JOURNAL OF
French and Francophone Philosophy
REVUE DE LA
philosophie française et de langue française

At the Core of Creolization

The Work of the African or the Africanization of Insular America

Hanétha Vété-Congolo

Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy - Revue de la philosophie française et de langue française, Vol XX, No 1 (2012) pp 39-74.

Vol XX, No 1 (2012)
ISSN 1936-6280 (print)
ISSN 2155-1162 (online)
DOI 10.5195/jffp.2012.540
www.jffp.org

At the Core of Creolization

The Work of the African or the Africanization of Insular America

Hanétha Vété-Congolo
Bowdoin College

Introduction

The Caribbean, as it is known today, is arguably the very last world born in the history of humanity with practices and physiological and spiritual characteristics that singularize its peoples and presents novel and original ways of being. The latter has always intrigued, bewildered, and raised an ontological issue within and without its geographical boundaries. Is it a pale replica of Europe or a worthless extension of Africa? The question arises due to the particular history that started with conflicts engaging the notion of race, with one self erected as pure and supreme to the detriment of the other, conflicts founded on the severe depreciation of humanity, but which has nonetheless involved mankind. This may be the most recent case in the history of mankind showing how groups of people originally recognizable through determined referents become others, in a new place and under specific circumstances, with different ontological referents, all while remaining, through some of the referents, very close to their ascendants. One certainty is that the result of this particularly complex history is equally complex, and the ways and mindsets of the individuals springing from it show such a high level of intricacies that they can be said to be "implexe-complexes." The literary term "implexe" refers to a very complex intrigue and enigma. Adjoining to the word "implexe" the very term "complexe" reinforces the idea of complexity I would like to stress concerning Caribbean identity.

According to the Martinican philosopher, Édouard Glissant, the American world of today, particularly its insular Caribbean part, is a creolized one. That is, its human constituents, as well as the cultural practices they produced, spring from ancient worlds whose respective

mores were, individually and separately, long formed and established in preceding times and distinct spaces. The subsequent encounter of these respective worlds in a common place, different from their original ones, during a substantial span of time, compelled them to undergo inevitable transformation together. The nature of the result could not be anticipated and is a composition of intrinsic parts, which Glissant labels "composite." The transformation is such that the total sum of the traits that distinguishes it can be said to be undoubtedly original. Glissant labeled this phenomenon *Creolization*: "Creolization is the point of contact of several cultures or at least of several elements of distinct cultures in a place of the world and which results on an aggregate that is new and unpredictable vis-à-vis the sum or simple synthesis of these elements."[1]

Creolization involves the Relation principle, which, in a context that does not consider any sound and balanced relationship between the different parties, bears its significance. It is for this very reason that the actual materialization of the process is aesthetics. Creolization rectifies, according to fairness, pertinence and justice, the absolutistic view that strove to prevent its occurrence. It introduces the ethics and humanism that the plantation system lacked. Just as much, what is at stake are notions of speech, discourse, perception and apperception. But the issue of ideas arises as well, as it is a parameter according to which the relationship is based and the phenomena of the environment are governed. In America, two main ideas will be in crude opposition, that of the Europeans and of the Africans. The fundamental perspective from which Europe views Africans and the New World at that time is so much anchored in the notion of a superior and inferior race, that one can argue that the primary idea that Europe introduces to America is racism. As a matter of fact, the dichotomous vision of Africans and Europeans about aesthetics, which, according to Hegel, stands for the beauty and philosophy of art enticing both emotion and a critical sense,[2] is fully expressed in the plantation space as Reverend du Tertre reports it. Talking about the way African mothers tend to their children, which demonstrates their appreciation of beauty, the reverend argues that Africans establish their aesthetic and beauty criteria in ugliness:

> If they [the children] have a flat nose, it is because their mothers and fathers crush it to make it so. They also press their lips to make them big…the first child of our slave Dominique whom we reared in Guadeloupe has a face, a nose and lips as pretty as that of the French: in other words, nothing about him is of the negroe type except the color of his hair because one of the priests had expressly forbade his mother from crushing his nose which she never dared do. This priest, thinking that she would do the same thing with her next daughter did not repeat the recommendation. He was wrong and as he blamed her for it she replied that she did it to make her daughter prettier than her son that she saw as extremely ugly

> because he did not have this hideous deformation in which they establish beauty in their country.[3]

It is understood that the root of the term "creolization" is "creole" or "criole" from the Spanish "criollo," a word qualifying the children of European colonizers born in the Spanish colonies of America and later on adopted by the other colonial forces. The term will also later on be bestowed upon all that originates from the colonies be they human or not. In this light, Creole means distinction. Distinction from others, namely from one's own parents in the case of the locally born children. With the term, and the apparent need to use one to distinguish these indigenous progenies, already appears an ontological consciousness. The word testifies to a distinct locality which itself indicates and generates specificities. If one takes into account the typology of the formation of this phenomenon, the paradigms that propelled it, then one must conclude that it is a "*pied de nez*." For, in addition to its unpredictability, measures are consciously taken to preclude its occurrence in the dialogic way Glissant conceives it.

Governed by an ameliorative intention, the transformation of the Africans is programmed and actually consciously implemented. Du Tertre and Labat[4] assert that the Africans are condemned to never return to their original lands, which means that their deportation is irreversible and their fate is ineluctable. However, if the transformation of the Europeans also takes place, it is so despite themselves and in spite of all of the legal measures implemented and doctrinarian resistance put forth to prevent it.

The encounter of Africans and Europeans in America is motivated by slavery and manifested through systematic and utter violence and severe contradictions. This is the historical "*digenèse*"[5] out of which the Caribbean was born. Founded on violence, the power relation is exclusively advantageous to the Europeans. However, the Africans possess the numeric power, "*le pouvoir du nombre*," in that they are by far more numerous in almost all of the colonies due to the type of crop grown, according to Reverend Labat's writing less than fifty years after the start of the French colony:

> …ever since this commerce has been destroyed because tobacco is no longer produced, we have been forced to concentrate on sugar production which has drastically diminished the habitants number to such an extent that one cannot find even two thousand men in this island. Martinique, Guadeloupe and the other French colonies are all in this case…they currently are depopulated of white inhabitants and peopled with a huge number of Negroes…[6]

Apart from the numeral presence, they also testify to highly vibrant and dynamic cultures. However, despite the essentialist conception of identity, culture and race, African and European mores and peoples were creolized in America. At the *core* of creolization are sharing and commonalities. The

specific history of the Caribbean based on the debasement and violent enslavement of the Africans by the Europeans on a very long temporality and for reasons that predominantly involved speculation and exclusive economic profit, bring about critical questions concerning the notion of creolization. Consequently, this triggers questions related to the nature of the result of the process of transformation. What exactly was transformed and according to what parameters?

Through the process of colonization that entailed brutal imposition of her formalized institutions – religious, linguistic, legal, political, psycho-social, philosophical, cultural etc. – Europe anchors widely in the Caribbean. Despite this presence of the formal European institutions, and the conscious efforts and measures taken to prevent it, the presence of the African institutions is not precluded. As a matter of fact, given the numeric dominance of the Africans, but also given the strength of the African cultures, the European institutions were themselves processed by the African *noesis* to such an extent that one can claim that Europe was *africanized* in America, and that, in fact, at the basis of creolization lies what I call africanization. Paying attention to the dynamics of the American colonies, Freye affirms that "[i]t was Europe reigning without governing; it was Africa that governed."[7]

Additionally, up to very recently, the dominating gaze publicly proffered about the Caribbean and, specifically about Martinique, derived from extrinsic experiences by colonial emissaries, visitors, or European abolitionists. Reverends du Tertre and Labat, Moreau de Saint-Mery, Granier de Cassagnac, Victor Schœlcher, Lafcadio Hearn or Louis Garaud are among those who speak about or for the Caribbean. To the exception of Moreau de Saint-Mery, all are outsiders. Except Schœlcher, Hearn, and Garaud, all are slave owners, but, in any case, all are writing before the twentieth century. We must therefore take into account that Glissant writes as the product of what he describes, he comes from the Caribbean so his perception and ontological propositions comprise an intrinsic and modernist counter-vision vis-à-vis all colonial assertions.

All of these problematic reasons require a close consideration of the very notion of Creolization and of its operating modes. Let us insist here that the phenomenon of creolization, as proposed by Glissant, occurs in America as the result of a particularly harsh history. It is as much an epistemological as it is a historical phenomenon. Therefore, one has to analyze the paradigms of this history in order to identify and understand the process, the degree and nature of creolization. Glissant, coming from Martinique, which endured this specific history, and Martinique acting as a privileged site for the Glissantian phenomenon, it is worth paying attention to his example. Martinique, a 1080 square kilometers former French colony and current *Département d'Outre Mer* of 400,000 inhabitants in the lesser Antilles, has boldly participated, as it still does, in the reflections and proposed ideas

that have contributed to the best understandings of the original phenomenon that took place in this region.

