysis for her claim. Whether or not Mobilian Jargon could serve as a medium to explain the gospel was not so much a problem of any linguistic limitation of the pidgin *per se*, as it was rather an issue of how well the speakers learned and used it. Complex constructions in Mobilian Jargon syntax and the comparative richness of its vocabulary (Drechsel 1996; 1997: 124-128) in fact undermine Galloway’s claim, as do the actual early example of “Houma” by the French Jesuit priest Paul du Ru – clearly identifiable as Mobilian Jargon by grammatical criteria – and numerous references to the use of Mobilian Jargon in missionaries’ proselytizing efforts (Drechsel 1997: 139, 216-217, 262). Most importantly, Galloway fails to recognize that the linguistic flexibility of pidgins, like Mobilian Jargon, permitted syntactic and lexical expansion, if demanded by the situations. Alas, she rejects such an idea, because du Ru did not expect his assignment in Louisiana to last long (Galloway 2006: 243, fn. 56).

Galloway (2006: 235-236) further argues against Mobilian Jargon on grounds that the French government discouraged its soldiers and young officers from learning an intertribal medium for fear of their desertion. She however does not seem to have thought through this argument, for the very same line of reasoning also applies to vernaculars, perhaps even more so. Whereas the pidgin had the obvious advantage of geographic range by being understood by many linguistically diverse groups, a native vernacular required greater depth in learning it, following Galloway's own earlier argument about missionaries. Except for a few trusted interpreters and spies, such a deeper understanding was hardly in the interest of the colonial government fearing desertion by those who attained an intimate knowledge of Native American languages and cultures. In some ways, European speakers of Native American vernaculars probably constituted a greater threat to colonial culture than Mobilian Jargon speakers, because they had gained an appreciation of indigenous language and culture that escaped some pidgin speakers. Finally, the Caesarean principle of *divide et impera* that Galloway (2006: 237) raises as yet another counterargument proves of little use in light of the fact that the French were not really in control (as already observed earlier) and that the Indians had access to a common medium outside of the French domain of influence.

Galloway (2006: 237) reluctantly recognizes that Africans might have learned Mobilian Jargon, but prefers to think that many spoke Indian vernaculars instead – again without adding specific documentation for support. From a linguistic perspective, there is no reason why Africans should have learned Native American languages in their pidginized or vernacular forms any more easily or faster than Europeans; conceivably, Africans could have done so when they became absorbed into Native American societies, which indeed happened among several Southeastern Indians (see Miles and Holland 2006). Galloway does not pursue that argument, and instead reminds the reader that the colonial government of Louisiana controlled trade and life much more strictly than its counterparts in the English colonies (Galloway 2006: 238) – ignoring the fact that by then Mobilian Jargon, already well attested, had spread widely (Drechsel 1997: 215-232).

Ultimately, Galloway (2006: 238) recognizes only less formal contexts of trade, especially food provisioning, as a single context for the use of Mobilian Jargon, as it occurred in a triethnic milieu between Native Americans, Frenchmen, and Africans, explicitly excluding métis families. If Galloway's reasoning were correct, we would expect the pidgin under the influence of French and African immigrants to have reflected a substantial influx of French and possibly African words in its lexicon and, with any such substantial relexification, some corresponding grammatical changes towards French. In reality, Mobilian Jargon adopted no more than eight words of French origin – less than one percent of the entire vocabulary – and no identifiable words of African derivation (Drechsel 1997: 325-327); it also remained thoroughly Muskogean in its grammar.

Nonetheless, this restrictive perspective of Mobilian Jargon leads Galloway (2006: 228) to accuse me of ignoring “the tremendous upheavals in Indian life that took place as a result of sustained contact with Europeans, especially after

the end of the European colonial period.” Regretfully, she neglects to describe any specific social upheavals related to Mobilian Jargon, until she draws her final conclusions and then does so only cursorily. Galloway’s focus on late upheavals in the lives of Louisiana Indians since “the end of the European colonial period” comes as a surprise in light of the many other social disruptions that they had already experienced as a result of the earlier introduction of epidemic diseases by Europeans (see, e.g., Kelton 2004). In reality, her claim presents a rather simplistic correlation between linguistic and social domains of history, which we do not find to hold true for pidgins because of their high range in linguistic variation and their great social adaptability (see Mühlhäusler 1997: 63-72). There is no doubt that speakers of pidgin languages, including those of Mobilian Jargon, experienced major upheavals; it would however be inappropriate to presume that the linguistic structures of pidgins correlate with particular social events (such as upheavals) or vice versa, for the simple reason that language-culture correlations beyond those of language selection vaguely reflecting political influence and power have proven thornier than anthropological linguistics had originally expected (see Philips 2004).

