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Title: Comment on "On the Relation between Plantations and Creole Cultures," by Richard N. Adams.

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In considering the relation between plantations and Creole cultures we are faced with a limited number of logical alternatives. If the relations between Creole cultures and plantations are necessary and invariant, we shall expect to find either of these conditions wherever we find the other. Alternatively the plantation and Creole culture may occur and vary independently. Only if we can show that there is a necessary relation between Creole culture and plantation organization, does the problem of dependence or causation arise. However, the capacity of these two complexes to occur independently of one another does not indicate that they are not interdependent in contexts which contain both.

Dr. Adams has defined both the plantation and Creole cultures with care. There is of course no necessary association of a community with a plantation. Nor is a plantation system to be found wherever we find plantations. It seems somewhat unfortunate to apply concepts such as community and system as part of the definition of plantation. Such definitions inevitably exclude many units generally referred to as plantations which lack the attributes of community and/or system.

Dr. Adams initially defines Creole cultures as those "cultures which were born, or if you prefer, that emerged in the New World". But he observes that the "inclusion of ladinos, caboclos, Black Caribs and East Indians within the term Creole obviously does not fit familiar usage. From simple inspection of the cases, it appears that those societies to which the term (Creole) has been applied are in all cases also societies which have been intimately involved in some

kind of colonial arrangement and are limited to specific regions... There was almost always present a significant and powerful "plantation system" in the societies where cultures have been called 'Creole'." (pp. 74-75).

In other words, by excluding the ladinos and East Indians, the Black Caribs and caboclos, who live in areas with a colonial past, and have experienced the operation of plantation systems, Dr. Adams shows that he recognizes the differing distributions in the New World of plantation systems, Creole cultures, and of populations whose cultural history includes experience of both these conditions. In the Old World there are many areas which contain plantation systems, and these areas differ culturally from the category to which the term Creole is applied. However, in Mauritius we find social and cultural conditions which offer striking parallels with those of the Caribbean and New World Creole cultures. Notably, the history of Mauritius and the history of the British colonial territories in the New World overlap for most of their formative periods.

After these introductory remarks Dr. Adams puts forward the proposition that "the degree to which plantation communities may be said to have dominated or set the pattern for the Creole cultures is directly related to the degree to which the plantation system exercised political and administrative authority as well as economic control of the region in which the community existed."

(p. 75) I take this to mean that when persons actively interested in plantation operations are politically as well as economically dominant, plantation organization sets the pattern of the Creole culture. Accordingly, where we find equal degrees of this dominance we should find very similar sorts of culture. However, by excluding the ladinos, East Indians and caboclos, Dr. Adams indicates that this inference might not always hold true. Instead he concludes that "if we see 'Creole cultures' as being found in certain regional societies that reflect or manifest the effect of the dominance of plantation systems within a regional society, then presumably the end of this dominance means that new patterns are emerging and that the 'Creole cultures' as known heretofore are disappearing" (p. 80). Unfortunately, this proposition is equally at variance with the facts. In the tiny island of Carriacou, and in other small West Indian territories long since abandoned as plantation areas, we find the sort of culture generally referred to as 'Creole' flourishing quite vigorously. Likewise, in Haiti following on Christophe the states were parcelled out, and the plantation system ceased to operate as a dominant factor in Haitian society, without any parallel dissolution of Haitian Creole culture (Leyburn, 1941, p. 86-7). As Ragatz (1928) has shown, the political and economic dominance of British Caribbean planters was widely dispersed in the last years of slavery and the position of plantation operators steadily worsened despite their local political dominance. The Report of the Royal Commission of 1897 documents the breakdown of the "plantation system" in Jamaica but there was no corresponding breakdown or abandonment of Creole culture.

I suspect that Dr. Adams has conceived of Creole culture as dominated by the plantation economically and politically. This conception postulates a necessary dependence of the Creole culture on the plantation system and rests on various reifications. Specialized classifications and definitions have been developed to facilitate this interpretation. However, while admiring Dr. Adams' clear and ingenious argument, I would suggest that we should reject it as inadequate and incorrect. The mere classification of Creole cultures is not enough; summaries of the content and organization of these cultures are necessary in order to illuminate their relations to plantations or any other sub-system. Perhaps comparative studies of the changing histories of plantation systems and of Creole societies may allow us to develop more refined hypotheses about their inter-relations.