Around the years 1790, Moreau de Saint-Mery, a Martinican colonizer traveling around the Caribbean especially to the French possessions to create some archives, published the following description on the characteristics of the colonies. According to him, the colony is a mere assemblage of heteroclite elements that do not prefigure any common culture. He asserts that the reason driving the Europeans to insular America is not to structure a society with an identifying culture:

> In these places where people have been gathered for a long span of time, (a sort of association system was formed to which local manners brought about rules. This system is maintained with no particular change unless it is influenced by events that are as rare as they are extraordinary events because those who settle in the group or who are born out of it acquire its usages. The group is more or less nothing but a large family. Their union is more or less a perfect amalgamation and all of the family members can be identified by easily perceived traits. However, in the colonial settlements that have recently been founded by successive migration, one cannot find traces of any cohesive whole. It is rather a shapeless form that receive diverse influences and this incoherence is critical when a large colony is founded by individuals who came merely to seek for climes absolutely different from theirs and procuring them some exoticism because each of them maintain the habit of their original customs which are modified only to adapt them to the new country.[8]

This is so much so that by the mid-nineteenth century, before the abolition of slavery in 1848, Victor Schœlcher, a French abolitionist, advocated for a unified culture, which reminds us that racial demarcation was still the absolute norm. Around the years 1890, Louis Garaud spends three years in Martinique as vice Chief Education Officer. He published his impressions in *Trois ans à la Martinique,* a work in which he claims that what singularizes the members of the Martinican population is racial division and enmity:

> …I cannot resist the temptation to give my point of view on the people of Martinique even though this people was born only yesterday and is composed of heterogeneous elements who are still in search of their own way with no fixed orientation…The people's faults and qualities can find an explanation or justification in their origin, in the racial antagonism, in the color difference, in the past sufferings, in the current struggles and worries. For three hundred years, Martinique has been the place of the admixture between two opposing races, the Black and White races…What is strange is that

> Whites and Blacks, despite all that should unite them, remained irreconcilable enemies, separated by a huge gulf; skin color.[9]

All of this taken into account, it is indeed interesting to consider the formation and evolution of Creolization from a historical point of view, and therefore to try to understand the extent to which I, in the twentieth century, will offer a rectification of the prior perceptions. At the same time, I will make a point of underlining the African contribution to the process of creolization, which Glissant omits and does not stress. Although, it is imposed on Africans and determined by the French and for the French; the goal of total and exclusive enrichment of the French is, consequently, common to both parties.

A Division Never to be Met

In 1635, colonial and slave France settles the colony of Martinique. The French settlers are animated with one spirit: to spend the less, gain the more, and make exclusive economic profit. Reverend Jean-Baptiste du Tertre stipulates that the French *habitants* of the French colonies are guided by a "strong passion to amass properties, which is the only one reason why they come to the colony…"[10] Therefore, to honor her project of enrichment and that of her subjects directly engaged in the colonial and slave enterprise, France deports thousands of Africans destined to provide exclusive free labor. Determined by the French for the French, and the imposition onto the Africans of the goal of total and exclusive enrichment of the French – this is common to both parties.

The system within which the enslavers consciously confine their relationship with the enslaved is rigidly governed by racial, social and economic segregation and opposition, which is meticulously construed to be irreconcilable. It is supported by a structured and fabricated Bourdieusian *doxa,* enclosing the disparaging perception and conception the Europeans hold of the Africans. Internalization of this *doxa* is expected and demanded until it provokes submission and auto-cannibalism. The *doxa* relies on structured and well thought-out psychic and physical attacks, all of which are manifested through a series of systematic verbal denigration and concrete aggressive and dissuasive actions. Among other myths, it is held that Africans are not able to conceive and produce culture. Still, their common goal notwithstanding, one of the major factors critically separating the fate of the Africans and that of the Europeans in America is that the former were deported against their will, while the latter chose their destination on their own accord. Another factor is that, for the Europeans, the interest was exclusively in their favor, as they desired to accomplish a single mission in America: to get as rich as possible and to return back to their original lands.[11] Therefore, it is understood that neither social nor economic advancement nor ease of life are projected for the Africans.

Similarly, it is worth stressing that, although the project of deporting Africans to America is structured and carefully thought through, it is less true of their potential return to their native societies. Nothing had been foreseen concerning the advent of Africans in America, except their concrete economic productivity. As to the Europeans in America, they did not envisage transformation of the established components of their collective personality, but rather aspired only to influence the environment with their idiosyncrasy. The only transformation that is sought is economic and material.

Consequently, the system of enrichment is logically based on exploitation, which is understood to bear at its core the African's free labor, even though, at the beginning of the French colonial enterprise, exploitation is also intra-racial. Many members of the white group draw profit from the exploitation of indentured counterparts, as eye-witnesses such as reverends Du Tertre or Labat document. Nevertheless, in her testimony, Mary Prince, a former Barbadian enslaved, affirms that what the enslaver wants of the enslaved is that the latter "…work, work, work, night and day, in good or bad health, until they fall of exhaustion."[12] This is such that the French abolitionist, Victor Schœlcher will argue that, "[t]he entire edifice of the colonies relies and will always rely on the black race that cultivate them; one has to necessarily tie everything to them…"[13]

The ideology that underwrites this perception on human relations and displacement expects total consensus on the essentialist, divisionist, exclusivist, and exclusionist terms that rule over the phenomena of the plantation society. The division between the two parties is so fully governed by the dominant segregationist ideology that the relationship between the enslaved Africans and the French enslavers is marked with a pronounced tension and opposition that is seemingly never to be transcended. Apart from the facts generating division, the tension is expressed through the diverging perspectives from which Africans and Europeans view the universe, relate to it, and posit themselves in it.

Transforming the Other, Preserving Oneself from Contact

In general terms, the African sense of filiation is commonly expressed and symbolized through diverse means but is more often than not articulated in self-presentation or embodied by the storytelling art in that the storyteller constantly reminds teir own intrinsic origins and that of their people speaker over several generations. Africa and Europe are the two principal worlds out of which the Caribbean specificities were derived. Glissant conceives these two worlds as atavistic, in that both were long established in their respective territories and responded to anchored myths of creation. Therefore, both clusters of values or civilizations claim to spring to original and ancestral geneses – filiations they strongly believe in. In general terms, the African

sense of filiation is commonly expressed and symbolized through diverse means, but is more often than not articulated in self-presentation or in a storytelling that constantly reminds of the origins of the speaker over several generations. It is this strong belief in filiations that brought Europe to consecrate her mores as a unique model being one worth propagating widely. This perception of the self encapsulates the notions of absolutism, essentialism, racial purity and supremacy, but also that of conformist universalism. Universalism proposes the vision and the thesis of an essence. This draws on the unique European model and subsumes, just as much as it imposes, the notions of uniqueness and compliance to this unique essentialist vision. The notion of universalism is sustained by a rigid theological system, which condemns what of the Africans is perceived as idolatry. That is why when in the Middle Ages, they arrived in the Congo, not being able to understand the African art expression, urged by an absolute religious motivation, and convinced that Africans cannot conceive any art form, the Europeans burned all of the art figurines and sculptures, labeling them as fetishist objects.[14] In the insular American plantation society in which Creolization occurs, conformism to the one measure Europe claims to represent is the only perspective and is rigidly erected by the dominant group.

Besides, when wrecking in insular America, Christopher Columbus' intention was to transform the environment and its original inhabitants according to the most identifying traits of Europe: religion. "Columbus," Rodway notes, "was continually harping on the desirability of making the natives of the New World Christians. 'Your Highness,' he said, in one of his letters, 'ought to rejoice that they will soon become Christians, and that they will be taught the good customs of your kingdom.'"[15] On the French part, it is indeed the perspective of Christianizing the Africans that convinced Louis XIII to allow the transatlantic trade:

> …the King, Louis XIII…consented to the pressing demands to allowing the Trade only because he was assured him that this was an unquestionable way, and the only possible way, to inspire to the Africans the cult of the true God, to remove them from fetishism slavery and maintain them, forever and till death, into the Christian religion that we would make them embrace.[16]

Such a spiritual disposition is derived from the strong belief that Europeans are men, men descended from God, hence their divine filiations. For instance, in 1635, at the time France colonizes Martinique, the former is heavily symbolized by her religion structured by the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman faith. The clear intention of the French authorities was to replicate France in America. The intent was to transform the mores of the territories, not simply those of the French subjects in the colony. The colony must operate according to a single type of culture produced by only one type of men. Even though *plurality* is envisaged because Africans are

deported into bondage, *diversity* is never considered. To institutionalize the firmness of their common intent, the French colonizers will sign an official contract with Richelieu and Louis the XIII will promulgate an edict in March 1642 to strengthen it. Indeed, in their 1635 contract with Richelieu, the Company Lords promised to allow but one sole religion in the colony and solely one kind of men, French men. This is what Glissant calls the "*identité racine-unique*"[17] that has imposed the "*absolu de l'Être*."[18] Reverend du Tertre, who observed and described the colony during its first decades, asserts that religiously speaking, the colony of Martinique is a replica of France. At the very beginning of the colonization enterprise in Martinique, the colonizers consciously, but also logically, "maintained their native customs." In the transplantation process, time is a critical factor. Time allows anchorage and the definition of practices and habits, which progressively become complexified into culture. The habitants were so much not anchored in the colony that they perpetually traveled to France so that "…it was an incessant flux and reflux of trips from America to France and from France to America."[19] Additionally, the will to produce a structure similar to that of France is such that the governors even built chimneys in their homes.[20] Lastly, one should also stress that, as far as the French are concerned with reinforcing this monolithic vision of human relationship, assimilating the Africans to French mores with the view of perfecting their "defective" cultural expressions is also a set goal.