### **Questions of Data and Sources as well as Methods and Theory**

Aside from bringing forth issues of sociolinguistic complexity, Galloway’s essay raises some broader questions of ethnohistorical methodology and theory.

Right from the beginning, Galloway (2006: 225-226) belittles the amount of linguistic information available, which she evidently takes as a justification for not addressing specific linguistic and historical data that Crawford and I have accumulated and analyzed over the years. Although Galloway (2006: 228) recognizes my book of some four hundred pages as “the most thorough study of Mobilian jargon (*sic*) now available,” she oddly does not use a single piece of linguistic data from it in her own essay; nor does she review the substantial amount of sociohistorical documentation that both Crawford and I assembled for what anthropologists and linguists had long thought lost. Instead, Galloway (2006: 240) has curiously drawn on a short, seven-page essay by Kenneth H. York (1982) for inspiration and “the insight of a sophisticated native speaker of Choctaw,” which demands a short appraisal.

Following early sources on Mobilian Jargon and drawing on linguistic data collected by Crawford, but analyzed by Mary R. Haas in a short article of her own (Haas 1975), York instead argues that Mobilian Jargon is little else than some variety of Choctaw, if highly deficient. Now we must also wonder whether Galloway trusts York’s judgment because of his intuitions as a native speaker of Choctaw and consequently is skeptical of Crawford’s and my analyses. However, such a predisposition proves at best a dangerous one, especially in the study of pidgin and creole languages. Unless York had learned Mobilian Jargon (for which neither he nor Galloway gives any indication), his linguistic expertise in fact did not qualify him for an analysis of the pidgin beyond the identification of single words. Choctaw

Indians of Oklahoma, fully fluent in their native language but without exposure to Mobilian Jargon, had great difficulty interpreting tape recordings of extended sentences in the pidgin because of its fundamental grammatical differences from their native language; they could make little sense of it beyond recognizing single words, and thought that Louisiana Choctaw had played a bad joke on me – a possibility that we can discard on grounds of ample historical documentation for the pidgin (Drechsel 1997: 248).

Speakers of a vernacular thus make poor analysts of a lexically related pidgin, just as for the same reason teachers of English have made poor students of English-based pidgins and creoles: They usually understand the pidgin as no more than as a “corrupted” version of their native language, and superimpose its grammar onto the pidgin instead of attempting to understand it in its own terms. Notwithstanding his “insight of a sophisticated native speaker of Choctaw,” York apparently has displayed unintentional prejudices in linguistic and historical analysis that ethnohistorians should avoid.

Galloway’s reliance on York’s outdated essay reveals a more fundamental problem: the lack of an explicit theoretical framework for understanding historical sociolinguistic data on Mobilian Jargon. Such a context stems from the study of pidgin and creole languages, which has emerged as a subfield of its own within linguistics with a history of no less than 125 years and a rich literature (see, e.g. Mühlhäusler 1997: 22-50 and Kouwenberg and Singler *in press*) and has presented the appropriate model for analyzing Mobilian Jargon. Yet the study of Mobilian Jargon also requires familiarity with issues in the study of language contact and contact languages, second-language learning, bi- and multilingualism, and the linguistic diversity of Native American languages, which along with sociohistorical factors lend the broader sociolinguistic context for a proper understanding of the pidgin.

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### **Notes**

1. Oddly, Galloway (2006: 229, 230) considers Alabama almost as identical and mutually intelligible with Western Muskogean, whereas in fact the linguistic differences were large, i.e. to the point of mutual unintelligibility (see, e.g., Broadwell 2005 and Hardy 2005b). The differences between Alabama and Choctaw also implied a much greater time depth for their historical separation than Galloway is willing to recognize (see Hardy 2005a for a recent review of the Muskogean language family).

