

[Philological perspectives on the Southeastern Nigerian diaspora](#)

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Tone typo: The second word in fn. 27 (p. 270) should be *Ékpè* [HL] and not *Èkpe* [LL]; the LL item refers to a dance genre (i.e. a subtype of the large category of performances called in Igbo *égwu* [HH]) rather than to the title society under discussion which happens to deploy its own proprietary masked dance representations. The latter institution is denoted by the HL item wherever it is found, including the southern and eastern Igbo-speaking area (cf. Igwè, *Igbo-English Dictionary*, University Press Ltd., Ibadán 1985–1999, p. 155) and specifically in *Árù* (= colonial "Arochukwu", cf. video interview with Èzè *Árù* by I. Miller, 2008) where the title society has big political clout. Two observations show that the respective forms with HL and LL represent one single word which traveled distinct historical paths, as opposed to being random near-homophones. First, festival songs of "*Èkpe*" [LL] in Omááhyá (= colonial "Umuhajá") include numerous emblematic references to *águ* [H:H] 'leopard' (cf. E. Ìkeokwú long essay, Department of Linguistics & Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsúka 1984, pp. 18f.). Second, the *Édó* word for 'leopard' is *èkpen* (cf. Melzian, *Concise Dictionary of the Bini Language of Southern Nigeria*, London, 1937, p. 53), with the same LL as in the Igbo word for the dance genre. (The nasalization of the root in the *Édó* reflex is probably related to the syllabic nasal which constitutes the noun prefix, sometimes singular and sometimes plural, of 'leopard/panthère' in many of the languages sampled in the *Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist*, Ibadán 1968, pp. 222–25.) In sum, the existence of the form *èkpè* [HL] in Igbo-speaking communities reflects the borrowing from Èfik of the historic word for 'leopard' along with its Èfik pitch pattern of [HL], used as the proper name for the leopard-themed title society which flourished in the catchment area of the Èfik trade empire known to European merchants and colonists as "Old Calabar" (cf. Talbot, *Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 1926, pp. 183f.). This borrowing endowed many southern and eastern Igbo-speaking communities with a secondary lexical item separate from the primary/inherited Igbo form of the word with LL, which had meanwhile lost in Igbo the literal denotation of 'leopard' (having been supplanted by the hypokoristic *águ*, literally 'the ravenous one', cf. *águú* or *águó* [H:H] 'hunger') and become semantically opaque in the specialized context of phrases like *ìgbá èkpe* [H:H LL] referring to heroically vigorous dance-play — so-called from its emulation of what the 1986 Nobel laureate in literature might like to call the leopard's "tigrityde" or more prosaically, "a type of dance requiring much energetic action and so restricted to able-bodied young men" (Igwè p. 155).

Missing from references:

Crabb, D. [1965]. *Ekoid Languages of Ogoja, Eastern Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press.

Jones, G. [1957]. *Report of the position, status & influence of chiefs & natural rulers in the Eastern Region of Nigeria*. Government Printer, Enugwu.

Significant empirical wrinkle: The cartographic errorism — what would today be called *unavoidable and regrettable targeting error* — responsible for sticking the name "Calabar" on the Èfik capital is much less complex in legendary inspiration, and slightly less farfetched in geographic distance, than modern historians have supposed. As quoted in the paper (p. 254), Jones wondered whether "the European attribution of the name Old Calabar to the Èfik people could be a reflection of the Korome myth of origin [...] about] the place which the Opukoroye line of Kalabarj kings claimed as their original home" (1965, 159). More plausibly and prosaically, Ejituwu suggests that the intended referent of the "old" term in this myth was not the Èfik-speaking village group on the "Rio da Cruz", but instead a Kalabarj-speaking settlement (subsequently abandoned) on a branch of the "Rio Real" estuary labeled "Old Calabar River" by Barbot's 1699 "[New Correct Mapp of Calbar River](#)" (reprinted by Barbot 1732, 462 and Ejituwu 1998, 137). Further ambiguity (as if any were required) is supplied by the fact that "when New Calabar itself segmented from 1879 to 1885 [...] [t]he Kalabarj in Bakana, Abonema and Buguma continued to regard New Calabar as Elem Kalabarj, which means 'Old Calabar', and the latter continued to appear in official documents till 1931" (Ejituwu 1998, 142). None of this confusion is surprising, given that adnominal modifiers like *old* and *new* are indexical "shifters" whereas map terms ideally aren't. But unlike Jones' frankly speculative account of the Èfik mistaken identity for "Calabar", Ejituwu's explanation of the mishap has independent documentary support and is moreover simpler: no need to assume that Dutch mappers of 9ja's eastern coast had even indirect access to Kalabarj dynastic tales, if what happened is that they ploddingly reproduced some coastal traders' casual misplacement of the older of the "Old" Calabars — i.e. the one so designated by locals in the 17th century — by a few hundred miles, to a different slaving depot a few estuaries further along to the east, albeit in a very different linguistic territory.

Barbot, J. [1732]. *A description of the coasts of north and south-Guinea* [...]. Churchill, London.

Ejituwu, N. [1998]. Old Calabar rediscovered. *The Multidisciplinary Approach to African History: essays in honor of Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa*, edited by N. Ejituwu, 133–50. Hisis Press, Port Harcourt, for University of Port Harcourt Press.

Current best guess for the pronunciation of the *Árù* term "otusi" (quoted on p. 257 of this paper from Diké & Èkèjìjùbá 1990, 48) is *òtúsi* (per I. Miller p.c.). An open question is the historical relationship hypothesised by Kánú (2000, 57f.) with the *Nri* term "otonsi" (illustrated by Ònwèjìjògwù 1980, 84 plate 26) whose pronunciation remains for now unknown.

Kánú, O. [2000]. *The Pre-British Árù of Àrìchìkùkwù: notes & reflections on an African civilization*. USAfrica Books, Houston Texas.

LEXICAL ÌGBOISMS in languages of the Western Hemisphere are few compared to estimated numbers of captive Ìgbo-speakers who lived here some 200 years ago. This fact, initially mysterious and long buried in philological rubble, may on second thought be informative. In Abakuá-related vocabulary collected by Cabrera from Cubans tracing themselves to the region now called southeastern Nigeria, including two dozen named Ìgbo subregions, appear thousands of Èfik-derived items but less than ten with Ìgbo roots. The divergence between ethnicity and language in this case implies that the historical ties of AfroCuban Abakuá culture to the Èfik-speaking region of West Africa are partly indirect. One possibility is that a share of Èfik-medium Abakuá was brought to Cuba not by Èfik-speakers, but by Ìgbo-speakers, and this is independently plausible. Anecdotally, Nigerian historians report that, in the orbit of the 18th century *Árù* ("Arochukwu") trading oligarchy, Ìgbo-speakers learned Èfik terminology alongside nonverbal *nsibiri* (or *nsibidi*, *nchibidi*) signs during initiation into the *èkpe* club—Abakuá's historic model.¹ Some of the Ìgbo items in Cabrera's Abakuá corpus bear hallmarks of *Árù* dialect; two are emblematic of *Árù* religion as studied by Nwáògá (1984). The implication is that some differences between the Cuban and Èfik versions of *èkpe* preceded the Middle Passage. This can be tested by comparing Abakuá texts with their *Árù* counterparts. If the conjecture is confirmed, then *èkpe/nsibiri* joins *Lùkùmi* and *Kìkòwngò* as regional *lingue franche* acting as media of African-American cultural transmission. Mother tongues, and theories of creolization, have less bearing on the process. In

particular, *ékpè/nsibiri* attests a style of diaspora built on ethnolinguistic aliases, and with an elective affinity to orientalist narratives.

WESTERN ERRORISM, NEGATIVE ÌGBOISMS AND AFRICANIST-AMERICANIST RESEARCH

Philology is more than textual critique; to Edward Saïd it's

...the most basic and creative of the interpretive arts. ...Rather than alienation and hostility to another time and a different culture, philology as applied to *Weltliteratur* involved a profound humanistic spirit deployed with generosity and, if I may use the word, hospitality. ...[H]umanism is the only and I would go so far as saying the final resistance we have against the inhuman practices and injustices that disfigure human history. (Saïd 2003)

A good example of philological disfigurement is the way European slavers and imperialists transcribed African personal and place names (Yáì 1978). Call it “Western error-ism”—the linguistic equivalent of cluster bombs, those indiscriminate modern weapons which

...cause humanitarian harm not only because they are area weapons, but also because a large percentage of their bomblets or grenades do not explode on impact. These explosive duds remain live and dangerous and are frequently set off by civilians after the strikes. (Docherty & Gelasco 2003, 103)²

Avoiding spelling shrapnel while defusing “dud” labels in the archives, forensic historians have ascribed plausible linguistic origins to many African captives shipped to the Western Hemisphere in the 17th-19th centuries (Curtin & Vansina 1964; Nwókéjì & Eltis 2002). The inferred source communities roughly coincide with African cultural traits observed in the Americas.³ But even with the best data, the two sides of the transatlantic equation—ethnic departures and cultural arrivals—don't necessarily match. Such discrepancies are puzzling at first, but on closer examination they open philological perspectives on the past.

In Cuba, Ortíz (1924) records many Bantuisms (largely Kik'óṅgò): dozens of vocabulary loans plus a corpus of Palo ritual expressions—opaque poetic phrases like

the Homeric ‘formulas’ (Kiparsky 1976). Cuban Yorùbáisms are more numerous and more stereotyped: less plain vocabulary (mostly names of processed foods), but more personal names, and a huge repertoire of Lucumí ritual song. Mandekan languages supply a few dozen words but no performance literature.⁴ Taking all Afro-Cuban linguistic heritage together, Yorùbá seems over-represented compared to the historic presence of its speakers.⁵ Setting aside how such differentials arise, the disproportion calls attention to itself, especially because it's not isolated.

Another American site where Africanisms disaggregate, by grammatical type and relative to source, is the Gullah-speaking archipelago of the Georgia/South Carolina coast. Turner (1949) transcribes over 3,000 personal names of probable African origin (lines *i-ii* below); a few hundred African nouns in daily use (line *iii*); and a few dozen text-embedded items (line *iv*). Turner didn't try to choose among multiple etymologies, but standard cognate criteria yield statistical patterns. Many source languages being closely similar, arbitrariness can be further reduced by merging results into the three large Niger-Congo subgroups represented in the sample:⁶

	Niger-Congo		
	Mandekan	Benue-Kwa less Bantu	Bantu
(i) African personal names →Gullah personal names	31% (n=632)	42% (858)	21% (425)
(ii) African nouns →Gullah personal names (=superset of (i))	25% (909)	41% (1,467)	27% (972)
(iii) African nouns →Gullah ordinary nouns	25% (164)	13% (34)	40% (100)
(iv) African vocabulary items →Gullah textual formulas	100% (88)	∅	∅

As in Afro-Cuba, the Gullah percentages show that the mix of sources varies by item type. Of the four types distinguished in Turner's sample, only (iii) approximates Gullah-speakers' assumed ancestral profile: between a third and a half Bantu-speaking (Curtin 1969, 157; cf. Wood 1974, 335).⁷

Some Afroamerican populations diverge from source languages more radically. Ìgbo, the main idiom of southeastern Nigeria, has effectively vanished from diaspora communities formed in the 17th-19th centuries. Scant linguistic Ìgboisms from that time appear anywhere in Cuba, Haiti or the southeastern U.S.—places otherwise rich in African linguistic heritage and where many Ìgbo speakers lived two centuries ago (Ortíz 1924; Debién & Houdaille 1964; W.P.A. 1940).⁸ In Cuba, among thousands of Abakuá expressions collected by Cabrera (1988) from people identified as “Carabali”

(a category including Ìgbo speakers), I find less than ten Ìgbo items; most of the rest seem to have either Èfik or Kikóńgò origin. Relative to populations, Èfik words especially are over-represented in American outcomes at Ìgbo expense.

The anomaly could be fixed mechanically in two ways: count more Ìgboisms in the outcomes than previously known, and/or fewer Ìgbo-speakers in the trade than errorist labels suggest. Both have been tried. The first tack is taken by Chambers (1997) and Gomez (1998) but their evidence has been assessed as wishful (Northrup 2000).⁹ Moreover, because the rarity of Ìgboisms recurs across diverse American plantation economies, particularist explanations are inherently liable to overlook a generalization pertaining to the source, hence the initial plausibility of the second option: reducing the estimated number of Ìgbo-speakers carried away. Comparing sex ratios of captives and modern census figures, Inikori boosts the estimated share of people trafficked from non-Ìgbo areas in the Nigerian “Middle Belt” (the linguistic fragmentation zone on the savanna fringe) and concludes “...that Ìgbos could not have contributed more than one-third of the total number of slaves sold in southeastern Nigeria between 1750 and 1830” (1988, 35).¹⁰ However, the image of a Middle Belt depopulated by slave raiding—a staple of colonial historiography (Buchanan & Pugh 1955)—remains speculative (Mason 1969), and even if true can’t change enough numbers to explain the lack of American Ìgboisms entirely.

The matter is thus moot: adjusted tallies of Ìgbo sources and outcomes leave the general problem untouched. Absent radically new data, new inferences must go beyond censuses and word counts to focus on intervening mechanisms. This has the advantage of being constrained, not just by available direct observations, which are sparse and error-strewn, but also by analogous cases elsewhere. One possible mediating factor is ‘creolization’—unusually abrupt linguistic or cultural shift between generations—but, as reviewed in the next section below, the logic of this term is incurably circular. All cultures change, and no one has ever proved that particular types of change are special to ‘creole’ contexts. That’s not to say that all changes are equally possible at a given time, but simply to deny that changes inherently divide into ‘creolizing’ and ‘noncreolizing’ kinds.¹¹ Therefore it’s worthwhile to consider other theories of information transfer across generations.