Around the year 1840, when creolization has certainly already been accomplished, Schœlcher affirms that "the African [is] amidst those who pretend to perfect him through slavery." [21] As Reverend du Tertre claimed, it was a general view of the time that the transformation of the Africans would be due to the sole contact with the European. Du Tertre indicates this global perception when describing African children in the colony, saying that "[m]ost of them are skillful and we realize that the fact that their kids consort with those of their white masters in their childhood opens up their mind and make them more spiritual than their parents."[22] The French literature of the nineteenth century assumes this vision as Claire de Duras' *Ourika* testifies. This is all the more so, in the colonies, because the Europeans adopts a fundamentally Bergsonian perspective on their transformation, which they near-exclusively attribute to the climate. Bergson claims that nature procures moral sensibility in mankind, which makes action in this domain null and void.[23] Regarding new and violent diseases from which they suffered, the European inhabitants of the colony thought that "it is the change of climate and life, different from those of Europe, that causes them to be sick."[24] The climate, then, transforms physically but also culturally. As du Tertre asserts:

> One must not talk of the youth of the islands as working people as since it is extremely hot, they are scatter brained and light minded. Consequently, their strength is diminished hence the fact that they

> have to have several meals and eat a lot to make up for their lost strength. Monsieur Biet should not blame them for not fasting at lent for it is almost impossible to make of fasting a general rule, not only because salted cod, salmon, red herring and mackerel get rotten as soon as the barrels have been opened and closed back.[25]

At the end of the nineteenth century, Garaud illustrates the European thought that holds that contacts with the Whites improve the Blacks' congenial and cultural defects. He compares the Martinican men's attitude to what he sees as a tendency on the part of women to inappropriately pour out their feelings and personal concerns to whomever is disposed to listen. Speaking to his colonial perception of the Martinican personality, Garaud claims that

> Like children, they like their own noise…However, thanks to the contact with the Europeans, men got rapidly accustomed to being less noisy and more direct whereas women, to the contrary, remained stubborn and resistant to any such influence and kept their primitive free gait. They continue to think out loud.[26]

Garaud further insists on the spontaneous and naïve character of the spiritual and cultural productions of the Martinicans. This transpires when he considers proverbs of Martinique and the Creole language, which he does view as a language: "created by instinct by the people and which has no depth, no elevation, no richness…is neither flexible nor malleable enough to bear all grammatical agreements and be used in all genres…."[27] Further:

> What strikes us at first, is the good sense of humor, the lightness of the spirit and innocent mischief of the Creoles. There is no complaint in the proverbs, no regret, no harshness, no resentment…no self-interest, no affection, no sophisticated research. All of this is so natural and impulsive. It is governed by a spontaneous thinking the form of which is improvised like itself…When one knows a people's language, one knows the people…Applied to the Creoles of Martinique, this thought is of a dazzling accuracy.[28]

This, we should note, is the main reason why Glissant rejects the vision of filiation as a basis for dismissing cultural and racial hierarchy. However, from a metaphysical perspective, it is precisely thanks to their perception of filiation, that is, thanks to the strength of the link between them and those from whom they spring, that the enslaved will find reasons to oppose the inhuman system. It is the very fact of this ancestrality, the fact that the enslaved is convinced that ancestrality exists according to individualizing elements that are antithetical to the European cultural vision, that they will rely on what they know of themselves, on their cultures. Glissant recognizes that "[t]he idea of atavistic belonging helps one to face sorrow and reinforces one's courage to combat slavery and oppression."[29] Nevertheless, in the case

of the Africans, he does not consider that the reliance on filiation might have facilitated creolization. The total metamorphosis wanted for the Africans, that is, the absolute separation between them in America and their ancestrality in Africa, did not full take effect. Since the link is and was no longer directly with their original environment and since, over time, they could no longer be named "Africans," they will nevertheless practice life in such a way that the new sum of their cultural and ontological constituents will indicate indisputable affiliation with their anteriority.

Needless to say, despite all segregations, the extreme proximity in which Whites and Blacks live, and the promiscuity of that proximity, means that unavoidable dialectic influences evolve. Transformation logically occurs, yet presents itself at first as quite simple. The process was progressively made complex under the impulse and action of the Africans. In other words, what Glissant fails to indicate is that the primary agents of creolization were the Africans who, as active participants in the process, as well as the party whose cultural traits are principally found in the new creolized culture, make it happen. It is worth underlining this, since, when considering the new world and especially the Caribbean, one generally does not focus on the transformation of the Europeans, but primarily on that of the Africans. Africans are the primary agents of creolization.

Europe becoming Creole

Creolization requires distinction as well as consciousness of it. Despite the desire to remain exclusively French, despite the concrete precautions taken to affirm the Frenchness of the colony and ensure the latter is not distinct from France, distinction occurred. At first glance, this distinction seems to respond solely to the adjustment to a new place and the constraints brought about by its characteristics. This compels pragmatic transformation according to a simple mode. The members of the colonies will be aware of what distinguishes them from their respective motherlands. As far as the white population is concerned, it endeavours to display its difference from its native France on the one hand, and from the Africans on the other hand.

On the one hand, the chroniclers among whom Reverend du Tertre is counted and who endeavor to observe, record and study the parameters of the colony make a critical point by constantly comparing the local mores, behaviors, and practices of the inhabitants to those of France. It is worth noticing that du Tertre observes and writes on and about the colonies as a French subject vis-à-vis the locals he even distinctively labels as "they" and are locally called the *habitants*. So, on the other hand, the writers constantly put forth the differences that distinguish the habitants from their motherland. One of the primary differences between France and her American colonies is to be found in the make-up of the population and in the institutional structure of the respective lands. Indeed, there scarcely are

Blacks on the French soil and no direct form of African enslavement is perpetrated in France. The differences between France and her colonies will be such and so much felt from within the colonies that Saint-Domingue's enslavers themselves press demands for a political status change. In 1793, M. Tanguy de la Boissière will therefore argue that: "It is indispensable…that there be a different status for our country that differs from France in all points…In Saint-Domingue, there can only be but masters and slaves; that is masters who cultivate and slaves as cultivating instruments."[30]

Much prior to this period in the colony of Martinique, a particular anecdote, though comical and evoking a smile, is nevertheless symbolic and informs us of the vision the colony's habitants had of themselves and how much they intended to manifest it. It also highlights the unquestionable discrepancy between the insider's and the outsider's gaze. Because of the outsider's ignorance of the milieu's specificities, he situates himself at the margin, thus underlining the critical importance of ontological distinction. The anecdote: a foreigner, that is a Frenchman newly arrived in the colony, is slow to understand and adjust his clothing to the local climate. He incurs the wrath of a local:

> One never wears a coat except when it rains. As a matter of fact, someone who saw a newcomer at church with a coat on, filed a lawsuit against him to demand for compensation and his pétun duty saying that the man would make him loose his because of the winter weather he was going to attract onto the colony with his coat.[31]

Most of all, it is observed that twenty years after the arrival in the colony the colonial inhabitants can already be distinguished from France through an intrinsic "façon de vivre" – to such an extent, in fact, that the children born in the colony cannot be expected to find integration in the France to which their fathers continuously travel. They have "no customs of France."[32] The masculine population is not faithful to the location, but the institutions of marriage and family nevertheless trigger their local anchorage. Creole identity operates here, since it is because the children belong in the colony and are attached to the native territory, and not to that of France, that their fathers consent to not incessantly traveling back and forth to France, which thus creates stability and coherence *in situ*: "…marriages have secured the loyalty of men who having left many children who have no custom of France, have consolidated the colony and established a sweet and pleasant way of life."[33]

Therefore, the process of cultural amalgamation happens and its characteristics end up being shared by all parties, as it is symbolically and concretely shown by the compelling fact that, despite their will for absolute dissociation with the enslaved, the Europeans end up sharing the same local taste as the Africans – even preferring for instance, the food normally

reserved to the enslaved. As they demarcate themselves from France, and even though racial demarcation is rigidly practiced, the French colonists logically identify with the specificities of their milieu. For instance, taste is paramount in typifying identity, but whereas the enslaved have no choice but accept the one definite type of food served and let it shape their culinary habit, that is, a sort of agency representing the local culture, the enslavers actually make their difference known by eschewing the taste of the motherland, *choosing* the one they perceive and determine as coherently closer to their local sensitivity. Even given the belief that Africans are tasteless and unable to determine and measure taste as "good" taste, this particular instance of choosing culinary habit is critical to the function of taste as a "*lieu commun*," that is as a feature shared by the opposed parties:

> For their food, the slaves are given two pounds of salted codfish and two pots of cassava flour per week: this is what one calls the ordinary. The slaves' food has been exactly this from the first to the last day. This conformity was one of the inevitable consequences of slavery. All of the stomachs must do with it as changing this is impossible. But here again, habit is tied with necessity and both the Blacks and the masters enjoy salted meat and every Creole family serves salted codfish at lunch. Unfortunately, the slave cannot diversify their food like the master…As for the cassava flour, it is healthy, fresh and well appropriate to marry with salted meat. The slave of the French colony prefers cassava flour to anything else and many planters and a good deal of white ladies reject bread for this flour.[34]

The differences are not only physical but they are also spiritual in that the habitants identify with the local practices they constituted. For instance, du Tertre insistently asserts that "even though the richest of them import flour from France and Holland to make bread, many of them prefer the old and good cassava bread than that of France…Even though they ordinarily serve salted meat from France, the habitants feed cattle and always have fresh meat like chicken, pork…When their friends pay them a visit, they receive them with much cordiality and entertain them in a way that is no less amicable than in Europe"[35] To this must be added the fact that the popular drink is not wine but "*mabi*" or "*woucou*" and even "*vésou*," local beverages directly tied to specific agricultural activity.[36]

When coming to America, du Tertre insists that: "Among all of the diseases the habitants are attacked by, some are common with those of France and others are proper to the islands."[37] Yet, most often, the diseases are cured "with almost the same method as in France. But most of the French and the enslaved are taken care of only when the disease is anchored and that it is excruciating."[38] The appreciation and use of time are so much different with the European conception that abolitionist Victor Schœlcher says that "No one in the French colonies is in a rush nor rushes anyone."[39]

One of the chief properties of mores in the colony relies on hospitality, a "Christian virtue" according to du Tertre, which ensures peace and friendship. It is even feared that this virtue will be endangered by the opening of inns, and so this hospitable culture will become "as rare on the island that it is in France."[40] Hospitality is paired with solidarity despite the intra-racial exploitation: "They help one another charitably when a habitant wants to roof their house all of the neighbors come to help and they in turn do the same. When one has an emergency one borrows the slaves of another and this is rarely refused."[41] The primary social distinguishers in France, that is social ranking and differentiation based on one's social occupation,[42] are repudiated in the colony within the white group since hierarchy is racialized and being white ensures the highest position, even as the level of wealth is nevertheless taken into account: "There is no difference between the noble and commoners among the habitants. Those who have the most properties are more respected for only officers can hold rank. Thus only richness helps dissociate the others."[43]