2 For further illustration of this point, note the telling example of another non-European pidgin mistaken as its related vernacular. The recorded sentences in this case prove to be not Hawaiian as erroneously claimed by historians (see Barman and Watson 2006: 24, 446, fn. 15), but Pidgin Hawaiian, spoken in the Pacific Northwest of North America and Mexico in 1790 (*sic*) and identifiable as such with comparable instances throughout eastern Polynesia by their lack of grammatical markers, a few Spanish loanwords, and especially their word order of SVO (as opposed to VSO in Hawaiian).

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# Synergy, Meshworks, and the Nature of Anthropology: A Teaching Perspective

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Textbooks in general anthropology describe the subject as a holistic endeavor with distinct subfields. However, other than paying lip service to the concept of holism, most establish few fundamental links between the biological, social, and linguistic features of the discipline. In this paper I argue that four-field anthropology is best taught not as a set of layered blocks but as a meshwork of interacting layers of complexity. Moreover, the metaphor of meshworks in synergistic interaction changes not only how we imagine that anthropology's parts are integrated, it suggests a different philosophical orientation to the study of the physical, communicative, and social aspects of our world.

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Beginning anthropology courses as they are typically taught in the United States are either of a "general" type or they focus on one of the discipline's subfields: archaeology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, or linguistic anthropology. General anthropology is an especially difficult course to teach because it involves covering a vast expanse of numerous other vast territories, including under its heading such topics as genetics, taxonomy, biological evolution, prehistory, language structure and linguistic relativism, comparative religion, cultural variation, and globalization. With such grounds to cover, no wonder that many anthropology programs have done away with their general anthropology courses, replacing them with introductory courses that focus on the specific subfields. While some have abandoned altogether even the ideal of a general anthropology (Segal and Yanagisako 2005), general anthropology textbooks themselves tend to focus on each subfield as a rather separate entity, taught in distinct chapters. There is a key concept that is usually said to hold general anthropology together, however. This is the concept of "holism" and it is generally defined in the opening chapter of most books.

## **Holism and Holistic Assumptions**

Holism or a "holistic perspective" is described most simply in one popular textbook as a "multifaceted approach to the study of human beings" (Ember, Em-

ber, and Peregrine 2009: 3). The definitions from four other leading textbooks are more complex:

Michael Alan Park (2006: 15) writes in the third edition of his text that “anthropology is the holistic study of humankind; it searches for interrelationships among all the parts of its subject.”

In the twelfth edition of *Anthropology: The Human Challenge*, Haviland et al. write that a holistic perspective is a fundamental principle of the discipline that means “the various parts of human culture and biology must be viewed in the broadest possible context in order to understand their interconnections and interdependence” (Haviland, Prins, Walrath, and McBride 2008: 5).

Conrad Phillip Kottak (2008: 4, 19) states in the twelfth edition of his general anthropology text that anthropological holism refers to an interest in “the whole of the human condition: past, present, and future; biology, society, language, and culture.”

Robert H. Lavenda and Emily A. Schultz (2008: 3), in the most recent version of their general text, see holism as a “characteristic of the anthropological perspective that describes how anthropology tries to integrate all that is known about human beings and their activities at the highest and most inclusive level.”

These texts all agree that anthropology focuses on wholes and parts and the relationships between them. However, they also reveal a couple of biases. First, they all imply a bias against paleoanthropology and primatology in that they stress the study of humanity. Surprisingly for a field that is supposed to integrate knowledge, nowhere in the standard texts’ discussion of holism is the non-human primate world or a notion of deep heritage given even the briefest mention. Second, they do not say anything about process or dynamics. In general what Jeffrey Goldstein (1999: 52) says is true about the limitations of the term “gestalt” is true about the limitations of the term “holism,” namely, that both terms imply a pre-determined whole without any dynamic sense of emergence. The texts’ static language implies that the subfields can be studied as kinds of essential units, like layers of a cake that can be put back together additively. This way of seeing wholes may be related to the concept’s intellectual pedigree, especially to the rather peculiar set of assumptions in the original formulation. As the *OED* points out, the term “holism” was coined by the South African General Jan Christian Smuts to refer to what he saw as an inherent “tendency in nature to produce wholes (*i.e.* bodies or organisms) from the ordered grouping of unit structures.”