Archaeology and genetics show that languages and Y-chromosome markers have evolved in close parallel during 70-100,000 years since *Homo sapiens* first left Africa (Cavalli-Sforza 2000, 167). Language ‘families’—despite tendentious use of this kinship term by Schleicher and other Darwinian linguists in the 1860’s—aren’t encoded in the genome, therefore any linkage of the two types of information is newsworthy and highlights why the gross correspondence should break down in smaller, more recent spatiotemporal intervals.¹² As migrants everywhere attest, such

breakdown typically takes place when children fail to learn a parental language in favor of a language of the local community. This ordinary kind of shift did not fail in the transatlantic African diaphora, leading to acquisition of colonial languages by American-born African descendants. Even speakers of Trinidad Yorùbá who “arrived not as slaves, but with the legal status of immigrant indentured laborers” (Warner-Lewis 1996, 26) had no active knowledge of an African ancestral tongue after a few generations, despite their concerted resistance to “language recession” (Warner-Lewis 1996, 173). As Prof. Mufwene rightly emphasized at the DePaul conference, the Trinidad example shows the irrelevance of slave status to first language shift *per se*. Indeed, the Cuban Ìgbo case shows that political differences *between* various captive populations were potentially more significant for language outcomes, than differences between captive and noncaptive groups. This is so because observed vocabulary survivals belong less to ordinary speaking knowledge and more to cultural esoterics like names and ritual phraseology.

Biologists distinguish two ways in which information moves among individuals: horizontal and vertical (within or between generations, respectively). Darwinian theory restricts genetic transfer to the latter, inherently slower vector (Cavalli-Sforza 2000, 180), but since cultural differences aren’t genetically fixed, culture can take either path (Boas 1920, 313).¹³ Language is a limiting case because of a maturational constraint: first language acquisition has a biologically determined *critical period*—a window that closes gradually at the end of infancy and early childhood, past which fluency can’t normally occur. Thanks to the window, some kinds of language transmission favor the vertical route. For example, radiocarbon and ecological evidence shows that the Indo-European language stock took between five and ten thousand years to split into its present ten branches. Scholars agree that family-internal changes (*isoglosses*) first moved horizontally through the Indo-European area, as borrowings between embryonic branches, but the changes eventually increased to the point they were confined to the vertical mode, remaining within individual branches (Meillet 1908, 4; 1922, 6; Robins 1967, 181).¹⁴ By hypothesis, vertical transmission takes over when horizontal changes accumulate to the point they alter information relevant to the critical period. To define this threshold is the main goal of historical linguistics, as indeed of population genetics (Hull 1978); pretheoretically, certain phenomena tend to fall on one side or the other of the line. Word order patterns and inflections are either passed along to children within the critical period, or else never; vocabulary and regional ‘accent’ are much less sensitive to the life-cycle stage at which they’re learned.¹⁵

The Boas-Herskovits program of African-American historical anthropology—recently dissed by Afrocentrists as “not successful” (Holloway & Vass 1993, xv) and

by a leading creolist as “suspect” and “naïve” (Palmie 1993, 337)—broadly fits the cultural information theory just outlined.¹⁶ After noting that the distribution of African cultures in the western hemisphere is patchy, both within communities of African origin and between them, Herskovits makes a subtler point: the “scale of intensity of New World Africanisms” is more than the scattered grist of history, it’s also food for cognitive science—an interdisciplinary field which the anthropologist invoked before its time. Few would deny that demography’s main cause is economic. Forced labor was deployed in the Western Hemisphere when and where it was, above all because it was the most efficient way available at the time to raise productivity in a “muscle-driven, plant-based, land-constrained agrarian economy” (Alam 2003).¹⁷ But Herskovits observes how the empirical pattern of diaspora also depends on noneconomic factors, including the ontology of *culture*—a category broadly defined as “something learned” (1945, 57). Understanding why an immigrant language is neither preserved, nor lost, all in one piece, presumes a general theory about how the various parts of a language adhere to humans and to each other:

[T]he underlying structure of the aboriginal tongues persists longest, and is most resistant to change, while vocabulary and pronunciation exhibit the most non-African elements. But it is just the grammatical configurations of any language that lodge deepest in linguistic habit-patterns, and that present the greatest difficulties where a new language is to be learned—far more than either phonetics or vocabulary, though this last is easier learned than pronunciation. (1945, 60)¹⁸

Herskovits’ cognitive variables are plausible on their face; after 60 years, they can be refined and applied to richer data. The Cuban pattern summarized above suggests that the effect of the mother tongue (which Chomsky calls *competence* or I-language) is distinct from that of two other phenomena: (i) *lingue franche* or regional second languages (used with widely varying degrees of fluency); and (ii) textual speech (Chomskyan *performance* or E-language). Neither (i) nor (ii) is restricted to the vertical mode; there’s independent reason to doubt that vertical transmission underlies many New World Africanisms; most importantly, both of the horizontal variables clearly affect the problem at hand.

As to factor (i), a Yorubá variety called “Licomin” (Lùkùmi) had by the early 17th century been explicitly compared to medieval Latin as the administrative vehicle of the western “Niger” delta.¹⁹ Earlier still, the *lingua franca* of the lower “Congo” river basin was probably a variety of Kikóṅgṅ similar to what’s now called Kituba (Swartenbroeckx 1952; van Bulck 1953, 107; Vellut 1989, 306).²⁰ If so, then large numbers of mother tongue speakers need not be the main reason that varieties of

Yorubá and Kikóṅgṅ are the major sources of linguistic Africanisms in the Americas.²¹ Although Ìgbo was a medium of trans-ethnic trade (Northrup 2000, 15), there’s no evidence it played a cultic or political role.²² Indeed, phonetic and morphological differences among Ìgbo dialects (some of which, some speakers still publicly portray as mutually unintelligible languages) continue to hinder the emergence of a regional standard *spoken* variety, despite the nationalistic impulse of the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-70). Today the mother tongue remains disfavored in literate pan-Ìgbo meetings, whether outside Nigeria or within.²³

The next question is what, if not Ìgbo, was the *lingua franca* in the southeast edge of the Ìgbo-speaking area. Here factor (ii) comes in: *ékpè* texts were symbolic capital for long-distance trade in the region (Latham 1973; Northrup 1978). A big share of the *ékpè* network, which supplied European slavers through Bight of Biafra ports, was administered (mainly between the Ímò, Èbòínyí and “Cross” rivers) by oracular agents of the Árù village group.²⁴ Árù

...was close to the leading trade emporiums of eastern Nigeria: about six hours by canoe from Calabar, two days from Bonny and Kalabari. In other words [Árù] commanded the geographical point in the hinterland through which flowed the hinterland products—men and commodities—through the Cross River as well as through the Eastern Delta ports to the sea. (Díké & Èkèjìyùbá 1990, 44)

Èkèjìyùbá (1986) “estimated that about 70% of the slaves carried from [the Bight of Biafra] probably passed through Árù hands” (Íjèṓma & Ñjìṓkù 1992, 300).²⁵ Attesting the scale of Árù influence in the region are “over one hundred and fifty Árù colonies... founded between 1700 and 1900” (Díké & Èkèjìyùbá 1990, 1).²⁶ It is observed that “[m]ost Árù till this day are bilingual and speak both Ìgbo and Èfik” (Díké & Èkèjìyùbá 1990, 158 *fn.* 32) and that Árù *ékpè* meetings comprise “secret” performances, learned by adults, comprising Èfik texts as well as *nsibiri*, an ideographic script *cum* gestural code (Daryell 1910, 1911; Talbot 1912; Ábálòḡu 1978, 92-94; Íjèṓma 1994, 1996).²⁷ Not being phonologically based, *nsibiri* can be learned with equal ease by adult speakers of any I-language including Ìgbo and Èfik even though it’s generally accepted to be of non-Ìgbo, non-Èfik origin.²⁸

It’s accordingly possible that the non-Ìgbo E-language of Abakuá *cabildos*, though etymologically Èfik to a large extent, was not transmitted to Cuba directly by Èfik-speakers alone, or at all. This conjecture still needs to be cross-checked by comparative philology on both Atlantic shores, but meanwhile it has an interesting consequence: missing diasporan Ìgboisms would no longer count as a mysterious deficit, but would be understandable as resulting from a mechanism which can be

called “negative” transmission: transfer of E-language material by speakers of a distinct I-language. Some AfroCuban texts which are etymologically non-Ìgbo could be *Árù*isms—referring to their immediate source—and also negative *Ìgbo*isms—since non-Ìgbo material was transmitted by *Ìgbo* speakers.

The revised picture is independently plausible for two reasons. (i) In *Árù* as in other so-called stateless polities, a key technique of power has exploited the non-correspondence between I-languages (mother tongues) and E-languages (the codes of ritual texts).²⁹ (ii) *Ékpè* codes were known by at least some captive *Ìgbo*-speakers: in *Árù*, “[e]ntry to the seven-tiered stages of full membership was open to any adult male no matter their class or status” (Díké & Ékèjìyá 1990, 77).³⁰ It follows that *Èfik*-medium *ékpè* performance texts were available to some transatlantic *Árù* captives as a basis for neo-ethnic associations like the AfroCuban Abakuá *cabildos*. Despite the paucity of *Ìgbo* lexical material, these have been labeled with the *Ìgbo* subgroup name “(I)suama” (Cabrera 1958, 69), literally *Ìsú amá* “the *Ìsú* of dispersion” (Áfìngbo 1986, 11; 1992a, 41), a term covering a large share of the *Árù* sector of influence in the southern *Ìgbo*-speaking area.

A testable prediction of the foregoing is that Cuban *ékpè* texts, despite predominance of *Èfik* lexical material, should display ‘transfer’ effects from *Ìgbo*-speaking intermediaries, as whenever a second language is learned outside the critical period. In principle the phenomena could be phonetic (altering *Èfik* pronunciation in stereotypically *Ìgbo* ways) or morphosyntactic (use of non-*Èfik* word order; leveling of *Èfik* person, number and aspect inflections). The differences may be subtle, since *Ìgbo* and *Èfik* are closely related (prosodically identical, in fact, cf. Green 1949), and may be further masked by secondary transfers from Cuban Spanish, but some should in principle be observed. Controlling for all these, the hypothesis of negative *Ìgbo*isms implies that *Ìgbo*-based departures from normal *Èfik* will be found in AfroCuban Abakuá no less than in the ritual speech of *ékpè* associations in bilingual communities like *Árù*.

Aspects of this scenario can be made more precise. Recognizing that comparison of Cuban Abakuá texts with *Árù* versions of *ékpè* will need the help of culture-bearing communities in southeastern Nigeria, the paper concludes with issues of “secondary explanations” in consciousness (Boas 1911). Abakuá, as the hegemonic ideology of an 18th-century diaspora, contrasts with orientalist beliefs in Middle Eastern origins favored by literate 19th- and 20th-century *Ìgbo* and *Èfik*-speakers, now reinforced by North American Afrocentrist discourse. Before all that, I should explain why creolization adds nothing to the Abakuá story.

IS ANYTHING *NOT* A CREOLE?

The trouble with creolization as a theory is that it’s either unfalsifiable or already falsified. Usually the notion is not presented explicitly enough to exclude any known or possible cultural change, and even when it is, the facts don’t oblige. In Americanist anthropology, the classic creolist broadside brims with earnest programmatic which, apart from being observationally vague, are multiply-hedged:

Within the strict limits set by the conditions of slavery, African-Americans learned to put a premium on innovation and individual creativity. ... From the first, then, the commitment to a new culture by African-Americans in a given place included an expectation of continued dynamism, change, elaboration and creativity. [FN] Some beliefs and rites have always served as a focus of conservatism, a badge of fidelity to the African past. ... Moreover, we recognize that many aspects of African-American adaptiveness may themselves be in some important sense African in origin. (Mintz & Price 1976, 51, 95)

Similar thoughts appear in the Amsterdam creole handbook:

[C]reole languages... exhibit an abrupt break in the course of their historical development. ... [They] develop as a result of ‘linguistic violence’ (and, as we shall see, frequently social violence too). In other words, we have to reckon with a break in the natural development of the language, the natural transmission of a language from generation to generation. (Muysken & Smith 1995, 4)

The task, in both cases, is to distinguish “creativity” or “abruptness” from “natural” historical scenarios in a non-circular way.

A reasonable way to define “Universal Creole Grammar” (Thompson 1961, 113) is to list features that all and only creole languages possess, then derive them from some characteristics of disrupted language transmission. Easier said than done: as the theoretical stakes have increased, the alleged defining properties of creoles have declined, from an unordered set of 12 constructions (Taylor 1971, 294), to 5 “key areas of grammar” and 7 secondary ones (Bickerton 1981, 51, 72), to mere “simplicity” itself defined as the *absence* of 3 morphological properties (McWhorter 1998, 809).³¹ The arbitrariness of these attempts is underlined by the fact that they

don't even overlap; the futility of the exercise is foretold by its diminishing returns, as the number of creole-specific traits approaches zero.³² At a descriptive level, to the extent that the lists can be tested, they fail. Taylor's net is too wide, catching presumptive 'non-creole' languages like Yorùbá (Oyèlárǎn 1982). Conversely, stereotypic 'creoles' like Haitian elude McWhorter's criteria (DeGraff 2001b).³³

Admitting the impasse, the same page of the Amsterdam handbook continues:

What is clear is that creole languages are not in the slightest qualitatively distinguishable from other spoken languages. ...This means that before we can claim a language to be a creole, we need to know something about its history, either linguistic or social, and preferably both. (Muysken & Smith 1995, 4f.)

How to square the circle: if creoles are sociohistorically unusual, why aren't they grammatically unique? From distinct premises, DeGraff and Mufwene both argue that this state of affairs is not contradictory, nor does it escape ordinary paths of language change. In short, the facts don't require any special theory of creolization.