Again, the value with which social distinction is obtained points to one of the modes of the psycho-social construction, which is tantamount to total exploitation. It also is intimately linked to vanity that is symbolized by the taste for luxury as this itself is expressed through the dressing code: "Luxury is very important in the islands. One is above all keen on pretty clothing."[44] Materiality, exploitation and vanity are exemplified by women who live by proxy of their husband's social statuses: "Women benefit from the privilege of their husbands and they believe that they deserve being called '*demoiselle*' because their husbands are soldiers. Their dressing habits show their social rank."[45]

In France, during the Ancien Régime period and long after, much consideration is granted to the nature of the female subject, and she is typically taken as an evil object. Naturalists, doctors, religious representatives, the judicial arena, writers, politicians, philosophers all granted critical attention to this confounding "being" and attempted a definition that systematically reduced her to nothingness. Women under this regime and after were regarded as bearing a pathological body easily possessed by demonic forces, all according to the propagated humoral and religious theories. Called "the Sex," women are said to be "debilitated," "feeble," and "cold," and are relegated to the status of spouses and mothers, all framed in a rigid legal system that pronounces them the legal and inextricable pupils of fathers and husbands. However, as of the eighteenth century, more efforts than in the previous centuries are made to educate young women high in the social hierarchy, though primarily with domestic skills such as sewing, embroidering and cooking, all of which appropriately correspond to the general view of their sex.[46]

In the colony, at the time when these anti-women discourses circulate, no parallel intellectual or philosophical consideration is paid to women,

whose mores seem to differ from their French mothers and sisters. In the colony, the education of white women is nonexistent and deemed unnecessary since their occupying the very top of the social ladder renders all skills useless:

> Most parents educate their girls with too much freedom which is the reason why they lack the modesty and propriety of our girls in France as well as many things they should know like embroidery…and the like...They are married very early and I do not know whether it is because of the heat of the country but one does not refrain from marrying them at eleven years old while at this age they would still bear a bib in France. They become mothers very early.[47]

It is also through the women's dressing code due to the climate that transpires a trait that can be associated with their new outlook and that of the male group. In France, the morale usages do not allow women to expose parts of their body. Whenever he sees one so dressed, du Tertre himself takes pride in the colonial women whom he then describes as "brave" which means that their attire hide all of the intimate parts of the body not to be seen such as the shoulder or the arms. He also insists in underlining that many of them are "*vêtues à la negligence*" wore sleeveless dresses and made a point of explaining that this was due to the "*chaleur*" that is, the hotclimate. This feminine dressing culture constitutes a revolution for the time and a liberation of the mores not found in France. As a matter of fact, the colony is said to be typified by one behavioral culture, which is libertine, while the weight of moralism and religion in France rigidify social comportments.

The judicial system's regulation of the life of the colony shows some critical differences from that of the motherland. For example, after a woman had been sentenced to death and actually undergone a cruel death in 1657, the religious body expressed their serious contention and concern underlying that these practices in the colony "which consequences are dangerous" are not even used in France.[48] The colony developed barbaric practices not perpetrated in the motherland. The rendition of justice, another mode of culture, differs from that of continental France. Du Tertre says that "[a]ll causes are judged in short attire and one does not even know what cassock and square hats are. In these islands, we practice good and short justice: for since all of the writing formalities are not followed like in France…cases are closed over night and no process last more than a week."[49]

Within the colony, the critical legal approach sustaining the organization of the economic practices also bears intrinsic and local modes. Those born in the colony, the Creoles, do not pay any of the one hundred pounds of "*pétun*" owed to the Lords, which is an exceptional privilege[50] that testifies to the acknowledgment of their singularity. Consequently, for the white population of the colony, to be Creole is to be born in a

geographical place different from that of one's parents. It is also to experience phenomena in the colony that shape one's practices distinctly from that of the original territory. Moreover, to be Creole is to undergo a status change from low to high inscribed in concrete and visible wealth. Creole identity in this light corresponds to parameters such as, firstly, a defined geography; secondly, practice in conformity with the climatic conditions of geography; and, thirdly, considerable wealth.

It is a truism that the vast majority of Europeans were in the colony to exploit the land and the soil through extensive free African labor. It is similarly a given that the material and pecuniary richness of the Europeans is acquired thanks to the agricultural[51] labor of the enslaved Africans. Therefore, the first noticeable and incommensurable transformation undergone by the white Europeans has to be seen in the drastic change between the generally poor social condition at their arrival in the colony and the rapid social ascension they benefit from: "…as soon as a man has gained enough money to purchase slaves, they hire an overseer to take care of the great house and does nothing but have fun. It does not mean that they do not keep an eye on their business. It means that never do they work again."[52]

Labat also points to the critical example of the licentious peculiarity of the enslavers at a time when France was entangled in crude religiosity and to the transforming power of the African productive labor that undeniably brings low class to high, and so unmistakable wealth:

> …la Boissière was from Linas, next to Paris. He was a very good habitant, very skillful and good at many a thing. But all of these good skills were accompanied with such a strong passion for wine that it was rare not to find him in a pitiful plight. He had a partnership with his brother in law whose name is Lozol. He had a fairly good number of negroes and they cultivated cocoa, they made roucou and fed cattle and poultry. This Lozol was from the Turenne viscounty and a sawyer. If need be, he could also be a carpenter and although he came to the islands as an indentured servant he already had amassed enough goods in such a way that when I left he was rich of more than one hundred thousand francs. He was a good man and a true original person who had this particularity of massacring the French language and a true talent to make everyone laugh.[53]

It is the African's concrete action and production – that is their work and productive capacity – that allow the European to access the third factor that signifies Creoleness. In this light, to become Creole bears an irretrievable materialistic nature, for it means to become rich, which, in the context of the plantation, stipulates superiority. The strong materialistic aspect of creoleness is reinforced by the very questionable means leading to richness, which entails a serious axiological problematic. Richness is acquired through

a fundamental amoral system antithetical to merit, effort and rigor. This too lessens the very notion of superiority, which aims at signifying elevation and grandeur. It is nonetheless important to note that, contrary to France, one of the first parameters of social construction and hierarchy in the colony is race.

In the same way, it is worth stressing that the European group abandoned all manual skills; hence, a certain decay of their abilities, abilities that are restrained and limited to one primary, if not one sole, skill: plantation management. Becoming Creole – that is, rich and material oriented – the white population neglected participation in nation building, which requires skills like the ones they forsook.

Concerning the economic rise of the white population of the plantation, the fact has seldom been noted that not only did craftsmen undergo a profound *material* transformation in an exclusively agricultural space, but, in addition, they experienced a crucial social transmutation. Conscious of the fact that being a "master" is by far more advantageous than working for people (something they did as craftsmen), they soon abandoned their original skill for a "great house." Often, they profited from the scarcity of craftsmen and the need for the rare goods they offered:

> [S]ince it is better for them to become masters rather than being servants, I mean since it is better for them to purchase a great house and make it profitable, than working for others, hence there are few of them and that what few there are, they exaggerate their prices so much that whatever they make is much more than in France and since they earn a lot in a short span of time they soon buy a great house. After that they no longer practice their skill or their art or only routinely until they completely cease all activity.[54]

Additionally, the presence of doctors in the colony is paramount, hence their subsequent numbers. One of their tasks is to shave the French weekly, and

> …those who are skillful become rich in a jiffy. Since they spend little for their medicines and hire one or two boys for three years whom they send to the country for the shaving, they are relieved of this task in addition to the fact that this costs them nothing. They do not feed these boys since they are sent to the countrysides. The latter think they are skillful as soon as they are able to somewhat shave and bleed…The first ones to this profession in the islands became excessively rich…[55]

The sawyer group offers another example of the rapid social ascension based on the exploitation of others in the craft industry. "Some of them," du Tertre writes, "spend their time sawing wood and making planks of them that they sell at a high price to the habitants."[56] To this can be added the similar case of innkeepers like du Tertre indicates:

> [O]ne would not believe what they have earned, for not only they have gained all the money in circulation in the entire island, they have also profited from the clearest and from all the goods of many habitants. Two or three people would sometime spend the totality of their one hundred pétun for lunch there.[57]

According to the nature of the social parameters, as well as the mindset that transformed the white population of the colony, it seems that being Creole means privileging the pragmatic, the material, and the religious, not the spiritual. *Indeed, no humanistic idea germinates out of this particular society.* Yet, among other things, the French society of this time produces ideas, such as those expressed by the Enlightenment, that display the concern of many about mankind and inter-relations between cultures.

