

Perspectives on Black English

Contributions to the Sociology of Language

4

Editor

Joshua A. Fishman

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Perspectives on Black English

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J. Dillard

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Contents

<i>J. L. Dillard</i>	
General Introduction: Perspectives on Black English	9
BLACK ENGLISH DIALECTOLOGY: THEORY, METHOD	
Introduction	33
<i>Glenna Ruth Pickford</i>	
American Linguistic Geography: A Sociological Appraisal	37
<i>William A. Stewart</i>	
Observations (1966) on the Problems of Defining Negro Dialect	57
<i>Marvin D. Loflin</i>	
Black American English and Syntactic Dialectology	65
<i>Philip A. Luelsdorff</i>	
Dialectology in Generative Grammar	74
<i>Joan G. Fickett</i>	
<i>Ain't, Not, and Don't</i> in Black English	86
THE HISTORY OF BLACK ENGLISH	
Introduction	91
<i>The Religious Intelligencer</i> (1821), Excerpts	102
<i>P. Grade</i>	
Das Neger-Englisch an der Westküste von Afrika	109

<i>J. A. Harrison</i>	
Negro English	143
<i>L. W. Payne, Jr.</i>	
A Word-List from East Alabama	196
<i>Paul Christophersen</i>	
Some Special West African English Words	202
<i>Paul Christophersen</i>	
A Note on the Words <i>dash</i> and <i>ju-ju</i> in West African English	212
<i>C. M. Wise</i>	
Negro Dialect	216
<i>William A. Stewart</i>	
Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects	222
<i>William A. Stewart</i>	
Continuity and Change in American Negro Dialects	233
<i>Ian F. Hancock</i>	
Some Aspects of English in Liberia	248
Appendix: Liberian English of Cape Palmas (with Piayon E. Kobbah)	256
 BLACK ENGLISH AND THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS	
Introduction	273
<i>William R. Bascom</i>	
Acculturation Among the Gullah Negroes	280
<i>J. L. Dillard</i>	
The Writings of Herskovits and the Study of the Language of the Negro in the New World	288
<i>Kenneth R. Johnson</i>	
Black Kinesics — Some Non-Verbal Communication Patterns in the Black Culture	296
 BLACK ENGLISH AND PSYCHOLINGUISTICS	
Introduction	307
<i>William Labov, Clarence Robins, Paul Cohen, and John Lewis</i>	
Classroom Correction Tests	313

<i>Contents</i>	7
<i>Stuart Silverman</i>	
The Learning of Black English by Puerto Ricans in New York City	331
<i>Susan H. Houston</i>	
A Sociolinguistic Consideration of the Black English of Children in Northern Florida	358
<i>Wallace E. Lambert and G. Richard Tucker</i>	
White and Negro Listeners' Reactions to Various American- English Dialects	369
References for the Introductions	378
Index	388

J. L. DILLARD

GENERAL INTRODUCTION: PERSPECTIVES ON BLACK ENGLISH

Despite the controversial and even polemic nature of much of the publication on the subject, it is now generally recognized that there is a language variety called Black English (less frequently Negro Non-Standard English, or even Merican). This variety is spoken by the great majority of poor ("disadvantaged") Black citizens of the United States, the descendants of the plantation field hands, although not by many middle-class Negroes, descendants of house servants and freedmen. Recognition of the relationship of this variety to the pidgin and creole varieties of West Africa and of the Caribbean (including Surinam, Honduras, etc.) is also becoming general.

This variety is, in the terms of Stewart (1968), a vernacular: it has a large body (perhaps 18 to 20 million) of living speakers, its history is traceable (see Dillard 1972), and its rules are essentially autonomous (regarded only by the linguistically naive as "distortions" of other varieties of English). It has not undergone standardization — in the familiar sociolinguistic sense of codification and legitimization — although some first steps in this direction have been taken by those who are concerned with the plight of the Black child in the U.S. school system (Stewart 1964, 1965; Baratz and Shuy 1969).

The recent resurgence of interest in Black English can easily lead to the faulty impression that it has been recently discovered, or even that it has newly "sprung up". That this is far from true is easily shown by citing a work so supposedly well known as Leonard Bloomfield's *Language* (1933:474). In the same year, C. M. Wise's "Negro Dialect" appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (vol. 19, 522-28). Explicit statement in popular sources goes back at least as far as N. S. Dodge's

"Negro Patois and Its Humor" (*Appleton's Journal*, 1870, 160-61). The articles by Harrison (1884) and Payne (1903), included in this collection, indicate that there was never a complete lapse of observation. Less explicit statements, often merely quotations of Negro speakers of pidgin or creole English, can be found as early as the first years of the eighteenth century. Yet the topic, as a matter for serious study, can be said to have been brought to the attention of the scholarly community by Melville J. Herskovits (*The Myth of the Negro Past*, 1941). The term itself, *Black English*, seems to be first attested from 1734 (Cohen 1952).

At the present time, the date at which West African Pidgin English — based probably on a Maritime Pidgin English, which may derive from the Mediterranean *Lingua Franca* (Sabir)¹ tradition — came to the British

¹ This is the point of view of Hancock (1972). An earlier personal communication suggested "an earlier Panguinean (Manding?) pidgin underlying it". In many respects, especially in phonology and lexicon, this must be true. Something must explain the great West African language influence on the Atlantic English Creoles (Hancock's term [1969]). There remain, however, striking similarities to English varieties in the Pacific, like that of Pitcairn Island. I believe that it is impossible, even absurd, to explain away these similarities in ecological terms, as has frequently been done (e.g. by Cassidy 1971). If similarities between Atlantic (African-based or influenced) and Pacific pidgins can be explained away in terms of "linguistic universals" in a simplistic sense, then why cannot the similarities between the Atlantic varieties be so explained as well?

There remains the important consideration of the possible nautical English-based *Lingua Franca*, a kind of English-lexicon Sabir. (This would be what is called Maritime Pidgin English in Dillard 1972.) Unfortunately, there is not the kind of documentation for this nautical variety which can be found for French-, Portuguese-, and even Italian-based varieties. Matthews (1935) reports seventeenth century comments on the "notorious ... strangeness of their [sailors'] speech". Ned Ward, in *Wooden World Dissected* (1757), asserted the need of sailors ashore for an interpreter. Matthews expresses the traditional view when he interprets this as meaning that "this dialect probably consisted largely of seaterms which the sailors when ashore applied to land objects" (p. 193). Matthews's purely phonological analysis of the attestations could hardly show more. But, if there were syntactic differences at a deeper level than the nautical vocabulary, explanation of the genesis of the maritime variety would at least have a more nearly solid foundation.

More basically, my reason for preferring the Sabir hypothesis to a direct explanation from African language interference is the same as that which motivated this collection: a preference for the use of texts over internal reconstruction, whenever the former alternative is possible. A "panguinean" pidgin, however it came into being, can hardly be postulated except on the basis of reconstruction; there are travellers' reports (e.g. Barbot) of the presence of *Lingua Franca* in the slave trade, and seventeenth century suggestions of a British nautical variety.

It soon becomes perfectly clear, however, from any kind of approach, that the language contact situation — in West Africa, in the New World, and at sea between the two — was more complex than it has hitherto been acknowledged to be. Simple copying of the European languages by the "inferior" population is not an adequate explanation; neither is the theory of conscious simplification by the European speakers. The complex

colonies on the continent of North America must remain a conjecture. It can hardly have been earlier than 1619 — the date for the first slaves in the colonies. Nor can it have been later than 1692 — the date at which Justice Hathorne recorded the partly pidgin speech of Tituba at the Salem witch trials. Given the fact that West African pidginists are now placing the development of Pidgin English in that area at least as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century,² it seems likely that at least some African slaves using Pidgin English came to what is now the United States by the middle of that century. Attestations begin to be commonplace around 1710-1720, but the variety may well have been around for the greater part of a century before anyone bothered to write it down.

At any rate, academic studies lagged, in the Americas as in Africa. West African records of the use of Pidgin English go back at least as far as Atkins (1732), but Grade (1892 — reprinted here) is one of the earliest formal studies. Many American attestations were collected by Krapp (1925). Krapp, like the group which would soon found the *Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada*, hardly knew what to do with these indications of a dialect with social (ethnic) distribution patterns. Krapp decided to refer to the West African Pidgin English, and to its creolized successor, as a "literary dialect". He also chose to treat the well-attested and authenticated American Indian Pidgin English as a literary creation,³ although many of the sources which he cited for the English varieties of both the Black and the Indian are not fictional.⁴ Until very recently, dialectologists have apparently followed Krapp, uncritically and apparently without reconsidering the issue.

West African language situation may have given rise to solutions to contact problems which were more sophisticated than the Europeans gave the Blacks credit for being able to perform. The speculations about "groping for communicative methods", attractive as they are in a commonsense way, do not take into account the serious tradition of pidgin studies.

² On the dating of Pidgin English, see Hancock (1969), Dalby (1969), and Schneider (1967).

³ For a different attitude toward AIPE, see Leechman and Hall (1955), Miller (1967), and Dillard (1972: chapter IV).