Smuts’ concept of holism, however, was by no means a static one; rather, it was explicitly evolutionary. Smuts particularly stressed the “whole” in holism because he thought there was some kind of “fundamental factor operative towards the making or creation of wholes in the universe” (1926: 98). While Smuts followed Aristotle in seeing that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts, he followed Henri Bergson (1911 [1907]) in seeing evolution as an inherently creative process leading to progressive developments, with ever better “wholes.” Of course, one should be immediately suspicious of such epistemology. Those who know about Smuts know that, while on the one hand he was a key player in the founding of the

United Nations, on the other hand he was a leading segregationist and defender of white supremacy in South Africa. What made his apparently progressive “holism” square with his segregationism and his paternalistic racism was precisely this notion of the whole, for it is predicated on a deep essentialism. The universe is made of entities that are clear and distinct, with absolute boundaries, evolving to ever more clear and distinct entities. How nice for a person who believes in the essentialist nature of race, with his race at the pinnacle of evolution!

But must we implicate anthropological notions of holism in this essentialism? There is, of course, another version of holism that does not seem to have the associations that Smuts implied. Instead, this version is put forth as an option to reductionism. In this view whole systems cannot be completely known simply by breaking them down into their component parts. There is always a need to understand gestalt features of systems as well the details of their subunits. In other words, anthropology involves the study a variety of levels as well as how these levels combine. While in principle synthesis is always of interest, in practice there may not be very many rewards for looking for it. This is reflected in the fact that a kind of segregation of subfields is implicit in the structure of many general anthropology texts, although the text of Lavenda and Schultz does stand out for making a distinction between a holistic perspective on the subfields and holism as a “perspective on the human [sic] condition that assumes the mind and body, individuals and society, and individuals and the environment interpenetrate and even define one another” (Lavenda and Schultz 2008: 223). Yet, even still, this continues with the textbook anthropocentrism.

In practice anthropology’s division into subfields has led, if not to essentializing tendencies, then to an under emphasis on their mutualities and complementary effects. As a result, anthropology may be championed not as greater than the sum of its parts but as a whole made up of components that can be added simply together to produce the whole.

What I would like to advocate is that the idea of synergy be combined with that of holism to better convey how the domains of anthropological knowledge interpenetrate in a dynamic way. The word synergy itself, taken to mean the impact of combined effects—be they positive negative, or neutral—is rarely used in anthropology. Yet, leaving aside its legacy in Aristotle, concepts of synergy are to be found in the work of Adam Smith, Charles Darwin, and Emile Durkheim—as well as in the thought of such venerable anthropologists as Franz Boas (1962: 209-11), Alfred Kroeber (1952[1948]), Ruth Benedict (2005[1934]V. Gordon Child (1942), Gregory Bateson (1972[1942]), and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1967[1963]: 320-342). (For details on Benedict, see Maslow and Honigman 1970; for Boas and Kroeber, see Shanafelt forthcoming.) Philosophers, psychologists, economists, biologists, chemists, physicists, sociologists, and anthropologists have all contributed to a growing litany of terminology for specific kinds of combined effects, including such terms as gestalt, mélange, complementarity, mutuality, conjunction, economy of scale, side-effect, ecological relation, symbiosis, network, interaction, and the pooling of ideas. More recently, a type of synergy known as emergence has

become popular among some anthropologists (Mosko and Damon 2005, Beekman and Baden 2005), although the idea of emergent effects was already being discussed in the 1870s (Lewes 1874-75). Not unlike Moliere's *Bourgeois Gentleman* who discovered that he had been speaking prose all his life, many social scientists have long been speaking "synergy" without recognizing it.

Of course, as with holism, the concept of synergy is not without its problems, some of which are connected to its pedigree. As synergy theorist Peter Corning (2003:103-105) has pointed out, one of the problems is that it is an umbrella concept with so many implications and interconnections that they are hard to envision. A second problem is that the concept is too frequently thought of as having only positive effects. Unlike the wide-ranging definition given above that references all "combined effects," according to the OED the earliest documented usage of the word in English in 1660 was already linked with the positive, as it was synonymous with cooperation or "join-working together."