DeGraff (1999b) holds that if *creole language* refers to anything, it's E-language: "externalized" or "extensional" language (Chomsky 1986, 20), an open corpus of texts (utterances) including the kind of unsystematic primary data normally available to infants during the critical period for language.³⁴ This fits the first handbook quote above. In line with the second quote, DeGraff finds that creole-ness does not name any property of I-language: the hypothetical, "internalized" or "intensional" mental representations that cause someone to speak a language fluently. The mixed result is coherent: although E-language input is a necessary condition for language development in infants (no particular human language is transmitted genetically), it's not a sufficient condition (major aspects of a fluent speaker's competence can't be induced from E-language material).³⁵

The preceding sentence may be intelligible to linguists, even those who reject the I-language/E-language distinction, but others might like a little background. *Contra* behaviorist psychology (Skinner 1957), naturalistic studies since Brown & Hanlon (1970, 48) don't find that infants' ungrammatical utterances are corrected in a systematic way, but even so, children reliably abandon large classes of sentences which they once freely produced. The best known case is zero causative expressions like *Don't giggle me* (intended to mean 'Don't make me giggle'): these are much used by English-speaking three-year olds (Bowerman 1982; 1988, 79), but occur in no adult variety of English or indeed any known language.³⁶ The question is why they get filtered out in a few years if no one penalizes their use. Moreover, analogous phrases like *I broke the cup* aren't affected, at least not in English (Hale 1996).³⁷ Conceivably,

children might infer a distinction between *giggle* and *break* from lived experience (only animates *giggle*; breaking can't be spontaneous), but the distinction by itself can't make causative *giggle* unspeakable while sparing causative *break*: both predicates are thinkable, so the change in performance depends in part on something remote from the external world. Chomsky calls such structures, among others, "Universal Grammar" (UG).³⁸ The example shows that UG is a brain state which constrains the use of individual vocabulary items and their morphological quirks, as the latter are gradually picked up by a maturing mind (Borer 2003).

DeGraff's point is that there's no evidence UG treats 'creole' E-language specially. The mix of contact jargons, varieties of French and Niger-Congo languages in the colonial sugar economy of 17th-18th century Saint-Domingue conferred no unique I-language properties on the subsequent Haitian language—called by its speakers either *Ayisyen* or *Kreyòl*.³⁹ In Chomskyan terms, the notion of "I-creole" is undefined: "creoles are no more and no less than the result of extraordinary external factors coupled with ordinary internal factors..." (DeGraff 1999b, 477). While McWhorter (2001b) regards creoles as "young languages" compared to all the rest, Chomskyan considers all human languages as, by definition, equally 'young': each one is recreated, every generation, in infant brains.

McWhorter accuses DeGraff of "a veiled claim that no statement about human language is valid unless couched in the Chomskyan paradigm" (2001b, 398), but equally negative conclusions are reached by non-Chomskyan Mufwene:

[W]hat is called *creolization* in the linguistics literature does not correspond to any particular structural process or combination thereof. ...[C]reoles are far from being a general structural type of language, although they form a special sociohistorically defined group of vernaculars and share several features on the family resemblance model. To be sure, similar social and linguistic developments took place elsewhere and at other times, however the term *creole* was not used for their outcomes there and then. Thus, what we have everywhere seems to be simple evolution of languages from one state to another under different ecological conditions. (2001, 138)⁴⁰

Despite adopting I-language/E-language terminology, Mufwene reinterprets this distinction to hold between "idiolects" and "communal languages" respectively, where the latter are defined as "ensembles of I-languages" and as presupposing the existence of a "collective mind" (Mufwene 2001, 2). Chomskyan ontology, by contrast, locates the grammar of any particular human language in an individual, mature brain state. This discrepancy isn't new: it recalls de Saussure's successive

interpretations of *langue* and *parole* (Godel 1957; Hiersche 1972). Chomsky recalls the de Saussure of 1906/07, who describes the systematic side of language (*langue*) as individual, and the accidental side (*parole*) as social:

Tout ce qui est amené sur les lèvres par les besoins du discours, et par une opération particulière, c'est la parole. Tout ce qui est contenu dans le cerveau de l'individu, le dépôt des formes entendues et pratiquées et de leur sens, c'est la langue. (Godel 1957, 145). [Everything brought to the lips by the needs of discourse, and by a particular activity, is *parole*. Everything contained in the brain of the individual, the store of understood and used forms plus their meaning, is *langue*.]

Mufwene's *communal language* is closer to how de Saussure defines *langue* in his course of 1908/09:⁴¹

La langue est un ensemble de conventions adoptées par le corps social pour permettre l'usage de la faculté du langage chez les individus. La parole est l'acte de l'individu réalisant sa faculté au moyen de la convention social qui est la langue. (Godel 1957, 66). [*Langue* is a set of conventions adopted by the social group permitting the use of the language faculty by individual speakers. *Parole* is the act by an individual realising his/her faculty via the social convention which is *langue*.]

Mufwene's denial of a creole grammar type thus surpasses DeGraff's, because it even extends to E-language. This leads to a second difference: Mufwene's analogy of "communal language" with "biological species" (2001, 14), rather than with an individual organism, causes him to reject the family tree (*Stammbaum*) model of language transmission, allowing instead that a language may have "multiple parents" (2001, 211 *fn.* 14). In sum, Mufwene's model has no room either for abruptness in language change, or for "hybridity" in linguistic inheritance. DeGraff by contrast is "*Stammbaumtheorie*-friendly" (2003, 398) with the catch that what is inherited in family trees is strictly an E-language base to which normal, discontinuous acquisition processes apply. If for Chomskyans like DeGraff all human languages are equally 'young' (re-created in infant ontogeny), for Mufwene they're all equally 'old' (inherited in group phylogeny). Both Bickerton and McWhorter, by contrast, divide human languages with respect to 'age'; that's the only way to make the creole label stick. But where is the evidence that allegedly 'younger' languages are special?⁴²

If a list of creole languages can't be compiled without peeking at speakers' ethnic backgrounds, then creolization is not just circular theory, it's racial ideology

(Manfredi 1993, 43). The first two quotes in this section convey the creolist obsession with ancestry: the belief that (cultural or linguistic) change is necessarily more abrupt in situations of contact between distinct populations, than in demographic tranquility. If this belief is simply wrong and its theoretical expression a dead end, its persistence is still instructive. Literate elites worry about rapid grassroots cultural change, especially when it's not masked by the stability of 'high', written forms of public memory. Such anxieties abounded in the mid-19th century—when creole studies were born—because the engine of European nationalism was the extension of literacy from clerics to a skilled industrial labor force (Gellner 1967).⁴³ The last section returns to issues in the sociology of (self-)knowledge, but first I should review available documentary evidence of E-language transmission.

CALL ME CARABALÍ: CUBAN ÌGBOISMS AS RITUAL-POLITICAL ALIAS

Summarizing so far: unless census tallies are radically revised to diminish Ìgbo presence, there's no I-language explanation for the scarcity of Ìgbo words in American communities stemming from the Middle Passage. Unless the gap reduces to a coincidence of particular mislabelings on both sides of the ocean, an alternative account is needed, and one is available which relies on political and literary dynamics of E-language. The task is to develop, and eventually to test, such a story.

As Turner showed, good evidence for ethnic origins of transatlantic populations is found in personal names. One source of such data comprises rosters of captives rescued at sea at the end of legal slave trade, a time coinciding with the peak of the Bight of Biafra sector (Eltis 2001, 45) as well as with "the most intense period of Àrù commercial expansion" (Ìjèòma & Ñjìòkù 1992, 300). Of 213 named individuals found on the ship *Amélie*, loaded at Ìḅanì ("Bonny") and intercepted in Martinique in 1822 (Thésée 1986, 137*f.*), most are unmistakably Ìgbo even in French errorist transcription.⁴⁴ Similarly,

...[o]f the slaves on four ships from Bonny captured by the British patrol in 1821, fully 74 per cent were registered in Sierra Leone as 'Ebo' or 'Heboo' (Igbo) and 20 per cent as Calabar (Efik-speaking). As in the case of the captured ships from Old Calabar, the method by which the registrars established who was an Igbo [speaker] would have inflated the percentage somewhat by including individuals of smaller groups who also understood Igbo. (Northrup 2000, 14 citing 1978, 60-62, 231)

Reviewing a larger set of such archives, Nwókéjì concludes that

...[w]hile the estimates of eighty percent and seventy-five percent for the Ìgbo proportion of Biafra's export captives given respectively by Chambers and Òrìjì are too high, Northrup's sixty percent estimate seems too low. (2000, 641)

Ethnic labels are referentially more ambiguous than personal names, but for reconstructed identification their redundancy (signal-to-noise ratio) is potentially greater because the set of named political units is smaller than the set of named individuals. In Cuba, Cabrera (1988, 7) lists two dozen autonyms of Ìgbo subgroups, using Spanish spelling of Cuban pronunciations. These are given below in italics. By inspection, all but two unambiguously match precolonial Ìgbo-speaking 'clans' (lineage federations) and ethnic subregions (cf. Ànòkà 1979; Òrìjì 1999). The identifications follow, with two unknown cases left blank:

<i>Abaya</i>	Ágbaaja ⁴⁵	<i>Ika</i>	Ìkà
<i>Aro</i>	Árù (“Aro”)	<i>Ikueri</i>	Ìkwére (“Ikwerri”)
<i>Oyofia</i>	Òhàófya (“Ohaffia”)	<i>Isu</i>	Ìsú
<i>Oyosara</i>	Òhàòzara	<i>Isuachi</i>	Ìsúochì
<i>Otansa</i>	Òtáncha	<i>Ndoki</i>	Ìndókì (“Ndokki”)
<i>Eda</i>	Èdḡhà (“Adda”)	<i>Nku</i>	Ìnkumè
<i>Ishielu</i>	Ísielú	<i>Koba</i>	[]
<i>Eché</i>	Èchiè (“Etche”)	<i>Onicha</i>	Ònìcha (“Onitsha”)
<i>Asiana</i>	[]	<i>Oka</i>	Òka (“Awka”)
<i>Iye</i>	Ìhè	<i>Ututu</i>	Útutù ⁴⁶
<i>Iyiesa</i>	Ìhiténàsa	<i>Orata</i>	Úràta (“Oratta”)
<i>Ikuo</i>	Ìkwó	<i>Oru</i>	Óru

At the most inclusive level of nomenclature, the Ìgbo category itself figures but marginally in Cuban trade records (Bergad & al. 1995), most Ìgbo speakers having been submerged in other designations, especially *Carabalí*:

Ibó es un importante pueblo casi en la desembocadura del Níger. Suenan poco en Cuba sus nativos, seguramente por confundirse algunos con los *lucumis* y con los *yorubas*, y otros con los *carabalís*. En la Habana hubo un cabildo *carabalí Ibó*...[L]os ibós entrasen en Cuba como carabalís. (Ortiz 1924, 252, 2) [Ìgbo is a

big population almost at the mouth of the River Niger. In Cuba one hears little about its natives, certainly because some were mixed in with *Lucumis* and *Yorùbás*, and others with *Carabalís*. In Havana there was a cabildo called *Carabalí Ibó*. ...The Ìgbo entered Cuba as *Carabalís*.]

In Africa the reverse distortion occurred, with Ìgbo overlapping its neighbors:⁴⁷

Its use by Europeans in the form *Heebo* or *Ibo* appears early in the slave trade to refer to any Ì[g]bo-speaking groups. It was also applied at first to the Ibibio who were later distinguished as “*Kwa Ibo*” after the principal river of their country. (Forde & Jones 1950, 9)

This asymmetry between the two ends of the trade makes Ìgbo under-labeling on the output side even more significant. As argued by Northrup (2000), it can be interpreted in two ways. It may, on the one hand, simply show that older, literal denotations of Ìgbo differed from its modern reference as an ethnonym (a proper name).⁴⁸ But other remarks by Afrocubans are more consistent with a second possibility: that submersion of Ìgbo in “*Carabalí*” was not intrinsic but errorist, since at least some culture bearers possessed a good understanding of the ethnic picture:

Carabalí isuama, —o *suama*. De estos vinieron muchos. ...Mi abuelo decía que saltando una tierra los ibó estaban en el Calabar: son y no son carabalís (Cabrera 1958, 69, 71). [Isuama, or Suama, Calabarians. Many of these came. ...My grandfather said that the Ìgbo were separated from Calabar by one intervening territory: they are, and aren't, *Carabalís*.]

The ambivalence of the preceding sentence also applies to the Ìgbo-speaking community of Àrù, supporting the idea that the latter was involved in the American transmission of “*Carabalí*” (as in Èfik) cultural material such as *ékpè*.

Quite apart from its (mis)use with respect to Ìgbo speakers, use of the name *Old Calabar* to refer to the slaving port at the mouth of the “Cross” river is a masterpiece of errorism all by itself:⁴⁹

The words Calabar or Old Calabar are not applied to the Cross River till the Dutch maps of the seventeenth century. The town of Calabar is known to the natives as Efuk (Efik), and they regard the word Calabar as of European origin. What in all probability actually happened was that the word was taken from the (New)

Calabar River which was so named from the town of the Kalabari who lived on it... Through some error this name was applied to the Cross River estuary which was finally called “old” Calabar to distinguish it... (Talbot 1926, 183f)

The name Calabar... is not shown on fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Spanish and Portuguese maps, but first appears on Dutch maps of the seventeenth century. ...The word Calabar is not of Efik origin; it is believed to have been first applied to the New Calabar River, farther to the west, so-called from the villages of the Kalabari Ijaw who lived along its banks. Through error the name came to be used for the Cross River estuary area, which in turn was later called ‘Old’ Calabar to distinguish it from ‘New’ Calabar, a town situated on the Niger River near Bonny, and now known as Degema. (Simmons 1956a, 4)

Beyond simple ignorance, the notion may have been suggested by oral traditions in the eastern delta, which Europeans had reached long before:

When the Dutch and English became interested in slaves from these rivers they distinguished three principal trading states each on its own river of the same name. These were Calbaria or New Calabar (Kalabari), Bonny and Old Calabar. The last referred to the Efik state and one can only guess how this name came to be applied to it. The Efik people have always dissociated themselves from the name, which they say they received from the Europeans, and have acknowledged no connections with the Kalabari. Kalabari traditions are complicated by the fact that Koroye, the founder of one of the Kalabari wards, is said to have come “from old Calabar”. This is probably a modern emendation. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that the Efiks came into contact with the Eastern Delta states. (1963, 20f., cf. 1989, 26)

The present ‘authorised tradition’ of the Kalabari attributes the establishment of the overseas slave trade to [king] Amakiri, and the contemporary traditions of the former Korome ward of Kalabari associate it with their founder Opu-Koro-ye... who came ‘from Efik’... [T]hough we can never prove it, we may suggest that the European attribution of the name Old Calabar to the Efik people could be a reflection of the Korome myth of origin. It was the place which the Opukoroye line of Kalabari kings claimed as their original home. (1965, 155f., 159)

The ambiguity of Cuban *Carabali* may thus have been compounded when several African ports fell within Western errorist usage of “Calabar”, “New” or “Old”.