The African Apperception and European Perception: Creating a '*situation anaclitique*'

In 1840, eight years before the abolition of slavery in the French colonies, and while colonial culture was already well-formed and structured, talking about the French American possessions, M. Le Chevalier, a pro-slavery Frenchman claims that: "…one knows that it is the Whites who founded culture there."[58] Yet, in the chronicles by European observers and writers concerning the practices and mores of the plantation system, Europeans are rarely described as producing or practicing culture. They are often described as inflicting severe punishments on the enslaved or taking drastic measures to guarantee their social and economic profit from the Africans' free labor. It is rather the African group that is often portrayed as replicating their ancestral cultural modes, such as dancing, storytelling, or singing. One of the primary spiritual properties du Tertre notes about the Africans is a positive apperception that denotes a strong sense of self. "Speaking about their spirit," he writes, "it is true that they are proud, arrogant and that they have such a good opinion of themselves, that they have as much self-esteem or even much more for themselves than the masters they serve.[59] As to Jean-Baptiste Labat he asserts that the Africans "…have such a good opinion of themselves that they regard themselves as much as or more than the masters they serve."[60] The African apperception triggers on their part resistance to the depersonalizing process to such an extent that cultural transformation cannot be achieved without confrontation. The confrontation testifies to a counter-intellectual disposition that denotes awareness, a conscious for judgement capacity and vigilance. For instance, talking about the Mahometans, du Tertre says the following: "…they never embrace the Christian religion."[61]

It is this critical disposition of African spirituality that the enslavers will endeavor to contain in order to maintain the material project, a project

which necessitates that they totally be "subdued to a passive obedience."[62] A Creole proverb asserts that "*sak vid pa ka tjenbé doubout*"; in other words, an empty bag cannot hold in the upright position. Emptying the African of their epistemological foundation creates a fundamental collapse; this is the end result of the project. This implies a reasoned and structured strategy as Labat points out:

> This is what brings the nations of Europe established in America to treat them with condescendence, to never forgive them any misdemeanor like with those one does not fear for if ever they thought one feared them they would become bolder and more inclined to foment rebellions to terminate their captivity.[63]

Reverend Labat suggests a methodology to literally "*dépayser*"[64] – to disorient, literally in French "to uproot one's country out of one's mind"– tame the Africans and teach them the customs of the plantation[65] so that they "…be uprooted for ever."[66] Labat advocates a *programme d'athrepsie,* which is the tradition of depriving a newborn of food in order to elicit a *situation anaclitique,* that is, a brutal separation from the maternal care during the early years of a child's life. Working on a par with the *doxa* system, the *situation anaclitique* aspires to bring the Africans to act against themselves and to literally become auto-cannibals. Talking about the suggestive kalenda dance that is performed in the colony of Martinique, Labat says: "To make them forget about this infamous dance we have taught them several French dances such as the *minuet*, *courante*, *passe-pied* and many more, as well as the swing and circle dances so that they can dance with partners together and jump as much as they want to."[67] Bringing the Africans to descend from their structured, sound and self-determined apperception to a debasing, motivated, and externally determined perception is the intention of the colonial strategy. The transformation is therefore governed by ideological and political ideas. It is thus not a spontaneous but a political transformation.

The physical violence suffered by the body of the Africans is not to be doubted. Attacking the organic body in a systemic and systematic manner is a strategy meant to elaborate a Bourdieusian system of symbolic violence destined to disorient psychic stability. The mutilated and dismembered body, the body ingurgitating excrements or lacerated with the indelible and visible marks of the lash, render the image of a monster. It is this monstrous image of himself that the destabilizing strategy aims at imposing onto the enslaved – the one who has to integrate it and adhere to it. It is the same body that will carry another visible sign displaying cultural transformation. Du Tertre describes the African traditional attire used at the very beginning of the settlement of Martinique by the Africans, and yet Schœlcher's report confirms that, by the mid-ninetieth century, the enslaved had ended up adopting the clothing code of the enslaver. The symbolic and concrete meaning of this fact is crucial when considering how dress-code is such an

important identity sign, and that, when wearing the European costume, the enslaved cannot be recognized. Schœlcher writes:

> On Sundays, they are seen wearing *redingotes* or in their Sundays with satin jackets, frilled shirts, boots, and of course the indispensable umbrella. They completely adopt our costume and once they are so attired, they cannot be recognized for they carry themselves well. Seeing them like that would not bring one to know that they are the same men seen the day before working in petty cloths.[68]

A century later, Lafcadio Hearn, a Greco-British-American who visited Martinique between 1887 and 1889, will be struck by the singularity of Martinican fashion.[69] Apart from the somatic vessel, cultural and determining psychic modes are used to reflect the internalization of paradigms that sustain the psychic discomfort of the Africans. The first means of this psychic attack is religion, as the goal is to sever the Africans from their original system of beliefs to the benefice of the Europeans, who thus becomes the maternal milk (according to du Tertre's symbolic terminology). "Their children born in the islands," writes du Tertre, "are as much instructed as the French kids thus sucking religion with their milk and doing so since their birth I hope they will practice their faith for their own sake."[70]

Similarly, the obliteration of the African language in favor of the adoption of the French language is consciously sought in order to serve the same strategy. Du Tertre affirms that the enslavers,

> have rather had the small enslaved consorted with their own children rather than with their fathers and mothers. From this comes the fact that the majority of the small negroes speak but French and understand nothing of their parents' language except this pidgin we commonly speak in the islands also with the savages and which is a jargon made up with French, Spanish, English and Portuguese words.[71]

Du Tertre's description is written in the very early years of the colony of Martinique, but years later, in 1693, the thirty year-old Reverend Labat points to a fifteen or sixteen year-old enslaved, Robert Popo, who was given to him by the habitants of Macouba in Martinique and who spoke French. He is a Creole – that is, born in the colony, of Africans. At the same time, Labat says that he himself could understand the pidgin that is already widely spoken by the enslaved: "The negro who was given to me was Creole, he had already served other priests, he knew the neighborhood where I was going, he spoke French, but anyway I was accustomed to the ordinary pidgin spoken by the negroes."[72]

The children of the African therefore speak either French or the language that will later be named Creole. Moreover, it is believed that children of Africans born in the colony are more easily manipulated than their parents and therefore less inclined to carry out revolts. Thus, they also count on the reproduction capacity of the enslaved to strengthen the Creole system with Creole tools that will best suit and serve their economic and objectivation purpose: "…our French make sure they marry them early as they can obtain children from them who, in turn, will replace their parents, do the same work and give the same service."[73] The transformation of the Africans is wished, directed, and implemented, for it is necessary as a controlling and oppressing tool. This is why a strategy is adopted consisting of making the assimilated enslaved take care of the new comers, the *bossals*, to speed up the latter's integration.[74]

Given the violence that governs it, given its power to turn Africans against their own selves as auto-cannibals disposed to serve the system that deconstructs them, and given the intention that consists in imposing alien cultural and identity components in order to support the psychic destruction of an established culture and identity, the creolization of the Africans, which progressively but evidently takes place, is as problematic as that of the Europeans. In this light, while creolizing the Europeans is a way to achieve material ease and power, creolizing the Africans helps subdue them at the same time as it contributes to support and carry the European's enrichment project. This is all the more so because the motivation to transform the Africans is also triggered by essentialism and racial pride according to which European "superior" idiosyncrasy, if assumed, can contribute to better the defective and retarded ways of the Africans. We should be reminded here of the very important fact that this is such because the European mindset stipulates that, although it is only climate that triggers the change and transformation of white personality and physiology, it is, for Africans, the contact with Europeans that brings about spiritual and physical transformation, for the Africans' nature is said to be corrupt. This troubling aspect of the creolization of the enslaved group is all the more enhanced because the process itself creates a type of cultural, but also physiological, essentialism, as the creolized object is logically seen both by the enslavers and the enslaved as superior than the non-creolized.

The enslavers are convinced of their being different than their French counterparts in France and different than and superior to the enslaved in the colony. But, later, the Creole enslaved also come to take pride in positing their difference, in words and attitudes, toward newly arrived enslaved so that in terms of the expression and consciousness of this distinction, both enslaved and enslavers will form a compact and homogeneous cluster. Thus Moreau de Saint Méry proclaims that: "The Creole Negroes are born with physical and moral qualities that give them a real right of superiority over those transported from Africa."[75] The Bossals are thus called to indicate their

difference and the Creole enslaved go as far as to calling them "horses" for not being Chirstianized: "Since the Creole negroes pretend, because they have been baptized, that they are superior to the negroes arriving from Africa and whom are called Bossals, a Spanish appellation, the African that they call horses are very eager to be baptized."[76] This global vision of cultural, and even racial, transformation is such that at the end of the nineteenth century, Hearn will contribute to the construction of the myth of creoleness as the most enviable, viable and worthwhile way for humankind: "And even in a bronze have I ever seen such extraordinary muscles. An anatomy professor could find inspiration with this model. A sculptor who wants to create a sort or Mercury should simply use this body as a mold with no modification."[77]

It is understood that the contribution of the Whites meliorates the body of the Blacks into such a bronze-like sculpture. Therefore, when forcefully passing their most critical and defining identity constituents (namely, religion and language) onto the Africans, the Europeans envisage a direct and above all full, mechanical, intact, and crude reception. *It is consequently a political creolization.* Transposition is aimed at, and not interposition – interposition would require the positing and the reception of elements through a modulation performed by the Africans' psychological specificities. Never do they consider the fact that, even if it is severely undermined by the violent assaults in the Americas, the receptive engine of these cultural parameters are actually set in an intrinsic system one could call Africanness, which is the engine that has its own modes and operations that work according to specific African manners, manners that will define the nature of the product coming out of its processes, operations, and actions.

Glissant presents Creolization as a point of encounter of at least two cultural elements under mutual influence. It is clear that the European does not conceive of such an encounter engaging reciprocity.

Africanizing Europe, Making the New World

Clearly, like the children of the French who were born in the colony and identify with it rather than with the land of their ascendants, the children of the Africans, also born in the colony, acquire the mores proper to this space. Both groups of children are likely to distinguish themselves from their ascendants psycho-culturally, while also sharing with them undeniable properties. The sum of the cultural constituents that typifies cannot logically be said to be equal to the respective sums of the cultural elements that make up their European or African parents' identity. It is undoubtedly these two groups of children born in the colony who will carry the modes of creolization the deepest. However, because of the operating modes and paradigms of the transformation, its systematic nature, as well as the

imposed geographical distance, one of the consequences for the Africans and their children born in the colony is something like a Fanonian psychological aberration. One can identify scores of instances of affective distortion, such as the extreme loyalty many enslaved will vow to their enslavers or the protection they will accord them.[78] Du Tertre mentions the fact that, in times of upheavals or wars, many members of the enslaved group would rather suffer death than denouncing their enslavers.[79] In the twentieth century, Fanon analyzes such psychological and psychiatric effects of the *doxa* system among the colonized, using Martinicans as an exemplary case study, and concludes that, "White people are entangled in their whiteness. Black people in their blackness."[80] Blackness and whiteness being two mystifications created during the colonial and slavery period.