⁴ As Krapp points out, sources as diverse as Madam Knight's *Journals* (1704-1705) and James Fenimore Cooper's *Redskins* (1846) contain references to and examples of what Krapp chose to label "Indian dialect" and "Negro dialect". Krapp consistently judges his sources as deficient because they indicate little difference between the two. The possibility that an essentially uniform pidgin variety was being reported apparently did not occur to Krapp; he apparently thought that the authors' sole purpose was to indicate racial characterization through the words given to the characters. It is easy to excuse Krapp because of the early date of his work, but Cooper had been perceptive enough to make the suggestion of a pidgin (calling it rather a *lingua franca*) nearly eighty years earlier. Krapp's objection (1925:266) that "if this *lingua franca* existed, of which Cooper speaks, certainly Cooper made little effort to use it" seems singularly obtuse. This very sentence comes at the end of a long series of citations of Cooper's

Because of the general preoccupation with finding regional — to the virtual exclusion of other — variation and with drawing isoglosses and finding isogloss bundles, the traces of Black English which were found even through the questionable methodology of the *Worksheets of the Linguistic Atlas* were treated in contradictory and illogical fashion. Atwood's *A Survey of the Verb Forms of the Eastern United States* (1953), for example, recorded four "characteristically Negro" expressions in a context of denying any difference between Negro and white speech patterns. The creolist Robert A. Hall, in *Pidgin and Creole Languages* (1966), pointed out, as had Bloomfield, that most American Negro dialects were the result of "decreolization" (merger of the creole with other, more nearly standard dialects), and that the existence of a creole presupposed the prior existence of a pidgin. But Hall asserted that there were no records of that pidgin. Thus, he apparently followed Krapp in assigning the abundant surviving records to the "literary dialect" scrap heap. Accordingly, Hall seems to offend against the principles of parsimony by postulating

use of Pidgin English for Negro and Indian characters. Strangely enough, it seems never to have occurred to Krapp that Cooper's "lingua franca" and his own "literary dialects" were the same thing.

Cooper's materials, although imbedded in fiction, were accompanied by a footnote comment in *Redskins* which was obviously intended to be factual. Although Cooper wrote of a time earlier than his own, he probably has as much claim to being a serious student of historical records — where Indians and Blacks are concerned, anyway — as Krapp or any of his colleagues. For non-fictional attestations of Black and Indian uses of Pidgin, Creole, and partly decreolized English which closely parallel what one finds in Cooper and other writers of fiction, one may easily cite many sources. Besides those referred to elsewhere, they would include

George Catlin, *Illustrations of the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians* (London, 1866, 2 vols.).

A. D. Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi* (1865).

James F. Rusling, *Across America: or, the Great West and the Pacific Coast* (New York, 1875).

Alex. Mackay, *The Western World* (London, 1850).

The Reverend Josiah Pratt, *The Life of David Brainerd* (London 1856) [based on Brainerd's journal of the early eighteenth century].

Lawrence Foster, *Negro-Indian Relationship in the Southwest*, University of Pennsylvania dissertation in Anthropology (1935).

Elisha K. Kane, "The Negro Dialects Along the Savannah River", *Dialect Notes* V, 1925.

and many others. Necessarily incomplete citations of the very many available sources may be found in Stewart (1967, 1968 — reprinted in this collection) and Dillard (1972).

In order to continue to regard either Black English or American Indian Pidgin English as a "literary dialect", one must apparently assume that writers like the missionary Brainerd and the New York Supreme Court member Daniel Horsmanden (*The New York Conspiracy*, 1744) deliberately chose to pass off these "literary dialects" as reported speech.

- (1) A pidgin, for which there are no records.
- (2) Records, for which there was no pidgin.

Dialect geographers, in keeping with their preconception (almost, at times, an obsession) that the dialects of American English must be basically regional in distribution, continued to assert that Black dialects were — or, at least, had been in earlier times — identical with those of Southern whites. Since any specifically Black forms must represent “archaisms”, the pidgin-creole tradition was felt to be unnecessary as an explanation of Black dialects in the United States. But the dialect geographers further asserted that these differences were solely a matter of a few relics, hardly enough to constitute a true dialect difference. The historical records did not, of course, bear them out. Neither did the evidence of listener perception tests (Baratz 1969, Lambert and Tucker 1969). The desire to submerge Black dialects in Southern regional dialects led to the identification of American Blacks as an exclusively Southern group. In some extreme cases, this preconception led to the absurd statement that no Negroes had been in the Northern states (not to mention colonies!) before World War I.⁶

It is hardly necessary to enter into detailed refutation of a glaring demographic error. Although the great concentration of Black slaves in the Southern colonies and states is historically commonplace, the very early presence of smaller numbers of slaves in the North is almost equally commonplace. Greene (1942) and Ottley and Weatherby (1967) show the continuous presence of Blacks in New England and New York since at least as early as 1635. Winks (1971) shows a continuous history of Negroes in that area, especially in Nova Scotia, since 1628.

Nor do the records show a major linguistic break between North and South, at least in the early period. Winks quotes an occasional scrap of Pidgin English like

No Work, No Yam. (p. 84).

from the Halifax Blacks. Dillard (1973) traces the records of Pidgin/Creole in the Halifax area from about 1790 to the present.⁶ Justice Daniel P. Hors-

⁶ The statement is “... all Black people in the North have a common origin — and an origin less than two generations old”. (Davis 1971: 50). Davis’s context makes it clear that he means by “common origin” the Southern states — not Africa, invasion from some remote planet, change of color within the last two generations, or any other of a conceivably infinite number of equally implausible alternatives. Against this kind of fantasy we can cite historical statements like the following: “New York, at the end of the seventeenth century, had a larger percentage of Negroes in its population than did Virginia” (Alexander C. Flick, ed., *History of the State of New York* [New York, 1933], p. 407).

⁶ The Pidgin English quotation from Winks is attributed to the Maroons, as is the following:

manden's *The New York Conspiracy ... 1741-42* reports of Jack, one of the ringleaders in the alleged conspiracy:

his dialect was so perfectly negro and unintelligible, it was thought it would be impossible to make anything of him without the help of an interpreter. (p. 127).

Horsmanden gives one major example of Jack's speech:

His master live in tall house Broadway. Ben ride de fat horse. (p. 128).

The author also uses individual lexical items like *backarara*, a variant used by Benjamin Franklin among others, for *buckra* or *bakra* 'white man'. It is a considerable assumption that all of these reflect simply literary imagination, particularly since the records quoted are not from writers of fiction. Dillard (1971) traces some of the subsequent evidence for the continuity of the language variety in the New York area.

Among the many ignored topics on the New World language picture is the English of the group of about two hundred American Negro freedmen who migrated to Santo Domingo in 1824, according to Work (1940). Now in the Samaná area, this group is reported by Hoetink (1962) to be

"Top lilly bit; you say me must forsake my wife. Only one of them. Which that one? Jesus Christ say so? No, no, massa, Gar A'mighty good; he tell somebody he must forsake him wife and children. Somebody no wicked for forsake him wife? No, massa, dis here talk no do for me." (Campbell 1873:207).

This may well be a traditional text. R. C. Dallas, *History of the Maroons*, quotes a somewhat different version. But the following was attributed (by Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 1962) to a period before the coming of the Maroons to Nova Scotia: "Massa Governor no mind King, he no mind You." (Add. MS41262B, fol. 9, British Museum).

Among the group (not necessarily all Maroons) whom John Clarkson recruited for the trip from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone in 1791 was one who "came originally from the coast of Africa and spoke English indifferently" (Clarkson, MS diary, Howard University collection). From the attestation quoted, this "indifferent" English is clearly Pidgin: "No, massa, me no hear nor no mind. Me work like slave can not do worse Massa in any part of the world, therefore am determined to go with you Massa, if you please."

Many attestations of a creole or decreolized variety are available from nineteenth century Nova Scotian texts (see Dillard, 1973). Greaves (1930), who believes that language could not possibly have any part in the educational difficulties of Nova Scotian Blacks, cites the "old Negro proverb": "When buckra tief, he tief plantation; when nigger tief, he tief piece of cane." (p. 71).

There remains a (largely unstudied) Black English dialect spoken in the Halifax area, especially by the New Roaders of the North Preston area. I am indebted to Norman Whitten (personal communication) for most of my information on this population, and to John Hogan for the initial suggestion that Black English varieties might be found in Nova Scotia. A popular article, Edna Staebler's "Would You Change the Lives of These People?" (*McLean's Magazine*, May 12, 1956), gives enough examples of the speech of the New Roaders to make it relatively certain that it is a (partly) decreolized variety. The article is, however, anthropologically insensitive and naive even to the point of racism.

divided into two parts, one of which speaks "better" English ("somewhat archaic perhaps and with an elaborate use of biblical parables", p. 20) than "that of the isolated farming people in the surrounding area". Hoetink quotes a boy from the latter group:

They said white man never speak English.

While it would obviously be impossible to draw any conclusions from so brief an utterance, the grammar (uninflected verb) of that utterance is at least consistent with what we know of Black English elsewhere.