At the limit of uncertainty is the Cuban term *Abakuá*. Thompson (1983, 298 fn 8) finds an etymology in an ethnic term known to Èfik speakers:

[T]he neighboring village, Big Qua Town, whose inhabitants are culturally related to the Ejagham Ekoi... are called *abakpa* by the Efik. (Simmons 1956b, 66).⁵⁰

Cook (1969, 168; 1985, 3 fn.4) cites this potential source as low throughout (*Àbakpa* in the orthography used here), which could easily emerge in Cuban Spanish as final stress, in contrast to the initial stress of Cuban *ecue* continuing the high-low prosody of Èfik *ékpè*. All the vowels match; as for consonants, Cuban [kw] (spelled *ku* or *cu*) is the regular treatment of African [kp], as in Cuban *ecue* continuing original *ékpè*.⁵¹

Semantically, the correspondence is less clear. Why should the Èfik cult name *ékpè* be replaced in Cuba with the name of Èfik’s ethnic neighbor, even if the latter is considered to be *ékpè*’s original source? The question gains force from the fact that *ékpè* itself persisted in Cuba (as *ecu e*). There are two general possibilities. (i) The Cuban usage of *Abakuá* began in Africa but either subsequently died out there without appearing in documents, or else was veiled from outsiders by errorism or secrecy. (ii) It’s a Cuban innovation, perhaps based on the view reported by Jones:

The Egbo [*ékpè*] society of Old Calabar [Èfik] was derived from the neighbouring Qua who said they brought it with them from their Ekoi homeland” (1956, 136).⁵²

This quote yields four errorist hits, two of which (emended by me in square brackets) were discussed above. The other two need comment. “Big Qua Town” is known in Èfik as *Àkwáá Obyò Abakpa* (literally ‘the big town of the Àbakpas’) and in its own language as “Akin Aen” (Imona 1996, 26). Noah speaks of “the Akin (the present Qua people)” (1980, 64). Cook renders Akin phonetically as [èKíín], where the upper case K is presumably ejective, and describes it as

mutually intelligible with Ejagham, a large language spoken to the northeast of Calabar. Ekin, Ejagham and Southern Etung (Crabb’s language H; Crabb, 1965:5, 9) can be regarded as forming a dialect cluster. (1985, 3 fn. 4)

Cook also corrects the spelling “Qua” (sometimes “Aqua”, cf. Akak 1983, 380, or “Akwa”, cf. Aye 1994, 16), transcribing it as [kúò] (1985, 3). Akak independently confirms this by referring to “Qua, Kwa or Kwo” (1995, 12).⁵³

Even though the names written *Qua* [= kúò] and *Akpa* [= àkpa] are linguistically distinct (Akak 1983, 378), they can be co-referent, as when Akak speaks of “Akpas alias Quas” (1995, 28), echoing a 1668 description quoted by Kingsley:⁵⁴

The original inhabitants of the district now occupied by the Old Calabar people are the Akpas whom the Calabarese drove out and to a large extent afterwards absorbed. This immigration of the Calabarese is said to have taken place a little over a hundred and fifty years ago. (1899, 553)

The equivalence between *Àkpa* and *Àbakpa* could be literal, if the *-ba-* can be separated as a plural, human nounclass marker in Benue-Kwa languages (B. Connell *pers. comm.*). The synonymy also fits Talbot’s take on Èfik origins:

c. 1670. Some of the Ibibio chiefs from Creek Town [Obio Oko], finding themselves cut off from the European traders by their kin at Obutong [Old Town], moved to the site now called Duke Town (Calabar), some two miles to the south... They procured the land from the Kwa (Ekoi) who owned the country, and their town was at first called Akwa Akpa [Big Qua,] or sometimes New Town, to distinguish it from Obutong. (1926, 185)

I suggest that “Qua” [= Kúò], “Akin” [= ēKîin] and “Ekoi” are all cognate. “Ekoi” is an old spelling of a term for “the Ejagham of Cameroun” (Crabb 1965, 11), apparently borrowed by Europeans from Èfik speakers and canonised in the literature in adjectival form “Ekoid” (Mansfield 1908; Talbot 1912). Crabb (1965, 69) reports variants of the lexical item for ‘forest’ in the “Ekoid” language group:

<i>form</i>	<i>location</i>
[è-kókói]	Ekparabong
[è-kúε]	Bendeghe-Northern Etung
[è-kúi]	Northern Etung
[è-kúa]	Southern Etung
[è-kún...]	Efutop
[è-kín...]	Nde ⁵⁵

In this list, it jumps off the page that the first variant is phonetically similar to “Ekoi”, the fourth to [Kúò] and the last to [ēKîin]. (Independently, “Qua” belongs to the

same subgroup as Etung.) It wouldn’t be the first time that the word for ‘bush’ provided the basis for ethnic nomenclature.⁵⁶

Àkpa and *Àbakpa* were also used outside “Calabar”; they named a group who intervened during the 17th century invasion of Ìbibio-speaking Àrù by Ìsúamá Ìgbo-speakers. That the item “Akankpa” is connected, is suggested in this retelling:

The raids for slaves were linked to powerful merchant princes such as Akuma Nnubi of Akankpa, belonging to the Ekoi (Okonyong) ethnic group. ...[A]rrival of yet another ethnic group, the Akpa or the Ekoi, whose interests were mercantile ...coincided with the ...conflict referred to in tradition as the Ibibio war. ...[D]ecisive battles were fought after the intervention of the Akpa, a completely different set of migrants from the Akpa area. ...The Akpa of course retained their connection with their homeland. This was ensured by the sacred symbols of ancestral authority given to them by their chief at Akankpa, their home base. ...In Arochukwu, these sacred relics were known as *otusi* and consisted of various elaborately carved ivory figures of the leopard, hunting dogs and elephant tusks. ...[T]he relatively peaceful period following the imposition of Akpa ascendancy saw an influx of new migrants: specialists of various descriptions, craftsmen, refugees from neighboring settlements and slaves. ...The well developed social and political system brought in by them and built around the *otusi*, the evolving system of patron/client relationship with its associated system of surplus extraction and accumulation through tributes and homage as well as the Ekpe club, enabled Akuma the Akpa king to organize the old and new settlements in Arochukwu into a unified state. ...The people east of the Cross River are said to have called themselves Akpa and the name ‘Ekoi’ was originally applied to them by the Efiks. There are a few villages on the middle section of the Cross River called Akpa and all ‘foreign’ settlements in Ogoja province on the River banks are known as Abakpa. The port of Calabar was locally known as Atakpa. ...The Abakwango-Hausa speaking [people] who lived and intermingled with the Jukuns for several centuries are known to the Jukun as Bakpa or Abakpa. The people who lived in the vicinity of the coast before the Efiks arrived from the interior and with whom they intermarried were called Kwa, Aka and Akpa. (Díké & Ékèjìyùbá 1990, 47-49)

A specific link between the *ékpè* institution and the term “Abakpa” at Àrù can be inferred from one more detail:

The introduction of the Ekpe club in Arochukwu is attributed to one of Akuma’s followers, Otu Ono, whom he commissioned to bring in the secrets from his natal home in Akankpa, east of the Cross River. (Díké & Ékèjìyùbá 1990, 77)

Absent any example of “Abakpa” applied to the *ékpè* institution by Èfik-speakers in “Calabar”, and with the only known such usage restricted to Árù, this particular usage of *Abakuá* in Cuba is closer to the latter.⁵⁷

If the foregoing is true, *Abakuá* E-language should show other Árù features. Scanning through the largest *Abakuá* anthology (Cabrera 1988), I found Ìgbo lexical content in nine entries, seven of which are easily matched in the Ìgbo dictionary. Five simple lexical items occur:

- Lebé*. Mirar (p. 325). *lèbé* ‘begin to look, continue looking’ (cf. Ígwè 1999, 365)
Ñene. Mujer (p. 429). *ónyèènye* ‘woman’ (Ígwè 1999, 611)⁵⁸
Okuko ibana unen. Gallina (p. 455). *òkúkò* ‘domestic fowl, hen’ (Ígwè 1999, 662),
 plus Èfik *únèn* ‘chicken’
Umon. Tribu (p. 507). *úmù* ‘children, descendants’ (Ígwè 1999, 812)
Yeó. Dinero (p. 527). *égo* ‘money, cowrie’ (Ígwè 1999, 145)

Cabrera also gives two formulaically repeated sentences, whose presence in the corpus is obviously due to ritual use:

- Anamabó, anamabó*. Se dice al purificar al cofrade con un mazo de hierbas (p. 52).
 [Said while cleaning a ritual brother with a sprig of herbs]
Ánà m abú, ánà m abú. ‘I am spattering [liquid]’. (cf. Ígwè 1999, 102, 826)
Anameró, anameró. Arrancando (las plumas de un ave) (p. 53). [Plucking out the
 feathers of a bird]
Ánà m eró, ánà m eró. ‘I am plucking out [feathers]’. (cf. Ígwè 1999, 175, 729)

The remaining two lexical Ìgbo-isms contain variants of a famous proper name, followed by various epithets which I conjecturally identify in the Ìgbo glosses:

- Choko guanabia*. Voz misteriosa que suena en el rincón del Butame [santuario]. El sonido de Ekue (p. 135). [Mysterious voice that sounds in the corner of the sanctuary. The sound of Ekue.]
Chúku ògbé ó nà-abíá ‘Chúkwu the visitor’ (cf. “Chúkwu the great deity of the strangers”, Nwáòga 1984, 60, 72)
Chukuabia eriélu. Santísimo, en el cielo y en la tierra (p. 135). [Holiest in heaven and earth]
Chúku abiaámá rí elú ‘God the stranger who is in the sky’⁵⁹

Both citations are significant because, before the term *Chúk(w)u* was neologically borrowed by catechists into the written language in a monotheistic sense (Àchebé 1975; Échèrúó 1979; Nwáòga 1984, 28), it named the Árù oracle (among others perhaps) giving rise to expressions like *Úmù Chúkwu* for “Arochukwu” citizens. Clarke’s name for the Árù oracle includes the epithet “Obyama” (1848, 73), precisely as in the Cuban source. Nwáòga’s summary is definitive:

The biggest oracle which pervaded Ìgboland from the 17th century was the Ibini Ukpabi of the Árù. Ibini Ukpabi was not the god of the Árù. When the Árù speak of god they speak of *chí* and *Òbasí*. It is important to make this distinction. When however the Árù went into the rest of Ìgboland to trade in slaves, they took with them, both for protection and as an additional business, the reputation of their *Chí-Ukwu* (big *chí*) thereby elevating Ibini Ukpabi to the status of the last arbiter, the god beyond which there could be no surer answer to problems. Árù agents all over Ìgboland and beyond advised individuals and groups among whom they lived to go to “to consult *Chúkwu*” whenever a case went beyond local solution. A strong chain of information gathering was created, mysteries were invented around the shrine, death and slavery were visited on guilty persons, and generally going “to consult *Chúkwu*” in Árùchúkwu became the highest act of the judicial process and of other problems and situations that required ultimate and drastic solution. (1984, 36)⁶⁰

A related, potential Árù-ism, also suggested by Nwáòga’s philology, is monotheistic use of the Èfik name *Abasi*, sans epithet (e.g. Cabrera 1988, 18):

Rev. Udo Odiong... explains that “*Abasi* is a general name for all gods in Ìbibioland.” When the Ìbibio want to refer to the Great God they use a qualifier: “Thus *Abasi Ibom* is the God whose greatness, ability etc. are beyond human knowledge.” ...It would appear that terminologically the same relationship exists between *Abasi Ibom* and *Chúkwu*, both being made up of the real original concept (*Abasi* and *Chí*, plus a descriptive epithet indicating immensity. ...It would also appear that the Árù *Òbasí dí n’elú* represents an incomplete and therefore faulty transfer of concept. (Nwáòga 1984, 57)

One more possible Árù-influence in *Abakuá*, suggested by C. Úchèchúkwu (*pers. comm.*), is not lexical but phonetic: the distribution of *r* and *l* in Cuban *Carabalí* compared to Ìzòñ *Kalàbàri*. The change is usually described as metathesis, but a more plausible alternative is at hand:

A rolled *r* occurs in the [Árù] language, but this sound is replaced in certain words by another consonant which is a mixture of *r* and *l*. This sound, common in many African languages, is difficult to acquire; our native did not like it if it resembled *l* too much. It occurs to the exclusion of *r* in the neighborhood of [i] and [ì], and occasionally with [e] and *u*; with other vowels [e.g. with *a*], *r* is used.” (Adams & Ward 1929, 66)

Applied to a loanword of the form [...*la...ri...*], the rule automatically returns the output [...*ra...li...*], precisely as in the Cuban pronunciation. On the far side of the ocean, 18th century Oldendorp (cited by Hair 1967, 72 *fn* 14) transcribed the term “Karabari” (1777/2000, 458), possibly illustrating the abovementioned difficulty to acquire a “consonant which is a mixture of *r* and *l*.”⁶¹

CALL ME HEBREW: NARCISSISM VERSUS NOSTALGIA

The preceding section culled secondary support for the neo-Herskovits idea that some of the ‘missing’ linguistic heritage of Ìgbo speakers in the Americas survives ‘negatively’ in Cuban Abakuá texts which are etymologically Èfik. To test this with primary data means comparing *ékpè* texts from Cuba and Árù, with Èfik counterparts as a control. In such an experiment, a potential methodological pitfall on the Nigerian side emerged at the 2003 African diaspora conference in Chicago, when Ìgbo-speaking migrants intervened in the discussion of Africanisms to present a claim of non-African, specifically Hebrew or Jewish, origin for themselves.