If the Europeans decide to become faithful to the location and its identifying practices, perhaps because of their family, marital, and paternal situation – in other words, if they chose to take into account and respect their offspring's creoleness, it remains that, contrary to the Africans, they are in constant contact with the original motherland from which they receive a direct cultural and political influence and to which they can at will easily return. Yet, despite the close proximity with their motherland, Europeans did not choose to invest the territory with the culture with which they never ceased to be in contact. It is true that the Frenchmen settling in the colony of Martinique originated primarily from regions of Northern France and that in the colony they are rather regulated by the centralistic Parisian power – a force that molds them as well. It is similarly true that the colonial enterprise starts during the Renaissance period in French history, and that steps are therefore taken to disavow those preceding centuries regarded as dark and non-civilized. However, during those previous centuries, particularly the medieval ones, some of the most distinctive French mores and values were formed. It remains in addition that the desire of the white French in the colony is not to act out his culture but to concentrate his attention on measures that will allow him to secure absolute racial and socio-economic supremacy. Writing of Europe in the colonial era, Alexis de Tocqueville stresses the disparity between cultural advancements (such as in the literary domain) and the blocked consciousness of the citizenry: "In the midst of this brilliant and literary Europe, never the idea of Rights had been more unknown. Never had people had so few political experiences and never the notions of true freedom had so little penetrated the minds."[81]

Meanwhile, the "implexe" situation experienced by the African group, which aims at concretely and symbolically depriving them of any form of voice and freedom, motivates the downtrodden group to seek comfort in fundamental cultural anchorages in order to counter-balance and challenge the atrophying system. The contribution of the African to the creolization procedure has to be understood according to three lights, which are, first of all, their numeric predominance; secondly, the exceptional magnitude of the

violence and ordeal faced that logically required self-defense and the urgency to maintain oneself by projecting it onto the territory; and, thirdly, the solid and deep putting down of the roots of African cultures. As to the Africanization process, it has to be seen according to two angles, the first of which is how Africans transpose their culturally representative traits directly, and the second angle is how the European transpositions are actually achieved *through* the Africans.

Here, it is the critical strength of the African systems of cultural values, but also the fact that spirituality and systematic performance of cultural rites and gestures were inherently and concretely part of the everyday life in Africa. That is, because these gestures primordially constituted one's way of being and of doing that the Africans, being vested and critically inhabited with this cultural force, could continue to assume it in their new American location and actually posit it as their self-defense and counter-action. Offering an alternative from and to the closed, essentialist, and monolithic European vision of the universe, in that it offers a multilateral opening and an unexpected second system of reference to the relationship, the African systems of values served as a means to crudely contradict the oppressing system and bring in what is lacking – that is, the African systems of values bring ethics, relativity, diversity, and a dialogic and inclusive inter-relation. Through his action, the African expands the initial plurality and introduces diversity. It is this inclusion of diversity that justifies Glissant's notion of diversality, a notion that contradicts the rigid notion of universalism according to which only one sole referent is reductively regarded as valuable and acceptable. Diversality does not efface nor does it dismiss the commonalities between the two groups. Rather, it acknowledges them while integrating each specificity at the same time. Consequently, to the European thesis of essence, the African proposes a counter-thesis of Sartrean existence. The European, exclusively material project is contradicted with an inclusive immaterial worldview. Enlarging the perspective on culture and identity through his inclusive initiative is therefore the African's totalizing counter-action that helps evacuate that fragmented principle wished for in the cultural expressions in the colony's space. Retaining and performing *in situ* many of the African traditional expressions to such an extent that they influence, in a complex and critical way, the culture in formation, which later becomes one of the primary cultural and ontological constituents. This is a *tour de force*. If creolization appears as such too, it is in this very action, through the integration into the process of what is wished to beannihilated and obliterated: the African personality. This fact would not have borne such highly critical importance had not the Europeans had the mission and project of "*dépayser*" the Africans, and so of aspiring to an American space bearing solely the marked influence of Europe. It is the action of the African that gives full meaning to that notion of encounter – rencontre – on which Glissant insists, since, as he

proposes it, "*La créolisation envisage à jamais son contraire*"[82] – "Creolization takes its contrary into consideration forever."

Therefore, Africans played a tremendous role in the process of simple and complex cultural transformation in insular America, and one can go as far as proposing that they are the first agents of creolization. The complexity of the transformation is to be seen in the constant inter-penetration of African and European values. The product of this inter-penetration found progressive anchorage in time to finally epitomize those who observed its modes. As noted above, African cultural mores are transposed directly onto the territory to which the mores are appropriately adapted. The African adaptations take into account the presence, the influence, and dialogic inter-relationship with the Europeans' particularisms. At the same time, receiving the European ways according to the codes of their *noesis*, the Africans logically adapt them accordingly, despite cultural interdiction and subsequent repression.

For instance, whenever possible, the occupation of space and especially habitat, followed the modes of the African conception and thus, du Tertre writes, "[a]ll the members of an enslaved family build their shanty in the same place leaving nevertheless ten or twelve feet between each of them. When there are many of them, they build their shanty in a circle and leave a space at the center that they keep clean at best."[83] Alongside this transposition with no adaptation, songs and the traditional practice of singing observed in Africa is also performed in insular America. In the plantation, the African sings while working, but the content is local since the lyrics are based on their local experience: "…when they work, they ordinarily sing songs in which they repeat all that their masters or overseers do to them positively or negatively."[84] The lyrics can be particularly oppositional as Victor Schœlcher stresses in *De l'esclavage des Noirs et de la législation coloniale* that, "…in Martinique, one year ago, a young colored woman…was flogged for singing a song against the Whites."[85]

The African oral system, composed of proverbs and storytales, is one of the most noticeable African cultural systems transposed and adapted in America. In general terms, there corresponds to almost every Caribbean folktale an African one. However, because there is transposition, the differing pattern relies on the new symbolism given as the content of the tales, and therefore to the transposed traditional characters such as Anansi, la Jicotéa or Compère Lapin and Ti-Malice for the African Anansi character or the equivalent of the hyena, that is, Zamba, Tacoohma or Bouki. This notwithstanding, the European folktales undergo transformation under the African's noesis to such an extent that characters and tales like Snow White, Cinderella, or Barbe Bleue are legitimate components of the Caribbean oral canon.

Many of the dances the enslavers bring to the colony back from Paris are also reconstrued by the enslaved's sense of rhythm and of movement – to such an extent that they are part of the Martinique cultural heritage today, such as *biguine, haute taille* or *bal boutjé*. Indeed, the encounter between Africa and Europe happens in the domain of dancing as while the enslaved practice and prefer their original *kalenda*, for instance, which is associated with the field and the heavy work it demanded – *danse des champs*. They also adhere to the Europeans' *danse de salon*, which is generally appended to domesticity and points to social stratification among the enslaved group. The European observers who witness these phenomena are puzzled and unable to understand the point of the matter, which they then dismiss as imitation, as when Peytraud writes that "[t]he domestics, imitators of the Whites whom they like to monkey, dance *minuet* and contra-dance and their balls are such a spectacle that it can make the most serious person laugh so much the adjustment to the European mode is peculiar and sometimes very grotesque."[86] The observer's biased gaze does not permit them to grasp what is at stake and thus cannot see that what is being articulated is precisely the traits of what will latter on qualify the territory. It is the originality of the phenomenon, never seen before, that brings to mind the impression of the grotesque. What is erroneously labeled "grotesque," however, is the very product, the Glissantian point of encounter that typifies creolized culture.

Two other examples of the European cultural signs modulated under the action and works of the African in America regard religion and language, two astutely important identity symbols. As to religion, Labat regrets that despite the Catholic Church efforts to Christianize the Africans, which they nevertheless successfully achieve, the bulk of the enslaved remain, at the same time, faithful to their original system of beliefs – hence their dual spiritual allegiance: "These Blacks…mix up…the unmixable, and secretly maintain the superstitions of their former fetishist cult together with the ceremonies of the Christian religion. Given that, one can assuredly judge of the type of Christianize in those countries."[87] Further, after he travels to Jamaica in 1902 to collect some Anansi Stories, Walter Jekyll reports: "When the stranger lands in Jamaica and hears the rapid rush of words, and the soft, open vowels, he often says: 'Why, I thought they talked English here, but it sounds like Spanish or Italian.'"[88] This bewildering way of speaking that causes one to believe that the unmixable is mixed is of course, Anansi's particular way; Anansi, that is, who in the oral system stands for the enslaved.