If synergy is to be useful it does need to be fitted into theory, with the most congenial probably being nonlinear dynamics or chaos theory. This is apparent because the interactions that anthropologists explore are not only greater than the sum of their parts; they are also interactions whose combined effects are not reducible to linear combinations of separable parts. Still, even if this sort of complexity is generally recognized as connected to the synergy concept, it is unlikely to revolutionize our understanding of basic causal mechanisms. Synergy is a descriptive concept rather than an explanatory one. Nonetheless, as a descriptive concept it can help us refocus our analytical gaze. While this is of obvious significance for reformulating both research and teaching, here I want to emphasize its value in teaching because, even though evidence of synergy is all around us, we have not been taught well enough to look for it or recognize it when we see it. Unfortunately, without the concept or at least what it represents we will continue to fruitlessly debate such false dichotomies as mind/body, reason/emotion, individual/society, and nature/nurture.

One example here is apposite. In a 2007 book, biological anthropologist and primatologist Barbara King undertook a brave foray into the question of the origin of religion. In her concluding chapters she castigates other recent scientific accounts of religion for being reductionistic, "gene-enamored," and for focusing too much on the mind as a self-contained, cogitating, entity (King 2007: 200, 204-208). In contrast, she develops a model that involves social and emotional mutuality and feedback between genes, the body and brain, and the external environment. Because all of these things combine in complex ways, our spiritual tendencies cannot be reduced to any one of them. "Too many modern evolutionary accounts of religion," she argues, "have lost a nuanced sense of what it means to be wholly social beings" (p. 210). In other words, King's alternative model is one that emphasizes what might be called "holistic synergy." Yet, neither she nor the individual scholars she critiques, or even favors, seem to have much appreciation for what synergy is, at least not in an explicit sense.

### **Holism and the Rejection of Approaches that Emphasize Combined Effects**

A little look at the history of anthropological pedagogy is useful for understanding how the teaching of a compartmentalized discipline developed and a non-dynamic sense of holism became so commonplace. The key to this is probably the influence of Alfred Kroeber, particularly with respect to the arguments he made about levels of complexity and the philosophical concept of emergence. In his heyday, from the turn of the century until the end of the 1940s, there were a number of theorists who were arguing with a measure of success, at least at the philosophical level, that the best way to view the natural world was in terms of levels of complexity in the physical, biological, and social realms. Emergence theorists saw new phenomena coming into fruition when different layers of complexity combined. As Peter Corning (2003: 32) puts it, “early theorists ... took emergence to refer to situations in which different parts merge, lose their identity, and take on new physical or functional properties.” University of Chicago anthropologist Robert Redfield in particular worked with a number of scholars in interdisciplinary efforts to bring social and physical sciences together in this way (Redfield 1942). However, although Kroeber participated in Redfield’s seminars, he rejected the views of emergent complexity he heard from other scientists in favor of an approach to anthropology in which subfield “layers” had to be kept distinct (Kroeber 1952[1948]). Particularly thanks to his widely read general anthropology text, (Kroeber 1948[1923]), Kroeber’s perspective became the norm for teaching anthropology. While it is outside the scope of this paper to provide further details here, in another paper I discuss in more detail the implications of Kroeber’s work as well as features of the thought of Boas that are misunderstood from Kroeber’s perspective on holism (Shanafelt forthcoming).

### **Biological, Social, and Cultural Forms are Meshworks of Synergy**

Anthropologists are interested in fundamental components of things, the patterns they form, and how they come together in particular cases. The traditional way of presenting this material is rather in the manner of how one stacks a child’s building blocks—one block stands atop the other, and there are clear and distinct levels. In most anthropology texts, the biological is seen as the bottom or foundation layer, with language, culture and events from prehistory and history built on top—although some may also present culture as floating rather autonomously above it all, thereby stressing the power of complex symbolic systems to shape the dispositions of the communities of individuals who operate in their terms. I argue in contrast that anthropology’s subfields are not merely separate domains that need to be looked at on their own terms. Anthropology should involve us in the study of crucial interactions and interdependencies across the divides. Despite the claims of Segal and Yanagisako (2005), evolution, primatology, and archaeology are not irrelevant to the concerns of cultural anthropologists. (And cultural

anthropology is relevant in the other direction.) All are fundamental to our understanding of what makes for our world and the world's potential trajectories today. But how do we convey this in a convincing way?