Orientalism is epidemic in Nigeria and there’s no cheap vaccine. Yorùbá churchmen claim “Northern Egyptian” ancestry (Lucas 1948, 353; cf. Odùúyoyè 1971; Wescott 1964), Èfik historians recall “migration from Palestine through Sudan” (QCCA 2003, 26; cf. Hart 1964; Aye 1967) and the Chicago Ìgbo spokesman glossed the Ìgbo phrase *áka òha* (‘hand of the people’) as the Hebrew word for priest, reprising Hyman Kaplan’s Yiddification of the 16th U.S. President as “Abram Lincohen” (Ross 1937, 5). Dismiss these tales as blowback, agitprop or malaprop, but they still matter, for two reasons. (i) Feeding back from historiography into oral tradition, they add noise to texts collected from living Nigerians. (ii) They’re grist for an information-theoretic analysis of actual migrations and ideological change.

Factor (i) is well known. Echoing abolitionists like Equiano (1789), missionaries styled the Ìgbo as a “lost tribe of Israel” (Basden 1938, 411-23; Ọgbàlù 1981, 7; Èkèèchí 1972). *Theological subtext*: these troublesome pagans are monotheists under

the skin (in the genes), but along the way from the Upper Nile to the Lower Niger, skydaddy Chúkwo Jehovah was rudely “elbowed into the background by the cult of the spirits and ancestors” (Àrínze 1970, 11).⁶² Colonial officials jumped on the Hamitic bandwagon after Ìgbo- and Ìbibio-speaking women deposed British-appointed chiefs in 1929 (Gailey 1970; Áfiìgbo 1972). *Political agenda*: if Chúkwo can be rehabilitated as Osiris’ long-lost cousin, we can repair hasty regime changes in Ñri and Árù and groom southeastern proxies to match Frederick Lugard’s beloved Fulani emirs (Jeffreys 1935; cf. Seligman 1930, Áfiìgbo 1975, 1981a). Braiding both strands into a civil creed, Republic of Biafra publicists compared the Ìgbo to “the Jews of old” (Ọjúkwu 1969, 221) complete with their own bearded, military Moses; described anti-Ìgbo riots as an antisemitic Cossack *pogrom* (locally pronounced *prógram*); and called the attritional Civil War a case of genocide.

The orientalist fancy that the word *Ìgbo* is a “corruption of the word Hebrew” (Áfiìgbo 1981c, 6; cf. Ilogu 1957, 116; Ọrìjí 1994, 26) resonates with Ìgbo-speaking literates because

...most educated Ìgbo have seen their historical vicissitudes in this century as paralleling only those of the Jews since the days of the exodus. ...[T]his widespread, though probably unhistorical, ideological feeling of oneness with the Jews, which as we have seen goes back to the ex-slave boy Equiano in the eighteenth century, provides some clue to understanding of Ìgbo psychology, motivation and drive. (Áfiìgbo 1981b: 182)

In other words, the exodus motif lives in Ìgbo consciousness because it echoes real displacement (dimension ii). 19th century European nationalists embraced the technical role of standard languages (Gellner 1967). In West Africa by contrast, where the economic game was not industry but trade, indigenous standardization deployed not secular literacy but decentralized, cultic texts. Local differences became entrenched. The Bight of Benin wove threads of “double nationality” in multilingual communities joining *òrìṣà* and *vodun* (Yáì 2001). The Bight of Biafra had the “*ékpè* polity” (Ruel 1969, 255) with its nonverbal *nsibiri* passport, multilingual ritual speech and multi-ethnic lineage federations (Áfiìgbo 1981a, 189f.). By the early 20th century, industrial Europe had toppled all the autonomous West African regional exchange systems, and oral, polytheistic lineages were subdued, if not entirely replaced, by Sunday-Sunday monotheism and centralized states run by local literates.

West Africans received these revolutions in diverse ways, broadly following the respective cognitive styles formed in the *régimes* of indigenous political economy. As a first approximation of aggregate cultural response, one can distinguish Ìgbo

narcissism from Yorùbá nostalgia. Peel fluently evokes the nationalist nostalgia of 19th century texts like Samuel Johnson's *History of the Yorùbás*. Accompanying his parents (rescued slaves and first generation churchgoers) in 1858, Johnson returned from Sierra Leone to Nigeria where, in Peel's sympathetic prose, he

...realized that his homeland needed to be re-imagined and re-configured for him to be truly at home there. The memory of Abíḡdún's vanished Ọ̀yọ́ had to be connected to the new, extended category of "Yorùbá" introduced by the C[hurch] M[issionary] S[ociety], and Christianity needed somehow to be integrated into its history. (2000, 305)

Peel goes on to identify Johnson's *History* with the mid-19th century's ruling literary genre, Romance: a blend of christian emotions reprising the New Testament narrative of pathos, described by White (1973) as a "drama of self-identification" with a plot of "redemption" (2000, 305).⁶³ Johnson's *History* never had an Ìgbo counterpart, and in the absence of an antiquarian written charter, the Ìgbo have been described as "receptive to change." In the classic statement of this culture-and-personality conundrum, Herskovits' student Ottenberg wonders

...whether the emphasis on individual achievement, alternative choices and other features which facilitate culture change developed out of the slave trade or not. (1959, 142)

As if in answer, a Haitian proverb declares *Ibo pann kòr a yo* 'Ìgbos hang themselves' (in captivity) and the "Ebo Landing" story recalls collective suicidal rebellion.⁶⁴

Meanwhile back in Nigeria, the Yorùbá have possessed the only stable ethnic political party: the Awoist movement called at different times *Action Group*, *Unity Party of Nigeria* or *Alliance for Democracy*. The Ìgbo by contrast, having lost a secession war, are reduced to the status of first-among-minorities (Coleman 1958, 350f.; Dudley 1978; Ọ̀mọ̀rúyí 2001, 287). The leading historian of Nigerian elites traces this difference to the relative involvement of the diaspora of emancipated Sàró (Sierraleonean) 'recaptives' from the two ethnolinguistic communities:

[O]nly a part of one ethnic group, the Yorùbá, in the territory that was to be called Nigeria countenanced the return of the Sàró in the nineteenth century. ...Why did Sàró from other ethnic groups in Nigeria, who were in large numbers in [the] Sierra Leone colony, not imitate the Yorùbá? First the evidence is strong

that nostalgia was strongest among the Akú (as the Yorùbá were known in Sierra Leone)... In contrast were the Ìgbo, the next largest ethnic group in Sierra Leone... The Pratts and Hortons (prominent Ìgbo) led no return-to-the-fatherland movement, J.A.B. Horton making only a defective mental excursion to Ìgboland. ...Second, the Yorùbá had the advantage of the British occupation of Lagos which non-Ègbá Sàró seized to intrude into Lagos. There by far the majority of them stayed permanently under British protection because they feared that if they returned to their places of birth in the interior, they would be reconverted to slaves for export. ...In no other part of Nigeria was there a British enclave like Lagos where the Sàró could move near to their ethnic groups. Hence the failure of the reconnoitering visit to Old Calabar by some Ìgbo who dare[d] not move into Ìgboland. It was only to Old Calabar and Fernando Po that many of them returned, but only in a very tiny number. Ìgboland was entirely sealed to outsiders, including the Sàró Ìgbo. On the Niger where mission stations and commercial stations were manned mainly by non-Ìgbo Sàró, the few Ìgbo mission agents lacked the temerity to venture into the interior. ...The early emergence of the educated elite among the Yorùbá gave the latter more than an ordinary lead in the matter of Western-style education over other ethnic groups in the country, a fact destined to inflame inter-ethnic rivalry in the twentieth century along directions not always healthy. (Àyándélé 1974, 11-13)

The contrast deepens in the post-independence diaspora, where the Ìgbo community defines itself genetically, while a corresponding Yorùbá membership statement is entirely cultural in orientation:

Any persons or groups of persons or people who have Igbo blood and genes in them in any part of the world, no matter under what circumstances they left Igboland/Biafraland, is Igbo and is therefore part and parcel of the Igbo race, Igbo heritage, and Igbo Nation. <<http://www.biafraland.com/Ibo%20Landings.htm>>⁶⁵

A Yorùbá is anyone that subscribes to the Yorùbá culture traditions and way of life. Anybody that has hereditary links to that Old Yorùbá kingdoms. You could live anywhere in the world or identify with any Nationality, but if you have a Yorùbá name, practice Yorùbá customs or even naturalize by adopting the Yorùbá way of Life then you are Yorùbá and can contribute to this forum. <<http://www.nubacom.com/21CenturyYoruba/21stCenturyYoruba.html>>

Abímbólá & Miller (1997) observe the boost which Yorùbá nationalism has drawn, since the 1970's, from Yorùbá cultural survivals in the diaspora of the 18th

and 19th centuries—a point repeated at the Chicago conference by the Yorùbá community representatives. By contrast, I've never heard *Abakuá* mentioned in an Ìgbo ethnic forum. Why not? In my observation at the conference, the Nigerian Yorùbás couldn't parse the Cuban Lukumí texts beyond a few readily intelligible proper names (Şàngó, Ògún...). More plausibly the two styles of diaspora differ, not in literal linguistic knowledge, but on the level of political metarepresentations of language, taking off from the very different codifications of Lukumí and Abakuá—both as collections of texts and as political *lingue franche* at the time of dispersion. By now, this old contrast has produced, and been reinforced by, distinct investments in literate intellectual capital and in literary styles through which these investments are respectively consumed. The greatest “Ìgbo novel” (in the phrase of Émènyonú 1978) is written in English, is entitled *Things Fall Apart* (Àchebé 1958) and has been translated not into Ìgbo but into Yorùbá (Ògúnṣemí 2000).⁶⁶

Thus there are many independent reasons to say that existing patterns of linguistic Africanisms in the Americas—as well as of diaspora consciousness—depend, as a historical matter, less on raw demography than widely believed, and more on pre-existing political institutions. This paper has made a preliminary case that a share of the observed outcomes is due to the intervening factor of E-language transmission—specifically to institutionalized uses of ritual *lingue franche* in diaspora. Being a properly political matter, and not a force of human nature, the E-language variable has a non-uniform effect on distinct populations, depending on long-term ecological and economic relationships, among other boundary conditions. Like the other big Middle Passage populations, captive Ìgbo-speakers left little trace on I-languages (mother tongues) in the Western Hemisphere, but unlike the other big groups they also failed to transmit an appreciable amount of their ‘own’ E-language. A simple explanation of the latter, Ìgbo-specific outcome is that the most relevant *lingua franca*, namely that of the hegemonic *ékpè* institution, was lexically non-Ìgbo. Conversely, a circumstantial case has been constructed, from hints in the standard historical literature, that Ìgbo-speakers were the main actors responsible for the massive presence of Èfik-derived *ékpè* ritual terminology in Cuban Abakuá.

This hypothesis is open to disproof by comparing Èfik *ékpè* and Cuban Abakuá performances, respectively, with *ékpè* material used by Ìgbo-speakers in the former Àrù sphere of influence. Any nonrandom similarities of the last two, as against the first, would confirm the line of reasoning presented here. What remains is the work and pleasure of establishing and juxtaposing these texts.

NOTES

Based on talks at the Conference on Recreating Africa in the Americas through Rhythms and Rituals, Center for the Black Diaspora, DePaul University, Chicago, 5 April 2003, and at the Walter Rodney African Studies Seminar, Boston University, 22 March 2004. Correspondence to manfredi@bu.edu. Thanks to Prof. S. Mufwene for his remarks in Chicago; to the AfroCuban ensemble *Omi Odara* led by R. Díaz for their performances there; to students in my Spring 2003 class “Language & Ethnicity” at Boston College; and to Dr. I. Miller for keeping me in his research community since the 1996 African diaspora conference at SUNY Binghamton. The present writup draws on discussions over the years with P. Muysken, 'S. Oyèlárán, M. Warner-Lewis and the late D. Nwàṣṣga, and on recent exchanges with B. Connell, M. DeGraff, E. Èzè, U. Nwókèjí, O. Onyile, U. Rösenthaller, A. Schwegler and J. Thornton. J. Cutler and I. Miller helped edit the first draft. Some of my conclusions converge with those reached by Northrup (2000) from partly different premises. My paradigm is Prof. M. Ònwuejìogwù's 1980 analysis of the Ñri diaspora, integrating archaeology, ecology, economics, demography, linguistics, oral and written history with political and symbolic anthropology. This paper is dedicated to my revered sponsor and teacher the late “Ònìkàrà” Ñkàma Òkpanì, Èzì Ukwu, Kpòghirikpò, Èhugbò (1911-2004). *Jòṣkwa Pàpá, ì hú máí?*

Transcription. So far as knowledge permits, and excepting some items in quotes or brackets, non-English forms are cited in standard orthography, marking lexically contrastive pitch. In Yorubá [MLH], a ‘3 tone’ language with minor accentual effects (Baṅgbòşé 1966), each syllable is individually marked except that M is marked only on nasals. Ìgbo [LL] and Èfik [LL], as trochaic, ‘2-tone plus downstep’ languages, are better suited to an accentual notation used by Christaller, Swift, Welmers and Nwachukwu, marking just the first of each sequence of syllables sharing a pitch level. Thus, in those languages, every unmarked syllable has the level of the preceding mark; every high (acute) mark is interpreted as downstepped with respect to the preceding one; and downstep is automatic if a low (grave) mark intervenes. Some Ìgbo and Èfik linguists use a Ìbàdàn-style, syllable-by-syllable approach, leaving high always unmarked and marking every low, but the presence of systematic downstep juncture in these languages then demands a special symbol. All known options—macron, vertical line, raised exclamation point, full stop—being impractical, downstep is most often ignored or mismarked

1. The precise phonetics of the word *nsibiri/nsibidi/nchibiri* are unknown to me. Some actual variation, as opposed to pure errorism, is likely with respect to the consonants, though probably not for the tone pattern, whatever it is.