Considerable work remains to be done on this population, and field-work is in its beginning stages. Work (1940:17) specifies that "the colony voluntarily remained isolated from the surrounding islanders and thus preserved its dialect". Hoetink's studies show how resistance to the local culture of the Dominican Republic and to Spanish have characterized the more prestigious descendants of the original immigrants. Tentative field studies tend to show, however, that the less prestigious members of the community today, who might be expected to have preserved the Plantation Creole of the field slaves, have acquired not only a great deal of Spanish but an appreciable amount of Haitian Creole. Admittedly inadequate field recordings suggest that, in intonation at least, the Samaná dialect is closer to West Indian English than anything now spoken in the United States.

Much is suggested from a broader context of study of the English of Black populations that is not apparent from geographically restricted investigations. Additional insights may be provided by looking away from English, to the language varieties spoken by Blacks but associated lexically with other European languages.

BLACK SPANISH

There have been many suggestions in recent years that certain dialects of Caribbean or South American Spanish belong in the Creole tradition. Max Leopold Wagner, in *Lingue e Dialetti dell' America Spagnola* (1949), made that suggestion, although it met with a very poor reception from Spanish dialectologists. Papiamentu has usually been the central issue in this debate; but Hispanists have often chosen to isolate Papiamentu, just as American dialectologists have traditionally isolated Gullah. Creolists have often dealt with Papiamentu while ignoring or avoiding the issue of whether it stands in any close relationship to other American varieties, especially of Spanish.⁷ The issue might, however, well arise, because of

⁷ There are early sources like P. Alonso de Sandoval, S. J., *De Instauranda Aethiopia Salutis* (1627):

the great amount of African vocabulary which survives in certain dialects of Caribbean Spanish (Álvarez Nazario 1961). Cabrera (all references) and other folklore collectors provide texts of apparently recognizable West African languages in Cuba, along with "non-standard" Spanish which has suspiciously Creole features. For bibliography on the subject, see De Granda (1968a).

The most striking evidence for this theory has recently come to light in the works of De Granda, Escalante, and Bickerton. As the last two point out, in El Palenque de San Basilio, Colombia, there are some two or three thousand speakers of a clearly Creole-related language variety — most of them also users of a certain amount of Colombian Spanish. Apparently, they and their ancestors have lived there and spoken earlier versions of the same dialect for three or four centuries (Bickerton and Escalante 1970). Since there are striking resemblances to Papiamentu and to Portuguese Creole, and since direct contact has clearly not been their source, it seems unavoidable that they go back to some contact-variety source.

Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo have been almost completely ignored so far. Puerto Rican language policy has been overwhelmingly concerned with the acquisition — or, in the case of some *independentistas*, avoidance — of English and with the attendant problems of bilingualism. A little attention has been paid to the interesting hybrid sometimes called Spanglish (M. E. Jones 1962, Dillard 1969b); and there has been bitter, politically-oriented debate over the issue. But all too little attention has been given to the historical implications of the speech of Blacks, especially in past centuries. There are strong indications in the speech of José, the *Negro bozal* in *La Juega de Gallos o el Negro Bozal* (excerpted in Álvarez Nazario 1961), that creole-like features were present in the speech of Puerto Rican Blacks as late as the mid-nineteenth century. (This is quite

"Y los que llamamos criollos y naturales de San Thomé, con la comunicación que con tan bárbaras y recónditas naciones han tenido el tiempo que han residido en San Thomé, las entienden casi todas con un género de lenguaje muy corrupto y revesado de la portuguesa, que llaman lengua de San Thomé, al modo que ahora nosotros entendemos y hablamos con todo género de negros y naciones con nuestra lengua española corrupta como comúnmente la hablan todos los negros" (Spanish translation, translator unidentified, Bogota, 1956, p. 94).

This is seemingly closely matched by Father A. Schabel's statement (1704): "De Negerslaven van Curaçao spreken gebroken Spaans." Antoine J. Maduro, who quotes this passage (*Papiamentu, Origen i Formacion*, Corsou, 1965), is highly skeptical of the accuracy of Schabel's statement. Maduro seems, however, to be unaware of Sandoval's very similar statement and perhaps even of the implications of both texts for general creole language history. An artificial handicap which Maduro, like other investigators, imposes upon himself is to limit his historical investigation to the Papiamentu-speaking islands and not to look at other areas where Portuguese or "Spanish" was used in the slave trade.

apart from the presence of Papiamentu-speaking immigrants.) The features of José's dialect in that drama are rather unlike Palenquero, but they are very similar to some features of Papiamentu. Vestiges of the creole are especially prominent today in the Loiza Aldea-Guayama area, but the conventional arguments about the provenience of features (e.g. /l/ for /r/ in final or pre-consonantal position) continue.

In this context, it seems increasingly important that pockets of Black speakers of non-standard Spanish keep turning up in scattered isolated areas in both North and South America. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán (1958) provides evidence of the same *l* for *r* in Mexico. He also shows etymological *s* becoming *j* and has even more interesting replacements of *d* by *l* (*Lalo*, diminutive of *Eduardo*, p. 213). Aguirre Beltrán quite conventionally traces these factors to the Spanish of the sixteenth century, but there are reasons to suspect that pat answer with its ubiquitous application.

The same problems are encountered in the study of the Spanish of Blacks in coastal South America. The most prominent specialist in Ecuadorean Spanish, Toscano Mateus (1953:36), writes

Buena parte de los caracteres del habla costeño (por ejemplo, el relajamiento de la *l* y la *r*) se encuentran también en Andalucía, pero no son menos peculiares del español hablado por los negros.

Andalucía, for Spanish dialect geographers, serves about the same function as Scotland and Ireland for their American English counterparts: largely unstudied, it can be claimed as a source for any New World dialect form which would otherwise prove embarrassing to the Eurocentric theory. But Toscano Mateus is guilty of no such simple appeal to the unknown; he makes specific comparison to coastal forms which are "de origen español y náutico" (p. 36), in what may be a striking parallel to what English Creolists are finding out about the historical importance of Maritime Pidgin English. In fact, he quite specifically attributes a language-contact cause to Ecuadorean dialect variation:

Pero los Andes ya la presencia del indio quichua en la Sierra y del negro en la Costa han diferenciado bastante el habla de las regiones occidental e interandina. (p. 36)

Obviously, studies have not gone very far when our only information about large areas and populations must consist of such impressionistic and anecdotal material. But it has now come to be realized that, wherever there are large pockets of descendants of West African slaves, the effects of the language contact factors of slavery may still be observable. A still more controversial issue may be the possible influence of the language of those descendants of slaves upon the American Indian- and even Spanish-descended population of South America. A great deal of Hispanic blood will boil at the very suggestion.

Nevertheless, there is now reason to doubt that New World Spanish dialectology can still be framed, historically, in terms of migration of European "regional" dialect features to the New World. Catalán (1958) makes the outright suggestion of a *koiné*, and there is abundant reason to believe that the leveling of "regional" features of the European languages was the rule rather than the exception. Historically, at least, Spanish dialectology may be in for as much of a revision as English dialectology where the New World dialects are concerned. And a strong case for a change in synchronic procedures is made in Resnick (1968).

BLACK FRENCH

So far, there seems to be no reason to claim such widespread influence of Creole on New World French dialects as upon English and Spanish; but, then, New World French itself is by no means so widespread a phenomenon as New World English or Spanish. Interesting Canadian varieties, like Zoual, are strikingly un-Creole in structure and history. French Creole is known, however, in Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Marie Galante, Dominica, St. Lucia, French Guyana, and Louisiana. There are, in addition, such relatively well-studied varieties as Cajun, of Louisiana, and such not-so-well studied non-Creole varieties as the French of Frenchtown, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas (Virgin Islands) and that of St. Barth's.

It is, however, also known that Creole has influenced the French of the Caribbean and of Louisiana. Pompilus (1961) has studied Creole influence on the Standard French of Haiti, and Stewart (1962b) has shown the switching phenomena which provide a sociolinguistic background for that influence. In *Conjonction*, vol. 116 (1971), Pompilus and Gaillard ("Debat sur le Destin du Français en Haiti") discuss such matters. Pompilus maintains something of an enlightened purism (insisting, for example, that typical Haitian Creole loss of post-vocalic /r/ in *froid* may damage communication by producing homophony with *foie*), whereas Gaillard constantly maintains the complete autonomy of the Haitian varieties and lack of danger of "loss of communication". But even Pompilus does not deny the influence of Creole upon Haitian French.

In Louisiana, where French Creole (Gombo) coexists with Cajun and a relatively standard variety, intermediate varieties are not unknown. Morgan (1959, 1960) has studied decreolization in St. Martin Creole. Cajun and Creole interact enough so that folklore collectors can confuse the two.

In Louisiana and in Southeast Texas, where French Creole speakers can be found, the terminology gets confused. French- and creole-speaking

informants whom I studied in Beaumont, Texas, gave me, when asked for "Creole", the most standard French of which they were capable. Asking for *mo couri, mo vini* (literally, 'I run/ran, I come/came') was the quickest way to get what the linguist calls Creole. And in Port Arthur, Texas, where the average white citizen is blatantly racist, asking a person if he is Cajun can motivate the furious answer, "Can't you see that I'm white?"