In *Voyage aux Antilles* published in 1842, Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac is confounded when he sees the dexterity and capacity with which domestics reproduce the enslavers' manners. Although the scene denotes assimilation through imitation, as well as the fact that the power relation together with the "*programme d'athrepsie*," generates a problematic desire for the Africans to acquire, even to covet, the modes of those who are

at the top of the social hierarchy; it also renders a drastic shift from the normative slave ideology: the audacity to change, in addition to the fact that the Glissantian "*identité-rhizome*" is now at play:

> At Fort-Royal and on fat Sunday, I witnessed a ball given by domestic slaves. One could attend only with an invitation…The orchestra was made up with white soldiers paid by the slaves. On this day, the Whites were truly humiliated for everything was tasteful…Never in my life had I seen so much jewelry, turquoise, emerald, and pearls. The women wore a lot of necklaces and a range of bracelets…And when I looked I was astounded for I saw a Congo…or a dark skin woman…This was no *bamboula*. Here, everything was elegant and all of the blacks spoke French.[89]

The observers are able to identify the influence of the Whites on the Blacks, an outcome they gladly name simple imitation or "monkeying" – *singerie*. However, they fail to notice that the process is multilateral and not unequivocal. Born in 1891, Elodie Dujon-Jourdain, a Martinican *béké* writes her memoirs, in which there clearly appears the Africanization of her cast less than three centuries after the start of the process. While Manman Loulou, her maternal grandmother, read European folktales to them, her paternal grandmother, Manman Nènène, tells them Caribbean folktales she calls *contes nègres*. According to Elodie, these *contes nègres* were by far more appropriate to their sensitivity and idiosyncrasy, so much so that they did not like the tales read by their maternal grandmother. Besides, the description Elodie gives of her paternal grandmother is one that connects the latter to her former enslaved contemporaries:

> The tales Manman Loulou would tell us by night looked like her. These stories chosen out of a collection written for European kids always had a moral purpose…[T]hey took place in distinguished French castles. All of this was pretty…but Manman Nènène's tales were by far more alive and funny. She never resented our local folklore and told us stories about Compè Lapin and Compè Tig. Miming their actions, singing the songs, which sometimes bore no meaning, invented by the Blacks, Manman Nènène rendered perfectly well the atmosphere of her childhood when the slaves would tell her stories. With her, the past of our country penetrated us and impregnated us with a special poetry forever.[90]

In the same way here, we see expressed the culmination of Glissant's proposition about the rhizomic roots that open up onto Relation.[91] During his stay in Martinique at the end of the nineteenth century, Lafcadio Hearn noticed, among the people and especially among the black population, elements of the culture and of the spiritual disposition that reminds of Glissant's principle of Relation. He transcribed them in *Youma*, a novel set

during the abolition of slavery and published in 1890, a year prior to Elodie Dujon-Jourdain's birth.

It is here important to explain the critical role of the child-minder, called a *da* in the French colonies. Highly respected and, more often than not, regarded as an integral mother to white children, she is carefully selected and sacrificially dedicates her life to those whom she serves. A bewildering but special relationship exists between the *da* and the children of the enslavers, to the point that the children often felt closer to her than the biological mother. Similarly, she is also conceived to be a better mother than the white mother. This intriguing figure of the *da* allows direct transmission of African cultural principles to the Creoles. This would not be critically important from epistemological and symbolic perspectives if not for the fact that the *da* actually *breastfed* the enslavers' children. Here is what du Tertre says about the *da*: "they are excellent children minders, which is why our French women who can afford it use them to breastfeed their children. They breastfeed and rear the children better than their own mothers."[92]

Inspired by the true story of a *da*, Hearn fantasizes the relationship between Youma and the enslavers to the benefit of the latter, with whom she firmly takes sides and whom she protects from the enslaved's rebellion. Youma is indeed owned by Madame Peyronnette and the *da* of her grandchild, Mayotte. Youma's alienation is sorrowfully at play and prevents here from pinpointing the enslavers' tyrannical paternalism, but Hearn's intention is not to denounce this state of affairs – that is, the mental abberation and ambiguity slavery brings about. Rather, his intent is to enhance his desires in order to promote mixed culture as the ultimate form and model. Hearn fails to question Youma's paradoxical and ambivalent choice. In the same vein, in light of its obvious lyricism and idealism, Hearn's writing extolls a worthy sense of honor and responsibility on the part of Youma, who here embodies the entire black population. Youma's act and perspectives are romanticized to the troubling point that they confer on the novel a certain tone of Greek tragedy. Indeed, even after the enslaver denies her the right to be free and marry Gabriel, and despite her everlasting loyalty, she is but a common enslaved. Youma nonetheless decides to die with them whose daughter she has promised to protect until death. Choosing the enslavers' fate, she refuses her freedom twice, first by not marooning with her beloved Gabriel, and then again when she refuses the ladder Gabriel offers her to flee the room the enslaved have set on fire.

However, though this does not seem to be Hearn's objective, his descriptions cast light on the crucial historical fact that I have stressed here, as it is a symbolic and concrete indication of the Africanization process vis-à-vis Europeans. Indeed, like du Tertre notes, if it is true that African children will suck in Christian precepts like a sort of maternal milk, it is also true that European children are spiritually constructed with components that express some of the most critical elements of African spiritual particularity. The only

way Youma can make Mayotte keep still, for example, is to tell her a story, one which carries specific African imagery. This is why and how Youma keeps telling Mayotte stories about Nanie Rosette, Yé, Pyé chik-la, or Damkéléman. Mayotte had heard all of these stories a thousand times before, but the more she hears them, the more she wants to hear them again. What Elodie Dujon-Jourdain testifies to, out of direct experience and as a *béké*, is that, as the offspring of enslavers in modern Martinican society, Hearn witnesses this as a first hand observer. Hence, his romantic transcription of this phenomenon bears all the terms of an Africanization of the mores shared by all parties.

Conclusion

By the mid-nineteenth century, Victor Schœlcher took note of the apathy that slavery has caused among the Africans.[93] The level of violence being so severe, that is, taking all imaginable forms and being perpetrated in a systematic manner and on a very long span of time, could not have generated another outcome. However, one should consider the complexity of both mankind and the system itself in order to moderate this statement. The productivity and work of the Africans assumed both material and immaterial construction.

Indeed, even though the 1685 French Code Noir stipulates that the enslaver must feed the enslaved, they very often failed to comply with the law, irresponsibly transferring and illegally leaving this duty to the enslaved themselves. The latter did cultivate the crops and fetch the water necessary to their physical sustenance.[94] Around the year 1840, a Martinican enslaved gives Victor Schœlcher an edifying and enlightening written testimony, as he sends the abolitionist a letter in which he describes their sorrowful plight and denounces the enslavers' propensity to lie, deceive, and contravene the law:

> They [the enslaved] are fed like chickens with corn (Turquish corn) and again we are not always given the ordinary. Sometimes, they do not give us the ordinary for several weeks; if the enslaved ask for the ordinary, they are beaten with the lash. Our chickens are killed by the soldiers who guard the dinghies…[95]

The motives of their presence in insular America do not press onto the Europeans the desire or the idea to construct societies that would be identified and represented with precise and distinctive cultural productions. Since they abandoned the multiple skills that would have allowed them to construct the infrastructures, in addition to the fieldwork and the agricultural production that is exclusively attributed to the Africans, the Europeans off-loaded the entire responsibility for infrastructural construction onto the enslaved, who then became carpenters, masons,

confectioners, cutlers, locksmiths, wheelwrights, and stone-cutters among other craft professions.[96] Not only does the enslaved African work for the economic and social uplift of the European, but, in addition, he works toward the preservation of himself in order to not sink into total decline, physically and spiritually. Spiritually, they retain many of the original African cultural properties and psychic ways of being, thus staving off total rupture with their ancestrality. This is why one can suggest that although Glissant rejects filiation as a potential disruptive element, one can assuredly consider the affiliation contained in and expressed by the Africanization of insular America. Doing so, they opened up the Europeans' traits, thus rendering possible the dialogic exchange, enlarging the inter-penetration and inter-relation that, over time, singularizes the culture and signals the creation of a new identity.

---

[1] Edouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, pp.36-37. La créolisation est la mise en contact de plusieurs cultures ou au moins de plusieurs éléments de cultures distinctes, dans un endroit du monde, avec pour résultante une donnée nouvelle, totalement imprévisible par rapport à la somme ou la simple synthèse de ces éléments.

[2] Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, I, trs. T.M. Knox (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 1.

[3] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles* (Paris: Thomas Jolly, 1971), pp. 474-475. "S'ils sont camus, c'est que les pères et les mères leur écrasent le nez pour les rendre tels, comme ils leur pressent ordinairement les lèvres pour les faire lippus…le premier que nous avons élevé de notre nègre Dominique à la Guadeloupe, a le visage aussi beau, le nez aussi aquilin, et les lèvres aussi minces que les Français: en un mot, il n'a rien de nègre que la couleur et les cheveux, parce qu'un de nos pères avait si expressément défendu à sa mère de lui aplatir le nez, qu'elle n'osa pas lui écacher. Ce bon père croyant qu'elle traiterait de la même manière la fille qu'elle eut ensuite, il ne lui en parla pas d'avantage, mais il se trompa: et comme il lui en fit reproche, elle répondit que c'était pour la rendre plus belle que son fils, qu'elle croyait extrêmement laid, parce qu'il n'avait pas cette déformité hideuse dans laquelle ils établissent la beauté en leur pays."

[4] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyage aux Isles* (Paris: Edition établie et présenté par Michel Le Bris, 1993), p. 228.

[5] Glissant, *Traité du Toute-Monde*, p. 36.

[6] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyage aux Iles*, 304-305, "…depuis que ce commerce a été détruit, parce que le tabac a été mis en parti, on a été obligé de s'attacher presque uniquement à la fabrique du sucre, ce qui a tellement diminué le nombre des habitants qu'on n'a jamais pu rassembler depuis ce temps-là deux mille hommes dans cette même île. La Martinique, la Guadeloupe et les autres colonies françaises sont dans le même cas…elles sont à présent, dépeuplées d'habitants blancs, et peuplées seulement de nègres [en] grand nombre…"

[7] Freye in Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean, 1492-1969*, p. 45.

[8] Moreau de Saint-Mery, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Société française d'historie d'Outre-Mer, 1984), p. 29. Dans les lieux où les hommes se trouvent rassemblés depuis une longue succession de temps, (il

s'est formé une sorte de système d'association particulière auxquelles des convenances locales ont donné des règles. Ce système se conserve sans changement sensible à moins d'évènements aussi extraordinaires que rares parce que les individus isolés qui viennent s'unir à la peuplade ou ceux qui y naissent en prennent les usages, ce n'est à proprement parler qu'une famille plus ou moins nombreuse.) leur réunion présente un amalgame plus ou moins parfait, et tous les membres de la famille générale ont entre eux des traits de ressemblance faciles à apercevoir ; mais dans des établissements coloniaux récemment fondés par une émigration successive, on ne peut trouver des marques d'un véritable ensemble : c'est un composé informe qui subit des impressions diverses, et cette incohérence est remarquable surtout, lorsqu'une grande colonie est formée par des individus qui sont venus y trouver un climat lointain, et absolument différent du leur ; parce que chacun conserve alors l'habitude de quelques usages des lieux qu'il abandonne, seulement modifiés et appropriés au pays où il est transporté.