2. <http://hrw.org/reports/2003/usa1203/6.htm#_Toc57442281>. See also Fisk & Goodman (2003), <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2788569.stm>> and the following description of the CBU-75 Sadeye:

a cluster bomb that contains 1800 one-pound bomblets, each containing 0.7 pounds of TNT with 700 razor-sharp steel shards imbedded in it, lethal up to 40 feet. These are scattered over an area equivalent to 157 football fields; presumably nothing—military, civilian, old, young, male, female—survives within this space. Many of the bomblets fail to go off and become landmines, the perfect random killer. (Lummis *et al.* 2003)

3. Even if not easily traceable as to origin, African archaisms in this hemisphere are rightly called *survivals*—facts whose impressive endurance underlines the brutality of genocide. This is surely why, as the Boston percussionist Nurudafina Pili Abena has often said, Afroamerican musicians reveal expressions of pain during the highest moments of artistic performance.

4. The scarcity of Mandekan texts in the African diaspora, as compared to general loanwords, can presumably be blamed on the decline of the Malian state after the 16th century (Ly-Tall 1984). The few Mandekan texts collected by Turner (1949, 256-59) are Mende or Vai.

5. For the period 1790 to 1880... the quantitative analysis in the work of Bergad *et al* (1995, 72; Barcia 1985, 50) provide a breakdown of slaves by classification as follows: Out of a sample of 6,871 African slaves, 27 per cent were Calabari, 28 per cent were 'Congo', 16 per cent were Gangá, 9 per cent were Mandinga and 10 per cent others; these classifications were broad and included many ethnic groups. The Calabari classification embraced the Efik, Ibibio, Ibo, Efut, Qua, and all other ethnic groups who were transported through Old Calabar and the Bight of Biafra. (Ishemo 2002, 260, references corrected)

I assume that Bergad's "Gangá" refers to Mandekan speakers, not to Central Africans as Ortiz (1924) supposed:

Aguirre Beltrán (1946, 120) señala que los Ganga formaban parte del grupo Mandinga, porque los árabes llamaron Gangara a los Mandé. (Pollak Eltz 1972, 30, reference corrected)

6. The numbers are calculated by Manfredi (1995). As to the labels, Bantu is technically a subset of Benue-Kwa, which is the union of Greenberg's (1963) Kwa and Benue-Congo (Givón 1975, 66; Williamson & Blench 2000, 17f., 27), but Bantu stands apart geographically and on typological grounds. Besides cognition, Turner considered syntactic and phonetic features; see also Mufwene (1985). Prof. Thornton (pers. comm) rightly notes that some Arabic names of Islamic captives, mainly in the Mandekan and Bantu columns, may have been masked in the Gullah outcomes in their Anglicized forms, e.g. with *Ibrahim* becoming *Abraham* or *Abe*.

7. A similar pattern occurs in Haiti, where *vodun* ritual terminology is mainly Fɔ̀n-Gbè, but general vocabulary is more evenly shared with Mandekan and Bantu (Comhaire-Sylvain 1955; Baker 1993).

8. A stray, undocumented reference to Cuban Abakuá "narratives in the Ibo language" (<http://www.africana.com/research/encarta/tt_563.asp>) is probably just a naïve inference from errorist labels. It's equally hard to evaluate Thornton's claim that "[n]o fewer than 60 percent of the Africans who formed the core of the surge of population in Virginia in the early eighteenth century were speakers of one or another dialect of the Ìgbo language" (1998, 322, citing Kulikoff 1986 and re-cited in turn by Berlin 1998, 111). In Haiti too the record is mainly silent. McDaniel (1998, 51-59) reports a handful of Ìgbo-identified songs in the Caribbean island of Carriacou, totaling less than 20 distinct lines in all, with one possibly Ìgbo item: the phrase *ibo lele* (also known as the name of a dance in Haiti). An expression *Lé èlè!* is glossed by Ìgwè (1999, 368) as an irregular imperative "Look!" In Grenada, McDaniel (1998, 52f.) quotes one song from Paul & Smith (1963, 7) in two forms. An untranslated stanza, transcribed "E-o, Ibo, Lélé-lélé / Ba ya mma ka-ki-ti/ Ba yo/ Ba ya mamma sa fa me/ Ibo" has the comment that the singer's grandmother "...is [g]bo family and she won't live for the other nations, she will trample them—that's *Ba kakite Ibo*." I see no way to derive this interpretation from the text on the assumption that it was originally in Ìgbo.

9. Both Gomez and Chambers raise the estimates of captive Ìgbo speakers, thereby making the dearth of American Ìgboisms even more mysterious.

10. The late 18th/early 19th century saw the vast majority of human exports from that region (Òrjí 1987). On the revived Middle Belt theory cf. also Áfiígbò (1977 and *pers. comm.* cited by Inikori 1988, 35 *fn* 33; Òbíchèrè 1988, 50; Inikori 1992, 106 *fn.* 68). Other authorities are studiously ambiguous, referring simply to "slaves... from the Ìgbo hinterland" (Alagoa 1992, 450). Many Ìgbo-speaking captives remained in coerced labor in southeastern Nigerian horticulture (Dike 1956; Jones 1961; Thomas-Éméagwaàlì 1984), and it may also matter that exported Ìgbo-speaking captives were disproportionately young (J. Thornton, *pers. comm.*).

11. Lacking any deductive content, the creole 'answer' begs the noncorrespondence question. Like other ideologies, creoleness exists mainly in the eye of the beholder, even if that beholder is looking in a mirror, as when Asante's quest for a "composite African... identification" (1990, 9) entails "a creative quest for interpretation which 'looks good'" (1990, 39).

12. E.g. "on average, one in four British African Caribbean men have a Y chromosome that traces back to Europe rather than Africa" (<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2757525.stm>>, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/genes/dna_detectives/african_roots/results.shtml>); and there is "an average of 30 per cent of White admixture in the Black population" of North America (Cavalli-Sforza 2000, 74).

13. In terms popularized by Boas, the comparative method has to consider if transmission of a given cultural similarity is better explained as 'evolution' or 'diffusion'. In genetics, transmissible traits are generated by the basic mechanisms of mutation, selection, migration and drift. Here migration is of prime importance. Lamarckian genetics underplays mutation by assuming that characteristics acquired in one lifetime are heritable, but even for Darwinians the issue is blurred by gene-environment interactions (Levins & Lewontin 1985; Depew & Weber 1995). Selection tends to be exaggerated by sociobiologists like Pinker (2002), cf. Roberts (2002). Implicitly in all comparisons, two other possibilities—chance resemblance and universals—need to be excluded before considering a causal inference, though this step is often skipped in folk theorising (some pertinent examples are given in the last section of this paper).

14. To take an example associated with Meillet, "Italo-Celtic" was a subgroup in the early history of the family, but not thereafter (Watkins 1966). The shift to vertical transmission is akin to Darwinian speciation, assumed to have a demographic cause (Mayr 1963, cited by Levins & Lewontin 1985, 294). For a sceptical view in linguistics, see Anttila (1972, 309).

15. See also Hale (1986). Mufwene (2001) challenges the limit on horizontal language transmission, in part with Afroamerican evidence relevant to the Cuban Ìgbo case. From a more philosophical angle, Koster (1988, 1992, 1994) questions which aspects of language pass between individuals (like genes), and which between groups (like intellectual property). Collective intellectual property is obviously a key concept for initiation societies like Abakuá; the notion, recently added to Western legal codes, that such property pertains to individuals, has less scientific plausibility. For "copyright-holder", read "cultural expropriator".

16. Endorsement of Herskovits doesn't mean uncritical acceptance of current African Studies in North America. While European Africanists draw on longstanding philological expertise, and on painfully acquired reservoirs of political sophistication about nation states, their U.S. counterparts by and large lack these resources, and tend to carry the short-run interests of their Cold War sponsors, especially in the U.S. Higher Education Title VI Area Studies funding stream (Wallerstein 1997). Thus Mùkoma wa Ngũgĩ is clearly right to insist that "...Western scholarship on Africa needs to reinvent itself. Perhaps refusing to wear the boy-scout badge of the Africanist is a beginning" (2003, 14), but progressives are not the only ones thinking about reinvention. U.S. Title VI is now on the verge of official enlistment in the War on Terrorism (see <<http://internationalstudies.uchicago.edu/titleVI.shtml>> updated December 5, 2003).

17. Alam cites Wrigley who attributes English industrial takeoff, ahead of commercial leader Holland, to "the move from an advanced organic to a mineral-based energy economy" (1988, 104). Before then, African labor power was the main kinetic resource. The calculation changed when England began industrial use of fossil fuels *circa* 1800. The importance of plantation slavery in the transition of Euro-Atlantic feudal and mercantilist empires into liberal and capitalist nation states is at least a corollary of Williams' thesis that "[i]t was the capital accumulated from the West Indian trade that financed James Watt and the steam engine" (1944, 102), cf. Wolf (1982, 200), Wallerstein (1989, 144ff.), Inikori (1992, 97), Bergquist (1996, 24-32) and Blackburn (1997, 572). English priority in abandoning muscle for fossil

power bears on another dimension of Williams' famous study: the relative weight of pecuniary versus moralistic motives behind Britain's 1807 anti-slavetrading law.

18. Generalizing from language to music, Herskovits goes on to propose that

in situations involving change, cultural imponderables are more resistant than are those elements of which persons are more conscious. It is important to stress in this connection, however, the distinction between this assumption and the hypothesis which holds that material culture is more acceptable under contact than non-material culture. (1945, 60)

He then tries to reconcile the two conflicting principles by restricting the first to "process" and the second to "form", but the attempt seems strained: both of them involve form as well as process, and the category of "material culture" assumes mind-body dualism, which is inconsistent with basic tenets of cognitive science like the computational theory of mental representations (Jordan & Russell 1999).

19. "...lingua eorum est facilis, vocatur lingua Licomin et est universalis in istis partibus, sicut latinum in partibus Europa" (Brásio 1960, 465, cf. Thornton 1988, 362 *fn.* 34). The locations included the Ìjẹ̀bu ("Jabou"), Wàrí ("Ouairai") and Èdó ("Benin") kingdoms. A language of similar name—Ólúkumí—survives today not far east of Èdó in a few enclaves in the western Ìgbo-speaking area now called Ànìọ̀ma (Thomas 1914; Ọ̀nwùjẹ̀jọ̀gwù & Ọ̀kó[h] 1981; Ọ̀rìjì 1999, 66). Recently salvaged copies of 700 distinct wax cylinders of 2.5 minutes' duration, recorded by Thomas and presumably including Ólúkumí, are being digitized in the British Library (<http://www.bl.uk/collections/sound-archiv>). It will help to check Thomas' sample for any similarities between the southern Nigerian variety and Cuban Lucumí which exclude Yorubá dialects *sensu stricto*—confirming a horizontal transmission model. Lucumí would be expected to show more similarities to the language presently called Işẹ̀kiri ("Itshekiri"). As a possible case in point, I'm anecdotally informed that the expression *olukú mi* (colloquially, 'my tight friend') is current as an Işẹ̀kiri greeting.

20. The same may have been true, somewhat later, of closely-related Lòbangi ("Bobangi"), the precursor of Lingala (Harms 1981, 126; de Rop 1960, 17 cited by Harms 1981, 93). A difference with Lúkúmi in southern Nigeria is that, until direct colonization in the late 19th century, the greater linguistic cohesion of the west-central Bantu area (roughly Guthrie's B and C zones) may have conferred less advantage on a Central African *lingua franca* as opposed to reliance on high mutual intelligibility among first languages (Harms 1981, 74, 92). Kíkó̀ngò elements in Afrocuban Abakúa await expert attention.

21. See Schwegler (1996), Moñino & Schwegler (2002) on Kíkó̀ngò in Colombian Palenque. The impression of 17th century missionaries that Atlantic Africa contained between 13 and 30 ethnolinguistic "nations" (Thornton 1992, 184 *fn.* 6, 185) may register no more than regional *lingue franche* in a "transnational community phenomenon" (Yai 2001, 248). Attribution of national status to ethnic labels may be another case of Western errorism—a 'blowback' of European ideology (cf. Chatterjee 1986, Simpson 1988). Thornton skirts a sociological definition of nation *à la* Gellner (1967), or an economic one *à la* Wallerstein (1980, 144), relying instead on assumed cultural identity as manifested in "mutual intelligibility" between individual languages (Thornton 1992, 187, *fn.* 14). However, overlap with a single *lingua franca* is not known to be a better indicator of intelligibility than any arbitrary lexicostatistic score.

22. Confusion between the two functions may be responsible for certain European ideas cited approvingly by Áfiigbo:

Baikie expressed the view that all the dialects spoken between Aro Chukwu and Old Calabar were directly or indirectly connected with Ìgbo. Major A.G. Leonard [1906, 43]... opined... 'that the languages spoken by the Ibibio, Efik, Andoni and others have all been derived from Ibo at some ancient period and that there is a distinct dialectal affinity between the Ijo dialects of Oru, Brass, Ibeni and New Calabar, and the Isumba dialect of Ibo' (1992c, 49).

Áfiigbo goes on "to suggest that there was a time when a vague ideology of 'pan-Ìgboness' floated generally between the Niger and the Cross River" (1992c, 50) and to blame scepticism by non-Ìgbo speaking historians like Noah (1980) on emotion from the Nigerian Civil War. Even at face value, this 'pan-Ìgbo' ideology begs the question of whether it was based on shared language, or—as seems likelier—on "[t]he part played by the Àrù in making inter-dependence and peaceful co-existence possible through their trade routes, and the pax established through the widespread dread engendered in this whole area by the Long Juju" (1992c, 57).