The early spread of Pidgin and Creole French, even in the United States, has not been investigated. The assumption has been that it was always limited to the Louisiana area. But Edward Larocque Tinker ("Gombo Comes to Philadelphia", *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings* 67, 1957, 50-76) provides what may be some counterevidence. *Idylles et Chansons, ou Essais de Poésie Créole, par un Habitant d'Hayti* was printed in Philadelphia in 1811. As Tinker points out

Long before gombo was printed in Louisiana, it had already appeared in type in Philadelphia ...

BLACK DUTCH

Perhaps least well known among the creoles, Dutch Creole (Negerhollands) has the most obscure history. Hancock (1969) has speculated that it is based upon Pidgin English, through supra-lexification; and there is evidence that he is correct. Hesseling (1905) quotes sentences like

Cabay ka saddel kaba, 'The horse has just been saddled'

wherein the subject and the 'function word' marker of recently completed action are obviously Romance — if not indisputably Portuguese. Crucial to this argument is, obviously, the thesis that Pidgin English is a relexification of the Portuguese Trade Pidgin (Stewart 1962a, Whinnom 1965).

The Virgin Islands Dutch Creole is reasonably well attested and described (Hesseling 1905, Josselin de Jong 1924). The so-called Danish Creole was — or is, perhaps, for a few surviving speakers — most likely Negerhollands with a few Danish lexical loans. Most treatments assume that the Dutch Creole was strictly confined to the Virgin Islands.

In "The Jersey Dutch Dialect" (1910), however, Prince clearly pointed out that members of the Dutch-speaking community in the New York-New Jersey area could distinguish Black speakers from white and could specify features of the Black dialect. The few sentences provided, from one aged Black informant, like

äk kân nît fässe xjesterdâx, 'I could not (lit. can not) fish yesterday' (p.468),

are at least consistent with what are generally accepted to be common creole structures. Prince reports that his informant "knew no past forms at all". This is, of course, often reported by investigators who examine a creole superficially while concentrating (as was Prince) upon a different variety of the 'same' language. Prince also points out that his other informants characterized many of the same informant's usages as *nêxer dâuts*, and Prince believed that this evidence showed that "the negro slaves of the old settlers used an idiom tinged with their own peculiarities" (p. 460). Vanderbilt (1881) and Loon (1938) provide evidence, even somewhat less professionally linguistic, to the same effect.

It appears, thus, quite likely that Dutch Creole — whether or not originally on a Pidgin English base — was a vehicle of contact between Dutchmen and their Negro slaves, both in the Virgin Islands and in the New York-New Jersey area. The Pidgin-Creole tradition thus seems to have played an important part in the verbal repertoire of African-derived slaves everywhere in the New World. Insofar as the slaves had influence on the children of the master caste, their language varieties must have influenced other language varieties of the New World. So far, that influence has not been taken into account in the language history of the Americas.

Dutch Creole is the least likely of all the creoles to be significantly represented in surviving Black dialects within the continental United States. But its historical role is not necessarily so insignificant. Many of those cute Dutch words so characteristic of the Hudson valley area may have had transmission at least partly by Blacks, speakers of *Negerhollands*. Even *yankee* may be from Dutch — it has often been traced to *Jan Kees*. Early reports, like that of James Fenimore Cooper (*Redskins*, 1846) which called *yankee* part of a frontier *lingua franca* (see footnote 4 for discussion), associated it with American Indian Pidgin English. AIPE, in turn, seems to have been transmitted to the Indians by Black slaves (Dillard 1972: chapter IV).

In a part of the North, including the New York-New Jersey area and a part of Pennsylvania, AIPE and/or the frontier *lingua franca* shared a language of wider communication relationship and mutual influence with a variety of either German or Dutch. Beadle (*Western Wilds and the Men Who Redeem Them*, 1878) linked Black English, Pennsylvania "Dutch", and Pidgin English in a "Hoosier" contact language which extended as far as Indiana. Whether the New York-New Jersey Dutch, including *nêxer dâuts*, was completely separate from Pennsylvania German has not really been investigated. If the reports of observers like Beadle can be substantiated, the pundits of dialect geography will have to reckon with more contact language influence and with more Black influence in the United States than they have wanted.

BLACK PORTUGUESE

To some extent, the failure to treat Black Portuguese directly is a function of the lack of experience of the writer. The weak excuse can be offered that, except for a small colony on Cape Cod, there is little direct evidence of the use of a contact variety of Portuguese within the continental United States, upon which this collection focuses. In the broader sense, according to one still-controversial theory (Voorhoeve 1973) all creoles — and, therefore, all the “Black” varieties under discussion — figure in the Portuguese Trade Pidgin and Portuguese Creole tradition (see the two articles by Christophersen, pp. 202-215). As indicated above, some of these (Palenquero, Papiamentu) are now considered to be varieties of Spanish. Portuguese Creole is spoken in Cape Verde (with the above-mentioned small colony in Cape Cod), Senegal, São Thomé, and Annabon. The “non-Black” varieties are of course omitted (see Hancock 1971). There is considerable evidence concerning what is probably a Creole or a decreolized variety in Brazil (Raimundo 1933, Neto 1950); but, for special reasons, it is beyond the scope of this book. The general study of the spread of the contact variety of Portuguese around the world has been given a firm foundation by David Lopes (*A Extensão do Português na Oriente*, Lisbon, 1936), but there has been little following up of this excellent beginning. Lopes does not identify his many attestations as pidgin and creole Portuguese, but they are obviously that.

THE “BLACK” LANGUAGE VARIETIES AND NEW WORLD DIALECTOLOGY

The use of pidgin varieties, with rather frequent creolization, has played a much greater part in the development of New World varieties of European languages than has been admitted in conventional dialectology.⁸ Much that has been conveniently lumped under “archaism” must now be reconsidered. It is, in fact, doubtful that anything in the “Black” varieties is meaningfully to be called a survival of archaic dialects.

If the Black dialects go, will the “white” varieties remain long behind

⁸ See Dillard (1972: chapter IV; also “Language Contact in the American West”, *Revista Interamericana*, 1972). Survivals of the contact languages tend to show up unexpectedly in special vocabularies, such as that of Northwestern loggers. McCulloch, *Woods Words, A Comprehensive Dictionary of Loggers' Terms* (1958), shows many terms from “Indian”, which must mean Chinook Jargon. But he also includes *cumshaw*, which was widespread in the Pacific and which has been traced to a Chinese source. Although much work remains to be done, it is now clear that the contact languages (including Chinook Jargon and Pidgin English) were much more widespread and influential than is generally believed, even among professional historians of language.

for European archaism? Although more privileged migrants than the Blacks and the Indians, the whites were migrants (as well as immigrants) in the Americas. Fairly elaborate studies have been made of the European IMMIGRANT populations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But the consequences of the MIGRANT status which the Europeans shared even with the aboriginal Indians (who WERE set to migrating) have not really been examined.

There seem to be special language varieties normally associated with migration, especially when there is a great deal of mixing of populations. If pidgins are normal in multilingual migrant situations, *koinés* are equally normal in multidialectal situations (Nida and Fehdureau 1970). A *koiné* for Spanish immigrants to the New World has been suggested by De Granda (1968b). There is a great deal of reason to believe that the "good" English and "English of astonishing classical purity" reported of the Americans by travellers (some of whom are cited in Reed 1933) indeed represented a *koiné*.⁹ The same process has been reported for Australia (Bernard 1969), although of course the American and Australian *koinés* could not have been identical.

How can American English non-standard dialects (and perhaps those of American Spanish, etc.) be explained if not in terms of transmission of European "regional" dialects? Since Kurath (1928), workers on American English dialects have by and large assumed that all forms can be traced back to some part of the British Isles. This means, however, that some dialects (especially Black English) are, in the traditional formulation, strange amalgams. The very ingenuity of the system by which Form F_1 of Dialect D_1 can be traced to Yorkshire, Form F_2 of the same dialect to Scotland, and Form F_3 of that dialect to Ireland is in the end self-defeating.

Let us consider, however, the not especially innovative procedure of taking into account, for language history, first of all the reports of those who were on hand. If, as they report, the American colonists spoke English "of great classical purity", it seems unlikely that that English was formed from promiscuous mixing of forms from British "regional" dialects. This seems especially unlikely, since the early colonists formed their unions in terms of religious or political beliefs, rather than in terms of regional allegiance.