Teaching from an approach informed by the idea of synergy is similar to the building blocks approach in that there are layers of complexity, and complex forms are dependent upon the simpler components that make them up. However, the synergistic approach is different in that instead of thinking of the four subfields of anthropology as layers of blocks we think of them as a meshwork of semi-permeable domains with "strong mutual interactions (or feedback) between components" (Delanda 2000:14). While domain boundaries are still evident, a single domain does not stand alone; each is dependent on its history of interactions with others. And this talk of meshworks and synergy is meant to be more than a simple shift in metaphors. The contrast between a holistic block and a meshwork of domains relates specifically to a shift in underlying philosophy; meshworks are what complexity theorist Manuel Delanda calls "assemblages against essences" (Delanda 2006: 26-46).

I used to teach four-field anthropology as clear and distinct units. First I would talk about Darwin and Darwinism, then briefly outline the basics of DNA, genes, and simple inheritance patterns. I would follow this "bottom layer" material with sections on primate characteristics and then give details of the fossil record, human origins and physical variation--although I might change the order of presentation. Squeezed in immediately following this would be lectures on communication and the nature of language. After this, or along with discussion of the fossil record, would come a description of archaeological methods. Then we would move on to talking about types of human societies from an initial period of foraging, and look at some examples of key archaeological discoveries concerning the rise of social complexity. This would involve also a discussion of the domestication of plants and animals, technological innovations, and perspectives on cultural evolution. Finally would come the cultural anthropology parts, including the topics of participant observation, cultural and linguistic relativism, kinship, a few case studies, and recent trends in globalization. By the end of all this, I would have presented what I thought was a fairly complete description of the discipline, although this would be more in the form of an outline sketch rather than a three dimensional representation. If the English-language textbooks are anything to go by, this is more or less how most people have been teaching "four-fields" anthropology for quite some time.

To highlight the challenge of Segal and Yanagisako, we may ask ourselves just where is the unity in perspective we get when we know how a gene works, how a monkey grooms another, how a Mayan king was buried, how a Tibetan got married, how ritual items are exchanged in the Trobriands, or how status is marked in Japanese. The building block approach to holism leaves one to wonder what would be wrong with simply knocking the whole edifice over so as to better look at the blocks more distinctly at each level. Indeed, knocking over the four-field edifice seems just what many anthropologists today would like to do.

Teaching with the synergistic “meshwork” metaphor makes available a different set of images. Instead of thinking in terms of distinct layers of blocks, one describes layers of structures that are entangled together. Yes, the distinctions still remain, but we cannot so readily assume that the layers are free from subtle mutual influences. In my teaching today I try to present cases of cross-layer linkages not as exceptions but as keys to anthropological thought. They allow us to glimpse what Gregory Bateson famously called “patterns that connect” (Bateson 1980: 6-11). The connections of anthropology focuses on today highlight historical processes of identity creation, the permeability of boundaries, and interactions between small, medium, and large scales.

Let me discuss a few examples of how the meshwork and synergy imagery has suggested to me different ways to teach my “introduction to anthropology” classes. I put this discussion under the headings of: (A) DNA and cells as meshworks; (B) Links between molecular structures and complex social behaviors; (C) The entanglement of thoughts, artifacts, and societies; (D) Signs, symbols, and the Great Cultural Leap Forward; and (E) Power and the harvesting of energy. Although the first example of synergistic interaction under heading A, that between eukaryotes and bacteria, does often get a mention nowadays in textbooks, less discussed is the interaction between viruses and primate DNA. Other important examples of neglected synergies concern interactions between biochemistry and behavior. We can also step back and see some of the classic insights of sociology and anthropology in a different light from this perspective.

*Our DNA and Our Cells are Meshworks.* The cell has two distinct places where DNA is located. One place is in the chromosomes inside the nucleus. The other place is in the cell’s “power source,” the mitochondrion. According to Lyn Margulis’s well-supported endosymbiotic hypothesis, mitochondria have their own DNA because they were once independently living bacteria. Eons ago they were ingested by larger, single-celled organisms, with nuclei. Because some of these bacteria happened by chance to be only partially digested, and because they enhanced the metabolism of the larger organisms, they proliferated. We know this because a variety of the structures that make up the mitochondrion preserve evidence of their bacterial origin. Today we also know that bacteria cannot be understood as discrete and isolated entities. For example, some species communicate with one another and change their behavior accordingly in a process known as quorum sensing.