23. E.g. at the business meeting of the Ìgbo Studies Association in Boston on 1 November 2003, Ìgbo was used fitfully, mainly to score points against members of Nigeria's current ruling party in attendance. A resolution to adopt Ìgbo as an official medium for Association meetings was withdrawn after sharp debate. It's a truism that such controversies could scarcely occur in an analogous gathering of Yorubá-speaking scholars abroad, despite the fact that mother tongue speaking fluency may not be significantly greater in the latter setting.

24. This sentence is a philological minefield. (i) Colonial rendering of *Àrù* as "Arochukwu" is honored by most historians, e.g. Díké & Èkèjìubá; Achebe reinforced it with the bilingual pun "arrow" in the title of his 1967 novel. Now there's also the neologism "Arochukwu" (Ọ̀kóro 1998, 46) with a hypercorrect "dotted o" in the second syllable replacing etymological "dotted u". Given the town's oracular industry, there's no reason not to derive the name from the root -rù 'propitiate a deity with sacrifice' (Williamson 1972, 457; Ígwè 1999, 735). Remarkably, the first written source for the name (Clarke 1848, 73) renders it better than subsequent literature; see also Ilogu (1957, 100). (ii) The river which Europeans called "Niger" has essentially one single indigenous name (Òhimi, Òlìmini, Òrìmlì...) as it flows past towns speaking dozens of Benue-Kwa languages. By contrast, indigenous nomenclature for the river baptized as the "Cross" (*Rio da cruz*) is diverse. At its mouth it's called either *inyang* or *ákpa*, both meaning generically 'river' (B. Connell, O. Onyile *pers. comm.*). It is marked as "Akpa Efik" by Petermann (1863, plate 6 facing p. 200). A few hundred kilometers upstream at Èhùgbò ("Afikpo") it's called *Ényòm Úkwu* 'Big Ényòm'—an expression which may reflect the downstream origin of some Èhùgbò lineages in Àrù, bordering a lower tributary of the "Cross" whose name is spelled "Enyong" (tones unknown) by colonial sources like Jones (1986). Like its Èfik counterpart and possible namesake, the Èhùgbò word *ényòm* by itself generically refers to 'river' as in the idiom -*gwù ényòm* 'swim' (literally, 'splash in river'), which in Standard Ìgbo is either -*gwù mǐrín* ('splash in water') or -*gwù íyí* ('splash in stream').

25. Details of Àrù hegemony remain controversial. Íjẹ̀oma observes that "Àrù settlements... were not always motivated by commercial opportunities" (1994, 42), and Áfiigbo suspects that

...an overall picture of trade and trading life in south-central and south-eastern Nigeria built up from competently prosecuted micro-studies is unlikely to uphold the idea, propagated by [Díké's] *Trade & Politics*, that the Àrù enjoyed in Ìgboland a monopoly of commerce so complete as to be generally accepted as divinely appointed (1992c, 83).

Àrù had difficulty encroaching on the much older Ñri kingdom and its *íchi/ózo* title system (Ọ̀nwùjẹ̀jọ̀gwù 1980, 26-30, 59-61; M. Àníkpó *pers. comm.*; Njìjókú & Ànọ̀zie 1992, 198). The British overthrew Àrù and Ñri in 1901 and 1911 respectively. Áfiigbo allows that most of the southern Ìgbo-speaking area was culturally integrated under the "dominant influence" of Àrù and "the growth in commerce which came to be associated with the trans-Atlantic system from about the tail end of the 17th century" (1992b, 157). He gives this area the name "*Ìgbo Abamaba* (*abamaba* meaning secret societies)" (1992b, 154).

26. "Of the 150, about 45 were located in Ìbibio, 38 in Ekoi and 67 in Ìgbo territory" (Èkèjìubá 1992, 332 *fn.* 17) citing Umo (n.d.), see also <<http://www.aro-okigbo.com/tribes.html>> and <<http://www.arochukwu.org/thearettlements.html>>.

27. “In Èkpe ceremonies at Àrùchúkwu, many songs are sung in Cross River languages, although most members do not understand them” (Bentor 2002, 30; cf. Obuh 1984 on nearby settlements). As to *nsibiri/nsibidil/nchibidi*, the name of the script, an Ejagham etymology has been proposed “from *nchibi* meaning ‘to turn’—a symbolic reference to... esoteric, organized and functional complexity...” (Onor 1994, 22). Leib & Romano cite the name of the gestural code as “egbe” (1984, 50), probably intending *ékpe* (see next footnote).

28. Onor (1994, 22, 101) claims origins in the Ejagham-speaking area both for *m̀gbè*—the Ejagham name for what Èfik calls *ékpe*—and for *nsibiri*. Similarly “[t]he most important men’s society in the Cross River area, Ekpe, had been sold by the Ekoi to the Efik at Old Calabar, who sold it to the Enyong, who sold it to others including the Aro, who in turn sold it to many other communities” (Northrup 1978, 173). Some say that *ékpe* also had an Ìbibio component: “The slave trade was partly responsible for the reshaping of the Ìbibio *Ekpo* society and the Ekoi Mgbè into the Ekpe at Calabar” (Alagoa 1992, 451), but this could be blowback from errorists who changed *ékpe* to “Egbo” (Jones 1956, *passim*), wrongly equated with *ékpo*, the Ìbibio word for ‘ancestor’ which also names a masked ancestral dance. (*Ékpe* has no such aspect, apparently.) Both Èfik and Ìbibio lack the *gb* phoneme (Simmons 1956b, 66; Essien 1985, 66), which is easier for Europeans than its voiceless counterpart *kp*. According to Nicklin & Salmons, the complementary distribution of *ékpe* and *ékpo* institutions in the region is both longstanding and continuing, with the exception of Ọ̀dọ̀n (“Oron”) where “*ékpe* seems to have been the major male cult at the advent of the colonial era” (1984, 33). See also:

The greatest difference between the mainland Ìbibio and the Efik is the absence of *Ekpo Onyoho* among the Efik. When they finally settled at their present site, they met the Efut and the Qua whose instrument of government was the *Ekpe* secret society. The Efik adapted the *Ekpe* secret society in preference to *Ekpo Onyoho* which was in their opinion less powerful than ekpe in the control of the large slave population among the Efik. (Údò 1976, 169f.)

29. I- and E-language need not be distinct in this function. In the Ìgbo-speaking area, *ólu* the argot of ọ̀zọ̀ initiation of the Nri Kingdom makes do with Ìgbo ingredients (Ọ̀nwụ̀jejiọgwụ̀ 1980; Manfredi 1991, 265-73), and the same is presumably true for the “secret codes” of the Óka (“Awka”) ironsmith guild (Díké 1974 cited by Ézèanị̀ 2002, 7). Similarly, Akuetey finds no non-Èvè material in the speech of Yèvègbè *vodun* initiates, despite an explicit “no Èvè-speaking rule” (1998/99, 83). Farther afield, the Italian Valle dell’Adda supplies another case of divergence, where shoemakers’ jargon draws heavily on German lexical items (Bracchi 1987).

30. They continue on the same page: “In many wards, however, the highest grade was open only to the Amadi [‘freeborn’].” Mobility may have been even greater in 19th century “Old Calabar” where “[s]everal slaves actually purchased entry to the governing council of *ékpe*” (Latham 1971, 601). Uya (1987, 39) endorses Latham’s view that the Ndem “tutelary deity” (1973, 146) was gradually supplanted by *ékpe* in the 17th and 18th centuries as Èfik economy turned from local estuary fishing to long distance middleman-ism.

31. McWhorter’s alleged non-creole symptoms comprise lexical tone, overt inflection and semantically-opaque derivational morphology.

32. Bickerton’s five primary characteristics at least share *something* empirical: they all appeared together in his paradigm example, the abrupt pidgin-to-creole transition of Hawai’ian English (1981, 17). Of course this clustering doesn’t mean the five are necessarily limited to creoles (They aren’t) and Bickerton is aware of the alternative explanation:

Orthodox generativists... could predict no more of a creole than that it should not violate any universal constraint. However, if all creoles could be shown to exhibit an identity far beyond the scope of chance, this would constitute strong evidence that some genetic program common to all members of the species was decisively shaping the result. (1981, 42)

The “if” not having panned out, Bickerton is now an “orthodox generativist” in the above terms when he defines creoles as possessing five properties “of natural language” *tout court* (1990, 171). Calvin & Bickerton (2000, 250) blandly declare that “creoles have the features of universal grammar”. But Bickerton still thinks that “acquisition of Haitian Creole would reach the level of mature native competence on the order of (at least) three or four years sooner than acquisition of English” (1999, 67)—still assuming, therefore, that Haitian is a “default” or “unmarked” instantiation of the human *faculté du langage*. But the link is not necessary: Mufwene (1999, 99-110) gives a consensus list of 7 “creole” features, all of which can plausibly be regarded as unmarked, not in a UG sense, just relative to “the ecology consisting of the linguistic materials (homogeneous or heterogeneous) the learner encounters” (1999, 121 *fn* 3).

33. A fallback position, consistent with intuitions presumably shared by Bickerton and McWhorter, would be that creoles exclude certain morphosyntactic types, e.g. polysynthesis (Baker 1996). This would be reasonable, except that traditional, macro-typological classes like polysynthetic languages have proved no easier to delimit than creoles, in other words adding a second circularity does not offer an escape route from the first one.

34. Chomsky’s *E-language* recalls Kiparsky’s “external evidence (including both behavioral and historical evidence)” (1973, 87), but the two linguists invest this type of data with respectively low and high relevance in the task of evaluating competing theories.

35. Genetic transmission of ancestral languages, though false, is part of folk belief as shown by immigrant surprise that children don’t automatically inherit their parents’ linguistic abilities. A remnant of this belief survives at the core of Bickerton’s creole theory, which holds that specific a grammatical pattern is transmitted genetically, in the absence of consistent E-language cues to the child. In his words, “all, or at least a substantial part, of the grammar of a language can be produced in the absence of the generation-to-generation transmission of particular languages that is a normal characteristic of our species” (1984, 174). He calls this pattern a “bioprogram”; related ideas in language acquisition theory include *the subset principle* (Berwick 1985) and *default parameter setting* (Hyams 1987). Muysken points out that all these approaches rely on the subsequently-abandoned idea of *syntactic markedness*:

Perhaps the whole original notion that creoles are unmarked systems was misguided, but so far it remains as the most substantial contribution of Bickerton to the field. Now there is no base for it. (1988, 306)

36. Hale’s generalization—that zero-causative unergatives are excluded from adult languages—is based on a sample comprising English, Miskitu, Navajo and Basque. With familiar caveats (Fodor 1970), a logical equivalent can always be expressed periphrastically, either by so-called analytic causatives (*make/let/have me giggle*) or by multi-clause expressions (*cause me to giggle, bring it about that I giggle*). In Modern Hebrew, zero-causatives are claimed to overapply in adult speech to include unergatives (Borer & Wexler 1987, 159), which would counterexample Hale (1996) assuming (i) that *binyan* 5 (schematized as *hiCCiC*) is inherently causative and (ii) that the causative-inchoative relationship is syntactic. However, both of these assumptions are questioned by Arad, who claims that “there is no [+causative] *binyan*” (2003, 182) and that “the non-causative and the causative verb are both [independently] derived from the root and not from one another” (2003, 333). Borer’s (2003) analysis of Hebrew lexical alternations is also consistent with Hale (1996), but without Arad’s appeal to Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993)—a phonological theory of affixation.

37. Adult Ìgbo filters out zero-causatives, even those translating English unaccusatives like *break* (Nwàchukwu 1987). Instead, alternating causatives in Ìgbo take the form of so-called *bipositional verbs* (or *V-V compounds*, cf. Lord 1975). This gap does not threaten Hale’s (1996) generalization, but it remains puzzling. Hale *et al.* (1995) sketch a solution in terms of lexical

redundancy, pending study of the development of causatives in Ìgbo-speaking children, as well as reconsideration of the unaccusative/unergative distinction (cf. Èmènanjọ 1984).

38. On logical grounds, UG is further idealized as the “initial state S_0 ” of the language faculty (Chomsky 1986, 25), however this begs the question of maturation (Borer & Wexler 1987) as well as the markedness assumption discussed above.

39. A possible response is that Haitian or whichever other language lacks the prototypical creole structures had to that extent “decreolized” (Bickerton 1974; 1981, 46f.), but this insulates the claim of a creole type from disproof, pending discovery of some way to know that any given data is *not* decreolized. The circularity is blatant in the following quotation:

The more we strip creoles of these more recent developments, the more we factor out superficial and accidental features, the greater are the similarities that reveal themselves. (Bickerton 1981, 132)

Another response is that the alleged status of “creoles” as “the world’s simplest grammars” is not a matter of “synchronic theory” at all but is purely “historical” (McWhorter 2001a; 2001b, 398, 411). An appeal to history as the unique testing ground for creole uniqueness concedes DeGraff’s point that the relevance of creole is limited to to E-language, at which point any mention of “synchrony” (McWhorter 2000) is surprising. The same objections can’t logically apply to Mufwene’s critique, which McWhorter has not addressed so far as I know.

40. Also Mufwene (1996, 107; 1998, 324) quoted by DeGraff (2001a, 285); Mufwene (2000).

41. According to Doroszewski (1933), cited by Hiersche (1972, 13), de Saussure’s shift between 1907 and ‘08 was influenced by Durkheim’s views on “collective consciousness”. Remarkably within mainstream generative grammar, something close to Durkheim’s “idéation collective” (1898, 301 *fn.* 1) has been rehabilitated by Koster (1988, 1992, 1994). Accepting UG as an innate constraint on natural language grammars passing through the acquisition filter, Koster nevertheless endorses Wittgenstein’s objection to the view that knowledge of any particular language fully coincides with individual psychology; on the contrary, it also has a supra-individual dimension because the mind, unlike the brain, “cannot be sharply distinguished from the external memory” (Koster 1992, 5), and external memory necessarily has a “public” or cultural context—for Durkheim, “collective”; for Mufwene, “communal”.