If we are to believe other reports — and, again, there is hardly any

⁹ A few more such statements are cited in Read (1935). A typical statement is that of the Reverend Jonathan Boucher in a letter to the Reverend Mr. James Paddington, 23 December 1777: "It is still more extraordinary that, in North America, there prevails not only, I believe, the purest pronunciation of the English tongue that is anywhere to be met with, but a perfect Uniformity." ("Letters of Rev. Jonathan Boucher", *Maryland Historical Magazine* X, 1916:30).

other way of knowing what went on — the frontier was a special locus of “bad” English. We have statements like that of (later General) Ethan Allen Hitchcock, *A Traveller in Indian Territory*, recounting his experiences in the mid-nineteenth century, about the “prominent defects among our border people, West and South” in language. Now, the pidgin contact varieties were prominent in just those border areas; Hitchcock cites a great deal of American Pidgin English and tells of his Black Seminole interpreter Sambo. In “Our Provincialisms” (*Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, March 1869, pp.318-19) we find an impressionistic statement about the relationship between border English and AIPE:

“Heap,” much used in the West for “a great many,” or “very much,” has naturally passed to the Indian tribes beyond the border. “He is a big man — heap big,” says the Indian.

Since *heap* as a general intensifier belongs originally to the pidgin (*hipi* is still in English Creole usage in Surinam), the opposite historical relationship was probably true: western white English probably got it from the Indian.

Blacks were a large part of the border population in both South and West, bringing words like *buckaroo* into the cowboy language (Mason 1960). Pidgin and Creole languages have almost always been regarded by popular observers, like Hitchcock and the *Lippincott’s* writer, as “bad” versions of European languages; every stage of Black English has been stigmatized as “bad” English by non-professional observers. Mixing of the pidgin and creole varieties with the “good” (here interpreted as *koiné*) English of the colonists may have been the greatest single factor in the development of American English non-standard dialects. Like the anonymous *Lippincott’s* author, Eurocentric observers have always been disposed to see influence FROM the mainstream varieties TO the contact variety rather than VICE VERSA.

Outside of English, hardly any of the requisite research seems to have been done; but it may be that equivalent reports of “good” colonial usage can be found for other European languages in the New World, especially Spanish. See Toscano Mateus (1953) for a statement at least consistent with such an interpretation.

If these broad generalizations are substantially accurate (and there is reason to believe that they may be), then the received opinion about the history of New World dialects will need to be altered greatly. It may be necessary to deal in the social dynamics of migration, in mutual influences between the *koinés*, the pidgin/creole and other contact varieties, and the languages spoken by the aboriginal populations of the New World. Instead of expecting to find reflection of white settlement history, we may rather need to look for the cultural ties which survived into — and,

especially, were forged in — the Americas. Except in the works of Herskovits and his followers, such ties, particularly as they involved African slaves, have been completely ignored. The fact that West Africans were thrown into *ad hoc* communities with members of other tribes who had been traditionally either strangers or enemies means that the studies of ties and survivals are especially difficult where that population is concerned. But difficulty is not impossibility, nor does it excuse the serious student from the effort involved.

Influence of Black language varieties on those of the European-derived population has been sporadically discussed (Dalby 1972, Dillard 1972: chapter V). Liberation of the Black dialects from Eurocentrism may be the first step in the eventual reevaluation of the white varieties. It may be possible to know the white speech communities of the New World better through the insights which we gain from studying the Black communities.

But the influence from the maritime pidgin tradition is not identical, by any means, to African influence. Tristan da Cunha is fairly safely outside the West African orbit, and Zettersten (1969) felt safe in judging its dialect "archaic". But as LePage's review (1971) points out, neither British archaic survivals nor "island universals" (Zettersten's term) explains away the many features held in common not only with St. Helena but also with Guyana and British Honduras. LePage admits that he has "attempted the same task for Jamaican Creole myself, and committed many of the same sins". What one learns from Afro-American situations may well apply elsewhere.

European dialectology itself may not be entirely unaffected. The Sabir/Portuguese Trade Pidgin tradition which was so important in West Africa could not have failed to influence the Mediterranean. Bloomfield (1933: 330-31) quotes Kloeke (1927) on the influence of the Hanseatic League, strong enough to effect a major break in the German isoglosses based on settlement patterns. This maritime activity could be expected, *a priori*, to develop a trade language, somewhat like Sabir, for the North Sea. Barbot wrote of "Low Dutch" among the languages (including *Lingua Franca*) which one should learn before going to Africa and the Caribbean. Was that Low Dutch in some way related to the trade language of the Hanseatic League? Recent research has suggested that Negerhollands may have been based on Pidgin English (Hancock 1969 and discussion above). A Hanseatic-North Sea variety might, however, force some complication — even sophistication — in that evaluation. There are older, almost forgotten but still accessible studies like Baumann (1877) tracing the influence of the maritime trade language on dialects like Cockney.

Did the Mediterranean *Lingua Franca* itself come to the New World? There are tantalizing bits of evidence like

Nickaleer, no comerradoe Englishmen were not his friends

in Jonathan Dickinson's *Journal* of 1696-97 (p. 51), an account of his suffering among the Florida Indians on a disastrous trip from Port Royal, Jamaica, to Philadelphia with a load of slaves. This (except of course for *Nickaleer*) seems obviously Romance, but hardly Spanish. So does "totus (or all) *Nickaleer*" (p. 32), the words of the "Cassecky" (obviously *cacique*). Dickinson specifically relates how his success in communicating with the Indians was in direct relationship to their knowledge of Spanish. It may well be, however, that Spanish was simply the superposed variety in terms of which the contact variety ("bad Spanish") was evaluated.¹⁰

Survivals of African languages have been sternly minimized in our language histories since the beginning of the study of New World language. In a sense, African language influence would be a stronger threat to the formulation of migrating "regional" dialects than even the Sabir-Pidgin-Creole theory. Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (1949) made it perfectly clear, however, that Africanisms could not be completely excluded, even from the continental United States. Dalby (1972) shows how such influence spread far beyond the Sea Islands.

Considering the unfavorable conditions under which the African languages had to exist in the New World, the aggregate evidence of the survivals is very great. Cabrera (all references) shows survivals of African language forms in ritual texts — not always intelligible, even to the reciter — in Cuba, and there are some hints of the same kind of usage in the *santería* ceremonies of Puerto Rico. Turner (1949:256-59) shows Mende and Vai recitations in the Sea Islands, however fragmentary their nature. More African survivals keep turning up. Maureen Warner ("Trinidad Yoruba — Notes on Survival", *Caribbean Quarterly*, 1971) cites considerable use of Yoruba on Trinidad, even at the present time. She considers (and this is most probable) that dialect mixing and leveling took place in the Yoruba of the New World. Yoruba survivals have also been reported in Brazil (Pierson 1967). It seems probable that the Yoruba

¹⁰ For further evidence of a contact variety (probably pidgin or creole) popularly, in its day, associated with Spanish, one might consider such American Southwesternisms as *lariat* (Spanish *la reata*) and *alligator* (*el lagarto*). Although these etymologies have long been known, there has apparently been no explanation of the process whereby the Spanish article became part of the noun stem (*the lariat*, *the alligator* being non-tautological in English). The same process is well known, however, to be involved in the relationship between creole languages and etymons derived from European source languages (Papiamentu *lareina* 'queen', not 'the queen'; Haitian Creole *lakay* 'house', not 'the house'). The same process produced the Louisiana term *lagniappe*, ultimately from Quechua *yapa* and the Romance article; again, *the lagniappe* is perfectly normal English. In the case of *lagniappe*, creole origin is perfectly clear (see entry in *Dictionary of Americanisms*).

varieties (and perhaps the Twi underlying the survivals in Jamaica reported by Cassidy 1961) represented non-native use of a coastal language by slaves brought in from the interior or from smaller coastal tribes.

The influence of the forces that work on languages in migration are everywhere in evidence in the New World — even in those relatively limited West African varieties which survive. Tracing back to a specific 'regional' dialect is — as Warner found — almost always impossible. The harsh but seemingly inevitable measure would be the elimination of the European-area-to-New-World procedures dear to the philological and reconstructive traditions. A few sputtering beginnings at the study of migration phenomena have been made in the past; the immediate future seems the ideal time to take those studies to the level of real accomplishment.

The decisions that the Blacks were imitators of European immigrants and that the Europeans themselves brought 'regional' varieties to the New World were made in dialectology before any appreciable part of the Black evidence was in. From these hastily formulated theories, it was deduced that investigation of Black populations would turn up no evidence contrary to the Eurocentric picture. Studies of Black language varieties were, therefore, not undertaken, except as Eurocentric or "white-washing" operations (Brooks 1935; Williamson 1961, 1968). The creolists constituted the only exceptions to this rule; and their studies, for the most part, were safely distant, out in the islands.

But the application of the creolist techniques to the continental dialect picture brings about a strong contradiction of the conjectures made by the Eurocentrists. The most cautious statement which could be made at the present time would at least acknowledge that, if varieties like Palenquero and Cuijla keep turning up, a very different overview will be necessary. In North, South, and Central America, not to mention the Caribbean islands, there are still very many unexplored Black population groups.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF BLACK SURVIVALS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEW WORLD

It is not necessary to dwell on the more abstruse areas of sociolinguistics and of sociology in order to point out the errors which characterized the pitifully little and absurdly restricted study which had been devoted to the English of the Negro in the United States (always excepting Turner's Gullah studies) before the mid-1960's. Pickford (1956) (the first selection reprinted here) deals with some of the relatively technical deficiencies of American dialect geography, which, until recently, dominated American dialect studies. But simple blunders — like Davis's assertion, cited above,

that all Northern Blacks are in that geographic area because of migration from the South in the past two generations — abound.