Our nuclear DNA, too, shows that the boundary between what we usually think of as inside and outside has been permeable. Viruses today affect our lives because they can invade our cells and hijack our DNA to make copies of themselves, often thereby making us ill. In evolutionary terms, it has sometimes happened that viruses get stuck inside the nucleus, but still manage to make deformed copies of themselves. In fact, some eight percent of our genome is composed of the remnants of viruses, called “Human Endogenous Retroviruses.” Elements of retroviruses are found throughout the animal kingdom, and their similarities and difference can be compared to give us a map of taxonomic relationships.

*There are Many Links Between Molecular Structures and Complex Social Behaviors.* The major job of genes is to tell the body how to link chains of amino acids. Amino acids combine to form proteins, and these are basic to our bodies' structure and functions. Some amino acids or amino acid chains also act to promote certain types of behavior. For example, a hormone called oxytocin (composed of a chain of only nine amino acids) is strongly associated with maternal behavior. (With respect to how evolution may work by "exaptation," we also have strong evidence of how this compound and the related compound vasopressin evolved and took on new behavioral functions from older ones associated with homeostasis.) Similarly, another peptide, prolactin, not only promotes lactation in mammals but in at least one New World Monkey, cotton top tamarins, there is a strong correlation between high levels of it and a male's propensity toward paternal behavior. Thanks to the work of such researchers as biochemist and primatologist Robert Sapolsky (2004; 1998) we know that other key hormones such as cortisol and testosterone do not simply cause behavior but that the behavioral environment itself may cause changes in their concentrations in the body.

Our knowledge of connections between the large and the small are increasing, and we best understand these in terms of interactions. We now know that, by way of triggering hormonal cascades, traumatic stress may damage the brain's hippocampus (and therefore memory), for example. Another prominent example that has gained a lot of attention in recent years concerns mirror neurons. Discovered by Italian researchers who were doing brain research with macaques, mirror neurons are networks of neurons in the prefrontal cortex that respond, or "mirror," the actions of another, firing as if the action was being performed by oneself (Rizzolatti et al. 1996). This suggests a kind of hardwired aspect to sociality and social intelligence.

None of these examples can be understood in a purely mechanical fashion. It is not the case that a chemical compound or a neuronal network causes a behavior in a simple linear fashion. There is interaction between external and internal environment here, and functions need to be understood as processes that have developed in deep evolutionary time.

*Our Thoughts, our Artifacts, and Our Societies are Entangled.* Before I began thinking about synergy, I would have interpreted the following passage from Emile Durkheim about the "public temper" simply as being about social causality:

We have only to notice what happens in a small town, when some moral scandal has just been committed. They stop each other on the street, they visit each other, they seek to come together to talk of the event and to wax indignant in common. From all the similar impressions which are exchanged, from all the temper that gets itself expressed, there emerges a unique temper, more or less determinate according to the circumstances, which is everybody's without being anybody's in particular. (Durkheim 1964: 102)

Notice that for Durkheim here causality is not merely downward from the social scale. What he is actually describing is a synergistic blending of individual thoughts in the formation of collective thought. It is not that there is a precon-

ceived social entity that causes thought. Rather, it is through the actual communicative process that a social opinion is created “which is everybody’s without being anybody’s.” Not only is the individual mind entangled in the social but the social is entangled in the meshwork of individual exchanges. Only in recent years do these insights seem to have become fully appreciated. Those who follow Bourdieu’s practice theory, for example, see cultural rules not as static abstractions but as forms that become manifest through action; and that which forms the patterns of our built world also works to form our psychological dispositions. More recently, with complexity theory in mind, Steve Lansing (2006) has demonstrated that the complex social organization of the Balinese irrigation system developed as a result of a similar meshing of individual and group communications, but in the course of a long historical process.

Configurationist views of culture also can be taught in fresh light if we think of them as synergies. Ruth Benedict, of course, was much influenced by the particular forms of synergy analyzed in gestalt psychology, but Lauriston Sharp’s classic case of the impact of the spread of the steel axe among the Yir Yoront (Sharp 1952) makes sense in these terms as well. Remember though, that the gestalt Sharp describes exists not in an autonomous realm of ideas but in the interplay of psyche, pragmatic tool, linguistic category, communicative acts, and others events and processes occurring at differing scales.