42. Both Mufwene and DeGraff endorse the views of Chaudenson (1992), in ways beyond the scope of my discussion here.

43. Paternity of creole linguistics conventionally belongs to Schuchardt (1882).

44. Thésée (1986) gives etymologies for seven personal names, e.g. “Houanizei” could be “Nwanyizie” (orthographic Nwáànyizíe) or “Nwanyieze” (Nwáànyizè). Unambiguous cases are Nwókèdì (“Oouquédi”) and Nđùbùisi (“Oudoubichi”).

45. Áfiìgbo evokes, without elaborating, an ethnic distinction “between Ágbaaja and Ísú at the pan-Ìgbo level” (1992b, 147).

46. A near neighbor of Árù, mentioned by Ilogu (1957, 107), Ékèjìyùbá (1992, 316) and Òrìjì (1990, 136). Nair (1975, 8) cites hilarious testimony, collected from Etubom Ededem Ekpényong Oku by Commissioner A.K. Hart:

The Èfikis were an oriental tribe whose home was in Palestine. ...When the Èfikis reached Eastern Nigeria settled at Ututu in the Ì[g]bo country. The people of Ututu called the Èfik immigrants Eburutu, a corruption of the words “Hebrew and Ututu” the former word being a reference to the Èfik oriental origin. (1964, 29)

A few pages later, Hart flips Etubom’s submission to interpret the appellation *Eburutu* as having been made “presumably in derision of the Èfik claim of Hebrew descent” (1964, 37). More trenchant, but equally improbable.

47. Also in this hemisphere, non-Ìgbo speakers were lumped into the Ìgbo category:

[W]hites in the British Caribbean and mainland colonies used ‘Ebo’ or ‘Ibo’ to include the ‘Ibo, Ibibio and Efik and Cross River peoples’ and rarely used and little understood the meaning behind names such as ‘Calabar’ and ‘Moko’. (Northrup 2000, 14)

Something similar happens in modern Nigeria: Òmọ̀rúyì (2004) recalls stereotyping the late Kenule Saro-Wiwa as “Ìgbo” in 1962 when they met as new students in University of Ìbáđán cafeteria queue, based on Ken’s preference for rice instead of *àmàlà* (yam porridge). Saro called Òmọ̀ “Yorùbá” for making the opposite dietary selection. They soon discovered a shared political identity as Nigerian “minorities”, respectively Èdó- and Ògòni-speaking, and both found a political home during the 1964 federal election campaign in the Northern People’s Congress, not in the South’s dominant Yorùbá and Ìgbo regional parties, AG and NCNC.

48. Èzè & Manfredi (2001) cite non-ethnic glosses of the term *Ìgbo*, including ‘community’ and ‘inland dwellers’, which remain salient in personal names and other fixed phrases.

49. Ardener (1968, 117 *fn.* 41) adds a further Dutch wrinkle. As if to prove the potential of this errorist “dud” to cause civilian havoc, witness the continued controversy over government recognition of the Èfik chieftaincy title formerly known as the *Obong of Old Calabar*:

The real meaning of the word ‘Calabar’ remains uncertain even now. It is not indigenous but is an imposition. [M]uch of the records that were relied on for what has so far passed for her history, were shrouded in constant mix-ups, mis-information and deliberate distortion of facts. ...When the epithet ‘Old’ was dropped in 1904, and ‘Old Calabar’ was renamed ‘Calabar’ it did not by implication extend the jurisdiction of the Efik chieftain to include the Quas and the Efuts. ...Never has any Qua man called Calabar ‘Obio Efik’ (Efik Town)... (QCCA 2003, 5, 23, 32)

On p. 35, the same memo portentously alludes to an analogous renaming in the early 1960’s when the western delta was in the Western Region (under Yorùbá-speaking administration) and the paramount title “Olù of Işekiri” (an ethnic category) was inflated to “Olù of Warri” (a geographical one). The change inflamed local rivalry that continues today as one of several low-intensity wars which span the impoverished, oil-producing Niger delta.

Compensating somehow for the heavy political load carried by the term *Calabar*, is the light linguistic weight of folk etymologies like the following:

The early Portuguese explorers of the period saw the left bank of the Calabar River close to the estuary settled; and it was they, we gather, who gave the name “Calabaros” to the early inhabitants of the Bight of Biafra. The name “Calabar” is sometimes interpreted by some as signifying “calm bar”, because the bar of the river is often naturally calm and as a whole not much ruffled by the wind. (Aye 1967, 4)

50. Simmons’ report is corroborated a century earlier by Petermann (1863, plate 6 facing p. 200); see also Nair (1975, 190). “Abakpa” has also been cited as the name of an apparently non-*èkpè* mask “in the Ogoja area” (Nicklin & Salmons 1984, 36) and occurs as a place name in some northeast Ìgbo-speaking settlements with slave-trade connections, e.g. *Abakpa Níkè*.

51. Cuban [ku] is the outcome of Yorùbá [kp] before a front unrounded vowel; before a back rounded vowel the result is [p], e.g. Yorùbá [otùrùkpòn] (a chapter of Ifá, spelled *otùrùpòn* because Yorùbá lacks a [p], cf. Àjàyì 1960) becomes in Cuba [otrupo(n)] not [otrukuo(n)]. Either treatment is possible before [a]: the Yorùbá exclamation [héekpà] —spelled *Héepà!* in Nigeria—comes out in Cuban Lucumí as either [epua] or [ekua].

52. Not the same as “Annang, the Qua (Kwa) of early colonial records” (Áfiìgbo 1974, 71).

53. It seems that Calabar inhabitants avoid orthographic confusion with another group called *Kwa* by resorting to the *qu* digraph which is otherwise unused:

Calabar was not the only name to worry nineteenth century ethnographers. There were also the Kwa (or Qua). One group of Kwa was a subtribe of the Ejagham Ekoi which, with another tribal fragment of the Efut, were the original inhabitants of Old Calabar. There were also a few villages on the Cameroons River, unrelated to the Ekoi, who also called themselves Kwa, and finally there was the Western or Anang division of the Ibibio whose European name was the Kwa and later the Qua Ibo, presumably to distinguish them from the other Kwa. (Jones 1963, 21)

Folk etymology derives the place name from personal names rather than the reverse:

It is said that the Qua got their name from the Portuguese traders who called them thus after one of the chiefs Oqua. ... *Okwa* is still a common name among the people of Qua Town. In Efik, Qua Town is called Akwa Obio (Big Town). (Nair 1972, 30f. fn 3).

The modern opacity of Èfik personal names, even to fluent speakers, is historically related to a process Aye calls “Anglification” whereby

Orok was changed into Duke; Efiom was anglicised as Ephraim; Akabom, Ekpenyong, Asibong became Cobham, Young and Archibong respectively. Attempts were even made to anglicise Asuquo as Escor.” (1967, 87; cf. Simmons 1956b, 69)

Place names are similar: “Guinea Company is the English name for the Èfik town of Adiabo, situated on the west bank of the Calabar River...” (Simmons 1956b, 70), etc.

54. Cited by Nair (1975, 190) as occurring on p. 566.

55. In Crabb’s transcription, barred <ɨ> is a centralized high vowel.

56. As a non-specialist, I may have rediscovered something obvious to *cognoscenti*. The three labels would probably not have continued to lead separate lives in Nigerian history books, but for the political marginality of the bearers *vis-à-vis* their Èfik speaking neighbors. One more stray gloss—of uncertain provenance, due to the vagaries of the document itself—which may support the above argument is a 1786 diary entry, cited by an Èfik-speaking historian, written by someone variously identified as “Antera Duke or Ntiero Edem Effiom” and referring to “Ekoi (Coqua)” (Asuquo 1978, 50). My interpretation of this doublet is that the parenthesized material represents the pidgin English transcription of the original manuscript, now lost (cf. Simmons 1956b), while the label *Ekoi* is Asuquo’s emendation.

57. The story comes full circle, or at least is further complicated, by the tradition that “[t]he Efik... had left Ibom [near Àrù] because of wars involving groups characterized as Akpa” (Alagoa 1992, 450). From this geographic origin, Áfiigbo draws the further conclusion that “[t]he Èfik were originally an Ígbo clan living on the boundary between the Ígbo and the Ìbibio where they progressively acquired Ìbibio cultural traits...” (1965, 272). However, this does not seem like the only way to explain the opinion that “the Èfik despise the Ìbibio” (1965, 271), normal ethnic rivalry being more plausible, cf. Údò (1976, 160f).

58. Cognates exist in other Benue-Kwa languages, but the Ígbo form is the closest.

59. Ígwè’s gloss of *Chúkúwú abjaama* as “God the provider” (1999, 3) is tentative. The most recognizable morpheme in the epithet is *-bjá* ‘come’ which, Nwáòga observes, happens to be the root on which all Ígbo dialects build an agent noun meaning ‘stranger/visitor’. Njìòkù (<<http://www.wku.edu/~johnston.njoku/aro-chukwu/>>) reports that Àrù tourguides refer to “Chukwu Obioma”—which could simply be mistranscribed if it doesn’t reflect a new folk etymology of ‘kind-hearted’. Njìòkù elsewhere has “Chukwu Abiama (Great and All-Knowing God)” (<<http://www.wku.edu/~johnston.njoku/aro-chukwu/history/>>), again without etymological foundation. The same source cites the oracle name as “Ibin Ukpabi”—an unconventional segmentation with an enticingly Oriental flavor recalling Ibn Khaldūn etc.

60. As noted by Nwáòga (1984, 44ff.), the wit to invent a sky god with which to dupe one’s neighbors was not limited to Àrù, which was preceded in the business by Ñri centuries before:

from Jeffreys (1934), Ònwùjéjìgwù (1980, 41) quotes an Ñri proverb, *Òfó ànyí jì elí Ìgbo* (roughly, ‘We use an ancestral shrine to scam inland dwellers’). Oral tradition contains many texts in which the character of Chúkúwú figures as just another of the *dramatis personae*, and one who can himself be duped on occasion. It is also fascinating to read, in the context of missionary rivalry, that the adoption of the Àrù cult name *Chúkúwú* by Catholic translators “was why the Protestants had changed to *Chínèkè* though the Catholics who came later to Ònicha still used *Chúkúwú*” (Nwáòga 1984, 26). The neologistic formation of *Chínèkè* is well critiqued by Àchebé (1975).

61. Westermann & Ward rephrase the rule as follows: “in certain dialects of Ígbo, ... a rolled *r* is used between all vowels except *i* and [ɨ], where the flapped sound is used” (1933, 75). It clearly matters which dialects if any besides Àrù are being referred to; Ward (1941, 35) doesn’t elaborate. Another phonetic feature which has been at least casually described in Àrù, and which may register in Abakuá (e.g. in the name *Abakuá* itself, among other items) is “the interchangeability of the sounds *kp* and *kw* in local pronunciation” (Matthews 1927, quoted by Áfiigbo 1981a, 223). The reliability of Matthews’ perception of consonants is unknown, though he wins points for correcting the errorist spelling of the root vowel of the word *Àrù* itself (Áfiigbo 1981a, 218). But the change of *kp* to *kw* is also found in Cuban Lucumí (see above), so it most likely reflects a more general type of phonetic restructuring.

62. A current replicant of the ‘Heegbrew meme’ appears in a pamphlet from the National African Language Resource Center at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, which refers in seriousness (and with blithe disregard for Ígbo orthography) to a historical scenario whereby

...the Igbo are descendants of early Jews because most of their customs and practices are similar to those of the Jews. A few examples are the celebration of the newborn (*Omugwo*), naming ceremony (*Igu aha*), marriage ceremonies (*Ilu nwaanyi*), atoning for accidental killing (*Ikwa ochu*) and many others.

(<<http://african.lss.wisc.edu/nalrc/prog-serv/Map/Brochures/Igbo.pdf>>)

63. Abímbólá (1999) rejects Peel’s more ambitious claim, that the wide ethnic category of Yorùbá was not merely exploited by 19th-century Sàró (returned Sierra Leonean) converts in their protestant self-fashioning, but was actually *created* by them as a spinoff of bible-translation into the dialect of fallen Òyó. But Peel himself notes that the Ífá corpus of oracular poetry (E-language) was cognitively salient, to the point of official scandal, for the Sàró missionary converts E. Ljádú and J. Johnson (2000, 302). That Ífá’s standardizing norms aren’t literate was irrelevant in a preindustrial context; they sufficed for political agitation *per se*, as in the oratorical success of Chief S.L.A. Akintóá, Awólòwò’s nemesis from the Òyó-derived town of Ògbómòṣṣó who excelled in *babaláwo*-like wordplay (cf. Òṣuntókún 1984, 22). Similarly, Adégbóá (2003) finds that *dún-dún* drummed surrogate speech reflects Òyó dialect even in non-Òyó areas, again suggesting pre-literate standardization.

64. The story, recorded from Gullah-speakers on the Georgia coast (W.P.A. 1940), has been reenacted by Latter-Day Heegbrews (<<http://www.biafraland.com/Ibo%20Landings.htm>>, <<http://authors.aalbc.com/juliedashchattext.htm>>, <<http://biafranet.com/pressreleases/Ekwenche/2002sep30.html>>).

65. Genetic narcissism recurs in the National African Language Resource Center blurb, cited above, which declares that “because Igbo speakers have permeated the world’s societies in many different ways, they have also increased in population by childbirth and marriage” (<<http://african.lss.wisc.edu/nalrc/prog-serv/Map/Brochures/Igbo.pdf>>). It should be obvious to diasporan language teachers that ability to speak Ígbo is not an inherited condition.

66. At the 2003 African Studies Association meeting in Boston, Prof. Èmènyòñù graciously recanted his view “that Ígbo literature is for the most part written in English” (1978, 189)—a notion swiftly rejected by Èmènanjò (1982, 47f.). With respect to the present discussion,

however, Èmènyonù's original position has the merit of diagnosing a real ambivalence, on the part of Ìgbo-speaking authors, to the choice of any particular linguistic medium of expression, so long as their texts "remain essentially Ìgbo in idiom and content" (1978, 189).

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