Perhaps the most basic misorientation of all has been due to the idealism which substituted for research and for the attitudes basic to research. Krapp's "The English of the Negro" (1924) congratulated (!) the Black on having attained exactly the same dialects as the white. There is, of course, considerable question as to whether the Blacks should feel flattered. But Krapp was basically guided not by a desire to be ingratiating to Blacks nor by the results of any research but by a simple-minded assimilationism which assumed that the melting pot MUST have been effective. At that, Krapp was not the worst of the students of the English of the Negro; his historical studies, collecting attestations of what he would continue to call "literary dialect", had made him suspect that it had not always been so. More naive students simply assumed, in the absence of any evidence except the somewhat ambiguous advertisements for escaped slaves, that the West African slaves had acquired an exact copy of the speech of their masters without a trace of the interference or contact language phenomena which are found in other such occasions of language shift and which are abundantly attested in the records, fictional and non-fictional.

The source of this attitude is Kurath (1928 and 1936, repeated in 1965) who imported the notions of internal reconstruction and of basically geographic distribution to the United States at about the time of the founding of the *Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada*. Although he can be partly excused on the grounds that studies like Dollard (1937) and Berreman (1961) were not available when his first articles were published, Kurath (1936) presents what is surely one of the most naive suppositions ever made in any professional statement:

Since folk speech and cultivated speech are very close together in recently settled and democratically organized America and since there is a constant give and take between the ill-defined class dialects ... (p. 19).

There seems, however, to be reason to believe that the *Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada* acted from the first in accordance with Kurath's belief in "democratically organized America" and that it assumed that the "constant give and take" of social equals took place between Black and white from the eighteenth century to the present.

To point up the flaw in this reasoning, it is hardly necessary to cite more than the most commonplace facts about American racial history. "Democratically organized America" was the locus — primarily, but by no means exclusively, in the South — of a Black/white caste division in many ways as clearly demarcated as those of India. Since Gumperz (1958) has shown how caste factors can sustain dialect differences, even

in conditions of great density of communication, there seems to remain no theoretical objection to the possibility of cultural and linguistic differences between ethnic groups in the United States. Historians of jazz and the blues (LeRoi Jones, Marshall Stearns, Frederick Ramsey, Harold Courlander, Paul Oliver, and many others), folklorists (Roger Abrahams, Alan Lomax, Arthur Huff Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston, and many others including the great Melville J. Herskovits), and historians of the dance (Stearns 1968) have shown how Black cultural differences in many areas have remained until the present time. Language studies have lagged dreadfully.

The sociopolitical reasons for such a lag have been given exemplary description in Stewart's "Sociopolitical Issues in the Linguistic Treatment of Negro Dialect" (1970). There is probably no need to recapitulate them here. The one unanswered question seems to be why such inhibitions have been more repressive in the area of language than in other areas like folklore and music. It may be impossible to answer such a question without making embarrassing statements about the relative talents of the researchers in the respective fields.

But many sociological, historical, and sociolinguistic questions remain to be asked. There is, always, the question of the relationship of Blacks to other disadvantaged immigrant groups in the Americas like the Chinese — or about the relationship of both to the Indians.¹¹ Pidgin languages, and such common social factors as enslavement, were shared, in the early days, by Black and Indian. The Chinese who came later used Pidgin English, and the status of the poorest of them was little better than slave labor. Intermarriage (including the broader, common law sense of that term) was also more commonplace between these 'colored' populations than between them and the whites. Use of Pidgin or Creole English between Blacks and Indians (in this case, the Trio) is attested from Surinam (Goeje 1906) to Nova Scotia.

A priori considerations have greatly hindered research. Writers like Pfaff (1971) have assumed that no general Plantation Creole could have

¹¹ See Dillard (1972: chapter IV). Concerning the minority groups, there are revealing statements in the works of historians like Jack D. Forbes, *Nevada Indians Speak* (1967) and Samuel Eliot Morrison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts* (1961). The latter quotes Chinese to Bostonians: "You and I olo flen; you belong honest man only no get chance ... Just now have sette counter. All finishee; you go, you please" (p. 65). "Too muchee strong gale; sea all same high mast head — no can see sky" (p. 78).

Foster Rhea Dulles, *The Old China Trade* (1930), says explicitly: "During this period [1784] the sole medium of communication between the Chinese and their visitors was that queer jargon known as Pidgin English."

Dulles's footnote is even more revealing: "The dialect largely made up of English words, with some Portuguese and Chinese embellishments" (p. 20).

developed in the continental United States, on the grounds that the slave owners would not have permitted interaction between Blacks on different plantations. Against this, we have specific documentation like the letter of Governor Nicholson on 20 August 1668 (quoted in Henry F. Thompson, "Maryland at the End of the Seventeenth Century", *Maryland Historical Magazine* II, 1907:165):

... Their [the Negro slaves'] common practice is on Saturday nights and Sundays, and on 2 or 3 days in Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide is to go and see one another tho' at 30 or 40 miles distance. I have, several times both in Virginy and here met negros, both single and 6 or 7 in Company in the night time. The major part of the negroes speak English, and most people have some of them as their domestic servants & the better sort have 6 or 7 in those circumstances, and may be not above one English. And they send the Negro men and boys about the Country where they have business: and they wait on them to all publick places, so that by these means they know not only the public but private roads of the country and circumstances thereof.

There is much more evidence of the same type, both from the United States (continental colonies)¹² and from the West Indies.¹³

Other well-known phenomena, like the marriages of slaves from different plantations,¹⁴ show how false a viewpoint is which makes each plantation separate and a law unto itself. Cruelty and repression were all

¹² For interesting stratagems used by slaves on adjoining plantations to communicate without the knowledge of their masters, see the notes to *Ethnic Folkways Library Album* no. FE 4417. The classical reference for the slaves' assembling in public and engaging in African behavioral patterns is of course George Washington Cable's "The Dance in the Place Congo" (*Century Magazine*, 1886, reprinted many times). That slaves were regularly required to have passes to leave their plantations, that the infamous "paterollers" pursued those who did not have them, and that many injustices were associated with the system is too commonplace to need documentation. (See collections like Botkin, *Lay My Burden Down*, 1945, p. 6 *et passim*.)

¹³ There is a convenient collection of such documents in Jerome S. Handler and Charlotte J. Frisbie, "Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and Its Cultural Context", *Caribbean Studies* 11 (1972): 5-46. See also Elsa V. Goveia, *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century*, especially pp. 235-40.

¹⁴ Documented examples are superabundant, but not everyone who has written on the subject has bothered to consult the documents. This lack is especially characteristic of the speculative psycholinguists who have written about Black English.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Arno Press reprint, 1968, part III, chapter VI) cites the case of Milly Edmondson, a slave, married to Paul, a freedman, at the insistence of her owners. In the life story of Josiah Henson (reprinted in Harvey Wish, *Slavery in the South*, 1964), we read "After the sale of my father by Newman, Dr. McPherson would no longer hire out my mother to him. She returned, accordingly, to his estate." There are many such accounts of marriage of slaves to freedmen and to slaves on other plantations in the accounts of ex-slaves in collections like Botkin's *Lay My Burden Down* (1945). Greene (1942) has a great deal on inter-marriage of Negro slaves and Indians.

too much a part of slavery, but the serious student cannot afford to ignore other relationships and other processes.¹⁶ Yet, in recent years, it has been the tendency of enthusiastic but misguided liberalism to factor out everything except repression from the study of slavery. Such institutions as the Underground Railroad were possible at least partly because of widespread Black communication networks not shared with whites. We have excellent studies like those of Fisher (1953), but too many of our studies of slavery and its results substitute preconception for history.

As yet, distressingly little is known about the Black use of the contact varieties of European languages in communicating with other minority groups like the Indians. Thanks to Taylor's excellent study (1951), much is known about that interesting mixed group the Black Carib of Honduras and about its associated groups; but we still know too little about linguistic relationships between Blacks and Indians in the early days on St. Vincent, from which the slaves came to Honduras. The priority of attestations of the use of Pidgin English (Leechman and Hall 1955) and Pidgin French (Goodman 1964) by Indians in the New World has been used as support of the argument that typical European patterns of communicating with "inferior" populations were of primary importance in the development of the creoles (see, especially, Hall 1966), but that evidence may simply indicate the degree of linguistic sharing between Blacks and Indians. Even in New York, cooperative resistance by Black and Indian was high on the list of problems faced by slave owners (Ottley and Weatherby 1967: 21-22). For the Florida Seminole-Black relationships, see Dillard (1972: chapter IV). Although a really thorough study devoted entirely to this matter does not seem to exist, Greene's "The Negro in Colonial New England" (1942) contains excellent and revealing materials on Black-Indian social relationships. Even Prince's (1910) *nêxer dâuts* New Jersey informant was part Minsi Indian.