*Signs, Symbols, and the Great Cultural Leap Forward.* Archaeologist Philip Chase (2006) and biological anthropologist Terrence Deacon (1997), among others, have stressed that we need to look at the evolution of symbolic thought and language as emergent social phenomena. If we just think of the individual as a distinctly autonomous biological block, rather than as a socially constituted aggregate or meshwork, then symbolism and language do not make much initial sense. Symbolic representations have some real disadvantages from the point of view of the individual learner that are extremely difficult to overcome. Social animals that communicate by signs rather than symbols communicate information directly about the external environment and/or their internal states. They are thereby engaged in the immediate context. A major problem with symbolic representation is that it can be one or more steps removed from this direct experience. Language further removes us from direct connection with the immediate in that it is not merely about representation of the world but must also involve a complex set of symbol-to-symbol references. How did our ancestors jump over such a big hurdle as that between signs and symbolic processes?

To help resolve this difficulty, Chase makes a distinction between perception cued to a partially symbolic social code and perception enveloped in a fully elaborated culture. What he means is that the initial onset of symbolic representation required time to become established so that it took command of consciousness. So, *Homo sapiens* of 75,000 years ago may have engaged in some symbolic representation, but that representation was not yet sufficiently disengaged from the associations of the immediate context. Many continuous generations of cultural reproduction were required before a fully elaborated sense of symbolism could be sustained.

We need not go into further details here. The point is that a capacity for an intelligent use of signs and a potential to learn symbolically does not automatically lead to language. Symbolism does not seem to be a consequence of a greater and greater capacity to remember and recall signs. In the human past there were some special, if not unique, synergistic combinations that allowed our ancestors to jump from sign use and restricted symbol use to life in a world fully elaborated with symbolic systems, one that maintained all the design features of language and the cultural references they evoke.

In teaching about language, it is easy enough to go with the building blocks approach. In this way, the equation phonemes + morphemes + syntax seems to equal language. But this really leaves out the anthropology. As anthropological linguist Michael Agar (1996) has aptly put it, language is much more than descriptive linguistics; human language is more accurately termed "languaculture" as it consists of a synergy not only of dictionary terms and algorithms of syntax, but also of the public temper created from common social contexts, attendant illocutionary acts, and shared historical experiences.

*Power and the Harvesting of Energy.* What notion of power comes from thinking in terms of holistic synergy? Rarely do we see links, even in discussions of Leslie White's evolutionism, between power as a concept in thermodynamics and a Weberian or Foucauldian sense of social power. Yet, if power is measure of capacity to do things or have them done, then we can surely look at how the capture of energy makes this capacity possible in different domains (Adams 1988). In Marx's terms, our economic developments are the product of congealed labor power. This should not be interpreted as a metaphor but as a literal expression for the processes that managed the control of specific quantities of energy/labor. We might also say that all of our material artifacts are transformations of natural resources that literally have encoded innovative human insights. In the imagery of meshworks, through heritages of muscular and mental labor elements of the natural are reconstituted as streets, walls, houses, clothing, monuments, edifices, mechanical devices, and tangible narratives and records.

Order does not arise without the capacity to capture energy; and energy differentials are maintained by boundaries, barriers, pathways and regulation of gateways and channels. These latter are themselves the manifestations of power, be they in the world of physical, biological, or social structures. To maintain power or order is to fight entropy. And, even if in the long-run entropy wins, before that we may gain by borrowing, taking, or extracting from available sources. Meanwhile, there are ebbs and flows and interconnections. Bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states have distinct identities but at the same time may be interconnected.

What are examples of energies harnessed or channeled? The leaf. Metabolic loops. Killing for food. Chimpanzee alliances. The production of tools. Control of fire. The ambush of rivals. Pottery traditions. Domestication. The construction of megaliths. Mana. Acquired social status. Market places. Money. Roads. Urbanization. Schools. Luxury goods. Levels of sociocultural integration. National boundaries. Globalization. And so on and so forth. Among other things, students should

be encouraged to wonder, where is the energy coming from? How is it channeled? What are the similarities and differences between natural processes and those with mind-driven interventions?

### **Conclusion**

This paper offers a challenge to anthropologists to teach our holism in a new way. The call is to teach not simply by referring to a set of four building blocks called biological, archaeological, linguistic, and cultural anthropology, but by referencing the entangled interconnections of the world that a permeable discipline of biological, archaeological, linguistic, and cultural study entails.

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