In Puerto Rico, where (as sketchily indicated above) the study of the possible Black Spanish variety remains almost entirely to be done, it has often been asserted that the Indians died out within the early years of the sixteenth century. Yet Puerto Rican folk belief persistently ascribes "Indian" heritage to a certain part of its population. "India" is a popular nickname for girls who have Amerindian features, and virtually any Puerto Rican can confidently point out people whom he regards as being Indian in appearance. It may well be that population mixture like that reported by Greene (1942) for colonial New England complicated the

¹⁶ Cultural contributions to the New World by African slaves were noted as early as 1721 (Cotton Mather, *The Angel of Bethesda*). Occasional references to such contributions can be found even in very traditional works like Philip A. Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (1896).

"extermination" of the Puerto Rican aborigines. *Tainismo* and *Africanismo* have long been competitors on Puerto Rico, as their equivalents have been elsewhere in Latin America; but they could easily become allies within the Pidgin-Creole tradition. Needless to say, the necessary work on this synthesis remains to be done.

But the most pressing need of all is for a general overview.¹⁶ As long as individual geographic areas, like the American South, are considered without reference to other sections into which essentially the same slave population was brought, like the Caribbean, the linguistic developments peculiar to the slave community can be lost in European archaism because more attention by far is given to the language of the white majority. But it is the merest commonplace that slaves brought to the United States (or to the continental colonies) often went through staging areas in the West Indies. In fact, it should not be forgotten that slavery in the early United States was a relatively minor branch of a trade which extended from Brazil to Nova Scotia, coming from West Africa and including the Caribbean.¹⁷ Concentration on the South, without reference to other areas, also allows for the unsubstantiated assumption that any Black language varieties must be exclusively Southern phenomena. Only through the exaggeration of such tendencies can it be sustained that British 'regional' varieties were transferred to the South, where the Negroes first imitated the whites exactly and then maintained that imitation (still, apparently, in an unaltered state) after its forms had become archaic or even obsolete in Southern white speech. Lack of knowledge of demographic patterns permits the further assumption that those 'archaic Southern' patterns were then carried to the Northern ghettos.

We have seen the shaping of the linguistic myth, which is still a lively one. Replacing it with more accurate formulations is still largely a job for the future. Some of the groundwork for the more responsible formulation has been done by the scholars whose work is represented in the following pages. There are, obviously, omissions. It is especially regretted that nothing from the works of Lorenzo Dow Turner or of Melville J. Herskovits could be included. Perhaps the latter could be considered to be represented in some way by the inclusion of my own

¹⁶ Herskovits's *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), the book which did most to establish the need for such an overview, is, almost paradoxically, the work which comes closest to accomplishing it. Szwed and Whitten (eds.), *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives* (1970), carries on the Herskovitsian approach. Unfortunately, dialectology has nothing even roughly comparable to those works.

¹⁷ For onomastic reflexes of cultural continuity in the slave trade in the Americas, see Dillard "The West African Day Names in Nova Scotia", *Names* (1971). Among other things, interchange of slaves between Nova Scotia and Surinam (with two-way traffic in at least a few cases) is documented.

(1964) paper, a kind of appreciation of the work of the then recently deceased Herskovits. If Turner does not have that much direct representation, it still should be remembered that none of this would have been possible without his *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

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Section I: Black English Dialectology: Theory, Method

INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 1

Academically, the chief barrier to the recognition of Black American English has been the influence exerted by the dialect geographers who, following Kurath (1928, 1936, 1965), have insisted that variation in American English MUST be more closely correlated with regional than with other factors. Upon examination, one must conclude that this pre-conception, no matter how influential it has been upon American academic life, is simply false. In fact, those who have worked on Black English and its relationship to other dialects have come increasingly to assign less importance to regional factors. In terms of general theory of dialect variation, there has been the important work of Gumperz (1958) and Labov (1965). But Gumperz, who has some claim to priority in the study of dialect and social stratification, acknowledged an important debt to a predecessor, Glenna Ruth Pickford.

Pickford's fine critical article finds the *Linguistic Atlas* work deficient in significance, validity, and reliability. She points out that the assumption that variation in American English is primarily regional, based as it is on prior work with long-settled European populations, simply does not take into account what sociologists have found out about American behavioral patterns. She is especially critical of *Atlas*' failure to take advantage of great advances in sampling theory. Perhaps the only lack which another avowed critic of *Atlas* techniques can point out in Pickford's criticism is her failure to note that cartographic techniques could be developed which were much better than the old isogloss maps. (More recently, such new techniques have been used in studies like Resnick 1968.) In sum, Pickford provided an almost complete theoretical background for the study of dialects of American English which correlated

with social factors like ethnic group membership. Although she said nothing about Black English, work in that area would have been much more difficult without her contribution.

No direct rebuttal to Pickford's criticism was ever attempted by the *Atlas* group, beyond claims like that of Davis (1971) that Pickford had confused population sampling techniques with dialect sampling techniques. Assertions like that of Davis that recognition of representative informants could be left to the judgment of dialect geographers are, of course, counter to all sociolinguistic theory. Failure to profit from Pickford's criticism may be the single greatest indication of the poor state of American dialect geography in the mid-twentieth century.

Meanwhile, aside from the researchers into Black English and the few others mentioned above, scholars like Hattori (1964), Blanc (1964), and Bernard (1969) have been providing examples of how dialectology need not be merely a spatial matter — and how, further, it need not be merely a propping up of “horizontal” geographic factors with “vertical” factors of social stratification. A more modern dialectology will seemingly have to consider factors like age, sex, class/caste, professional and religious affiliation, topic, interlocutor, and ethnic group membership — each of these at least potentially as important as narrowly geographic considerations.

Although she said nothing about the American Black population, Pickford provided the theoretical framework within which creolists like Stewart and syntactic dialectologists like Loflin and Luelsdorff could establish the autonomy (in Luelsdorff's words, independence) of the dialect of a great majority of the Black population in the United States. Stewart's public lectures, beginning around 1964, made very forcibly the point that not only an ethnically-related dialect (which he called Negro Non-Standard English and which has more recently been called Black English) but also a media-related dialect (which he called Network Standard) could exist in the United States. Most of the controversy has, of course, centered around the former; but the latter concept is no less revolutionary as an approach to social dialectology.

Loflin, Luelsdorff, and Fickett have been concerned with the technical details and theoretical considerations involved in writing a grammar of Black English. Loflin, particularly, was involved, as a transformational-generative linguist, in the controversy over whether a dialect of English could differ from other dialects by syntactic — and not only by phonological — rules. Loflin steadfastly maintained the possibility of syntactic differences (1967, 1969, 1970), even in the face of what was at one time considerable disapproval from the mainstream of transformational grammarians. Although Loflin took no sides in the creolist controversy, his conclusions did agree with those of creolists like Stewart in many

general ways. The common parts of their otherwise often highly divergent positions held that, while "mainstream" English (including white non-standard) dialects probably had not diverged from each other syntactically since Middle English times, the pidgin/creole related Black English (belonging to what Stewart, 1965, called a "quasi-foreign language" tradition) had diverged greatly. No one who is aware that Saramaccan is called an English-based Creole could be surprised that there are rather deep differences within that tradition.

Joan G. Fickett approached the problem of the language of inner city children from neither a creolist nor a transformational-generative position. An anthropological linguist in an older American tradition, she concentrated on internalizing the language structures before analyzing them. In this she agreed, by and large, with Stewart, except that she worked in the classrooms and halls of her junior high school (Fickett 1970), whereas Stewart depended upon even less formal contact with younger children. It is amazing that the work of Stewart and of Fickett agrees as often as it does with that of Loflin and Luelsdorff, since their theoretical orientations were so greatly different.

Luelsdorff, like Loflin, insisted upon working with one informant in an office interview situation, although of course he "soaked up intuition" by contact with the Black community in less official capacities. Loflin, Luelsdorff, Stewart, and Dillard — members of the Urban Language Study of the District of Columbia — have thus been left open to charges of laxity in sampling procedures — a situation which, on the surface, seems to contradict their function within the post-Pickford tradition. Labov, Cohen, Robins, and Lewis (1968) and Shuy, Fasold, and Wolfram (all references) were able to utilize more thorough sampling procedures. Although there are differences, their results in many ways resemble those of the original *Urban Language Study* group. And if that group was more naive statistically than Fasold (1972), it was far beyond his data collection procedures, relying as they do upon adult informants in an ultra-formal situation.¹

¹ Fasold reports that "The interviews were conducted in a variety of circumstances, all of them rather formal" (1972:27) and that "The studio-recorded interviews may have caused some speakers to use a more formal style than they would have in a field-recorded interview, but such an effect was not obvious" (1972:27).

Such impressionistic statements accord poorly with the claims often made by Fasold and his associates that their works are "technical" whereas works of others (especially Stewart) are "non-technical". In a dialect situation in which the importance of child informants has frequently been stressed, it is disconcerting to read "Children were not included in these comparisons ... because children can be expected to be the least sensitive to the social effects of language" (Fasold 1972:26-27). Again, one cannot help being reminded of the tendency of the *Linguistic Atlas* projects to seek out adult and even elderly informants.

The analytical procedures of all the linguists mentioned in the last paragraph were all superior to the lackadaisical taxonomy of the *Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada*, and thus all of them add something to American dialectology. The older system is woefully represented by Williamson (1968). Although her data include, on two representative pages

It be kind of complicated
 They're made their mistake
 They be doing
 If you be talking
 He going
 They coming
 If you trying to
 If you telling a story (p. 39).
 We do be out
 It don't be enough
 I don't be paying attention
 They be done cut your head off²
 Everybody done seen you
 I done forget (p. 40).

Williamson found that

Most of the grammatical patterns which they [Negro high school students in Memphis, Tennessee] use are found in standard or substandard [sic!] Southern English. (Documentary Resumé)

With fourteen control sentences like those above, Loflin could write rules which would show very clearly the differences between Black English and other varieties. And Fickett (1970) could have told Williamson a great deal about the differences between even junior high school students and those "bilinguals" who had found their way to the dizzy level of high school. The only way in which these scholars would have agreed with Williamson is that they all found it necessary to collect data from some source other than the records of the *Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada*. Thus all of the investigators herein discussed (even Williamson) are to some degree Pickfordians.

² Williamson describes the sequence *be done cut* as one of "three instances of *done* being used as an auxiliary" (1968:40). Thus, the complex situation in which both *be* and *done* are preverbal auxiliaries escapes her analysis.

Williamson has frequently, in this and other works, responded to amateur (or straw man professional) observers who would assert that Negro speech is structureless. Ironically, by ignoring the structural complexity of such verb phrases — as well as by utilizing impossibly outmoded models of linguistic analysis — she provides some ammunition for just those observers.

GLENN RUTH PICKFORD

AMERICAN LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY:
A SOCIOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Long-term research projects cannot escape the risk of becoming antiquated in design before their completion. Some linguistic atlases are notorious examples. The linguistic atlas of Germany, data for which were collected from 1879 to 1888 on a scale that practically ruled out publication, did not see the appearance of the first printed maps until 1926, and after not very many fascicles, its publication is now being suspended, with the method of the work a good two generations behind the times.

The *Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada*, being a human enterprise, has not been immune to the same dangers. Conceived in 1929, it began with New England, and the impressive tomes devoted to that region appeared, together with a useful handbook, in the latter 1930's. Field work has also been completed for the entire Eastern United States and, though unpublished, has been utilized for concrete studies (Kurath 1949, Atwood 1953); the remainder of the area is still to be covered. We are dealing, then, with a time span of at least 27 years, a period in which sociological techniques and the understanding of American society has advanced in a decisive way. Consequently, it is not too surprising that while many linguists are dismayed by the pre-structural design of the *American Atlas*, a sociologist is beset by grave doubts as to the validity and reliability of procedures used in it.

There is another source of misgiving. While the science of language may be entitled to theoretical and methodological autonomy, it will be granted that such branches of linguistics as dialect study are motivated and evaluated by the contribution they can make to the understanding

of broader sociocultural diversities and unities (Weinreich 1954:397f.). In Europe, dialect study has helped to supply answers to important questions of human geography (Dominian 1915:401-39; Roedder 1926:281-92; Bloomfield 1933: 321-45; Bottiglioni 1954:375-87). But geography is only one factor reflected in linguistic diversity (Hertzer 1953:115); in America, it is NOT the most important (Dieth 1948; Shevsky and Bell 1955: 22). The preoccupation with geography at the expense of other dimensions of dialectal diversity makes one suspect that American linguistic geography originated as a somewhat mechanical imitation of European approaches. To put it bluntly, American linguistic geography has expended vast energies in order to supply answers to unimportant, if not to nonexistent, questions. Is it surprising that the social scientists who were expected to take an interest in the findings of the *Atlas* have been so unresponsive (McDavid 1946:168)? If the study of American English is to contribute to the knowledge of America, it must address itself, as McDavid seems to suggest (1946:168-72), to such questions as the political structure of American society, differences and interrelationships between rural and urban communities, changes in the size and organization of the family, linguistic snobbery, and a wealth of other aspects of American social life (see e.g. Hertzer 1953). In other parts of the world comparable questions are also coming more and more to outrank regional diversity in importance, so that the potential methodological achievements of a modernized, sociologically-minded American dialectology would find important applications in other languages as well.

1. IMPROVING RESEARCH PROCEDURE

In its procedures, existing American linguistic geography falls short of the standards of social-science inquiry. Geographers of language are vulnerable to the charge that they have failed to use the best available methods for testing theories. The technique of sampling, developed within the past twenty years into a highly responsible scientific method, offers a number of lessons for dialect study. Linguists, like sampling theorists, agree that it is seldom possible to gather or manipulate a complete body of information, and therefore it has become customary to utilize a partial count and to reach conclusions about the whole from analysis of the small representative selection, or sample. But sampling theory has gone a long way in refining its concepts and techniques (Hagood 1941; Cantril 1944; McNemar 1949; Garrett 1953; Cochran 1953). It has been demonstrated that the success of a sample survey depends greatly upon disciplined control which linguistic geographers have not always exercised; this has resulted in error. Existing dialect studies are full of the two

main types of mistakes in sample surveys, errors of validity and errors of reliability, despite the fact that sampling experts and statisticians have designed techniques to eliminate or reduce such errors (Deming 1944).

Validity, in this context, has to do with the initial problem of asking the right questions. When planning a survey, experts with deep and thorough knowledge of the subject must decide exactly what is wanted. The scientific method of sampling emphasizes that the very first step is to determine the significance of the study, for to elicit irrelevant information is a waste of effort and money. "The requirement of a plain statement of what is wanted (the specification of the survey) is perhaps one of the greatest contributions of modern theoretical statistics" (Deming 1950:3). Many a proposed survey has not gone beyond the planning stage because valid questions were not being asked.

Secondly, validity involves the problem of how to draw out the needed information. This problem is the joint province of the statistician, the psychologist, and the expert in the subject (the experienced observer and the man of judgment), who must work together to determine the construction of the questionnaire, the technique of the interview, and the administration of field work. Biases arising from the interview or the questionnaire can be eliminated by skillful planning and preliminary testing (Deming 1950). American linguistic geographers have failed to employ indispensable technical assistance in the formulation of their survey plans, and invalidity is the unfortunate result.

Reliability is concerned with gathering a representative, unbiased selection of data, and procedures used in linguistics to this day justify an elementary review of the subject. To achieve a reliable sample two general procedures of sampling are in use. The random, or probability, sample is an automatic plan which virtually eliminates biases of selection, nonresponse, and estimation. Statistical formulae, based on the mathematical theory of probability, have been devised to calculate the sampling errors. The other procedure, the judgment sample, is an attempt to gather representative data by using informed judgment to determine which units are typical. In this procedure biases and sampling errors cannot be calculated mathematically; they must be estimated. It is important not to confuse the two types of sampling procedures, as linguists, it will appear below, do. For the judgment sample is not amenable to statistical analysis as is the probability sample. Each is an accepted method in its own right; each has its own proper uses and checks. The probability sample is reliable only if conducted faithfully and rigorously, and it is the type predominantly used in large-scale government surveys. The judgment sample is only as reliable as is the combined judgment of those who plan and execute it, and it is the type ordinarily used in small surveys of a preliminary nature (Deming 1950).

Basically, of course, all surveys partake indispensably of judgment, of knowledge and wisdom in the choice of the problem, in the wary design of the questionnaire, and in the final assessment. The difficulties of achieving validity are the same for both types of sample survey. Only in the search for reliability do the two types diverge: the automatic sample vs. the judicious selection.

Errors of Validity

From the point of view of validity, the questionnaire, interview, and evaluation of the surveys of the American *Atlas* are defective (Dieth 1948). The dialectologists' own cautions do not save their work from this criticism.

The needlessly formidable length of the questionnaire, by discouraging participation, has increased the important problem of nonresponse. Bloch (1935) gives an account of the difficulties of inducing persons to grant an interview ten to twelve hours long. Alexander in his discussion of similar difficulties (1940:42) remarks that one informant became deaf during the interview and one died.

Ambiguity of definition, where the use of a pictorial device might have clarified the meaning (see e.g. Sapon 1953:65), has resulted in erroneous answers (Reed 1954:9-10).

The wording of the items in the work sheets ... to some extent determined the method of inquiry and hence, also, in a measure, the response ... All distortions of the material due to formulation of the item are scrupulously noted in the commentaries (Kurath 1939:47).

The lack of systematic checks has permitted wrong answers to go undetected, except as the individual interviewer has happened to notice them. Questionable responses

... must be viewed with skepticism, since memory, politeness and the desire to appear to best advantage play tricks with informants, especially with older people. Sometimes an affirmative answer is given to a suggestion merely to get the matter out of the way, and the field worker is left in doubt (Kurath 1939:46).

Particularly important has been the failure to design a questionnaire adequate to the "double standard" (Alexander 1940:44) problem. The bias of the auspices has called forth a self-conscious speech, "English teacher's English", which technical precautions might have controlled by skillful checks. The precautions of the *Atlas* have gone no further than this:

Conversational forms are especially valuable ... for certain sounds or words on which the schools and the educated or would-be educated have focused their