[9] Louis Garaud, *Trois ans à la Martinique* (Paris: Librarie d'éducation nationale, 2011), pp. 201-202.

[10] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 523.

[11] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 488.

[12]Mary Prince, *La véritable histoire de Mary Prince, esclave antillaise* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000), p. 56.

[13] Victor Schœlcher, *Des colonies françaises, abolition immédiate de l'esclavage* (Fort-de-France: Société d'histoire de la Martinique/Bass-Terre, Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1976): "L'édifice entier des colonies repose aujourd'hui, et reposera longtemps encore, sur la race nègre qui les cultive; forcément il faut tout rattacher à eux…"

[14] Engelbert Mveng, *L'art et l'artisanat africains* (Yaoundé: Editions Clé, 1980), p. 13.

[15] James Rodway, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, p. 9

[16] Lucien Peytraud, *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises avant 1789* (Paris: Librarie Hachette, 1897), p. 221: "…le roi Louis XIII…ne se rendit enfin aux pressantes sollicitations qu'on lui faisait de leur octroyer cette permission que parce qu'on lui remontra que c'était un moyen infaillible, et l'unique qu'il y eût, pour inspirer le culte du vrai Dieu aux Africains, les retirer dans l'idolâtrie, et les faire persévérer jusqu'à la mort dans la religion chrétienne qu'on leur ferait embrasser.

[17] Edouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), p. 21.

[18] Edouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, p. 20.

[19] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, p. 443.

[20] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 424.

[21] Victor Schœlcher, *Des colonies françaises, abolition immédiate de l'esclavage*, p. 3:. "…Le nègre [est] au milieu de ceux qui prétendent le perfectionner par la servitude…"

[22] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, tome II, p. 468: "La plupart sont assez adroits à faire toutes les choses auxquelles on les occupe, et nous remarquons que la fréquentation de leurs enfants avec ceux de leurs maîtres, dans leur jeunesse, leur ouvre l'esprit et les rend plus spirituel que leur pères et leurs mères."

[23] Bergson, *Mémoire et vie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975), p. 138.

[24] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 449.

[25] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 431. "Il ne faut point parler de jeunes dans les iles pour les gens de travail; car comme il y fait extrêmement chaud, il s'y fait une très grande dissipation d'esprits, et par conséquent de forces ; d'où vient qu'ils sont obligés de faire plusieurs repas, et de manger beaucoup pour réparer les forces perdues. Monsieur Biet n'a pas tant de sujet de s'élever au sujet de l'abstinence du carême; car il est presqu'impossible d'en faire une règle générale ; non seulement parce que la morue, le saumon, le hareng, et le maquereau salé se corrompent, sitôt que l'on donne air aux barils ou ils sont enfermés…"

[26] Louis Garaud, *Trois ans à la Martinique*, pp. 19-20.

[27] Louis Garaud, *Trois ans à la Martinique*, pp. 158-160.

[28] Louis Garaud, *Trois ans à la Martinique*, pp. 80-81.

[29] Edouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, p. 37.

[30] Victor Schœlcher, *Vie de Toussaint Louverture* (Paris: Karthala, 1982), pp. 13-14.

[31] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français*, pp. 446-447: "L'on n'y porte point de manteaux. Si ce n'est quand il pleut. Un certain gaillard à ce sujet voyant un nouveau venu à l'Eglise, avec un manteau sur ses épaules, le fit assigner devant le juge, pour demander dédommagement contre lui, de sa levée de pétun, disant qu'il la lui allait faire perdre, par l'hiver qu'il allait amener aux iles"

[32] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, pp. 443.

[33] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, pp. 443.

[34] Victor Schœlcher, *Des colonies françaises, abolition immédiate de l'esclavage*, pp. 8-9: "L'esclave a droit pour sa nourriture à deux livres de morue et deux mesures de farine de manioc par semaine : c'est ce que l'on appelle l'ordinaire. …La nourriture des nègres est composée ainsi depuis le premier jusqu'au dernier jour. Cette uniformité était une des conséquences inévitables de l'esclavage. Tous les estomacs doivent s'y prêter, varier serait impossible. Mais ici encore l'habitude est venue en aide à la nécessité, les noirs et aussi les maîtres, aiment aujourd'hui les salaisons, et toute table créole a son plat de morue à déjeuner. Par malheur, l'esclave ne peut diversifier ses aliments comme le maître…Quant à la farine manioc, c'est une substance très nourrissante, fraîche à la bouche, merveilleusement appropriée à l'usage des salaisons. Le nègre des colonies françaises la préfère à tout, et beaucoup de planteurs, beaucoup de dames blanches laissent le pain pour cette farine."

[35] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 430.

[36] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 430.

[37] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 448.

[38] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 452.

[39] Victor Schœlcher, *Des colonies françaises, abolition immédiate de l'esclavage*, p. 22: "Personne aux colonies françaises ne se presse et ne presse les autres."

[40] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 445.

[41] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 447.

[42] Dominique Godineau, *Les femmes dans la société française, XVIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003), p. 17.

[43] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 554.

[44] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 445.

[45] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 446.

[46] Dominique Godineau, *Les femmes dans la société française, 16e-18e siècle* 22.

[47] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 447.

[48] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, Histoire générale des Antilles, tome 2, 422.

[49] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 420.

[50] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, Histoire générale des Antilles, tome 2, p. 415.

[51] Primarilynot solely since the Africans are bound to work as domestics, overseers, religious facilitators, fishermen etc.

[52] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 445.

[53] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyage aux Isles*, p. 57 "…la Boissière, qui était de Linas, près de Paris. C'était un très bon habitant, très habile et très intelligent dans une infinie de choses; mais toutes ces bonnes qualités étaient accompagnées d'une si forte passion pour le vin qu'il était rare de le trouver de sens rassis. Il était associé avec son beau-frère, nommé Lozol ; il avait un assez bon nombre de nègres, ils cultivaient du cacao, faisaient du rocou et élevaient des bestiaux et des volailles. Ce Lozol était de la vicomté de Turenne, scieur de long de son métier, et dans un besoin un peu charpentier; et quoiqu'il fut venu engagé aux Iles, il commençait déjà à avoir du bien, de manière que quand je suis parti il était riche de plus de cent mille francs, bon homme au reste, et un vrai original, qui avait un privilège pour estropier la langue française, et un talent particulier pour faire rire tout le monde."

[54] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, p. 440.

[55] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, p. 440.

[56] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, p. 441.

[57] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les François*, p. 442.

[58]Lucien Peytraud, *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises avant 1789*, p. 21: "…on sait que c'est par les blancs que la culture y a été fondée."

[59] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 465.

[60] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, p. 465: "…ils ont si bonne opinion d'eux-mêmes, qu'ils s'estiment autant ou plus que les maîtres qu'ils servent. C'est aussi ce qui oblige les Nations de l'Europe établies dans l'Amérique, de les traiter avec hauteur, de ne leur pardonner point de fautes…"

[61] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyage aux îles de l'Amérique* (Antilles) 1693-1705, p. 203: "…ils n'embrassent jamais la religion chrétienne…"

[62] Peytraud Lucien, *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises avant 1789*, p. 290.

[63] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, p. 465.

[64] Literally, 'to erase one's country and culture'.

[65] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux isles, Chronique aventureuse des Caraïbes, 1693-1705* (Paris: Edition établie et présenté par Michel Le Bris, 1993), p. 228.

[66] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux isles, Chronique aventureuse des Caraïbes, 1693-1705*, p. 278.

[67] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux îles d'Amérique*, p. 403: "Pour leur faire perdre l'idée de cette danse infâme, on leur en a appris plusieurs a la Françoise comme le menuet, la courante, le passe-pied et autres, aussi bien que les branles et danses rondes, afin qu'ils puissent danser plusieurs a la fois, et sauter autant qu'ils en ont envie."

[68] Victor Schœlcher, *Des colonies françaises, abolition immédiate de l'esclavage*, p. 14. "On en voit le dimanche en redingotes ou en habits très bien faits, avec gilet de satin, chemise à jabot, bottes, et l'indispensable parapluie; ils adoptent complètement notre costume, et une fois habillés, deviennent presque méconnaissables, car ils ont naturellement bonne tournure. A les rencontrer ainsi, on ne se douterait pas que ce sont les mêmes hommes que l'on a vus la veille travailler en haillons."

[69] Lafcadio Hearn, *Un voyage d'été aux tropiques* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), p. 43.

[70] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 470.

[71] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, pp. 476-477.

[72] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyage aux isles, Chronique aventureuse des Caraïbes, 1693-1705*, p. 52.

[73] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 471.

[74] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyages aux isles, Chronique aventureuse des Caraïbes, 1693-1705*, p. 228.

[75] Moreau de Saint-Mery, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint-Domingue*, p. 59: "Les nègres Créols naissent avec des qualités physiques et morales, qui leur donnent un droit réel à la supériorité sur ceux qu'on a transportés d'Afrique."

[76] Moreau de Saint-Mery, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint-Domingue*, p. 55: "Comme les nègres créols prétendent, à cause du baptême qu'ils ont reçu, à une grande supériorité sur tous les nègres arrivant d'Afrique, et qu'on désigne sous le nom de Bossals, employé dans toute l'Amérique espagnole ; les Africains qu'on apostrophe en les appelant chevaux, sont très empressés à se faire baptizer."

[77] Lafcadio Hearn, *Un voyage d'été aux tropiques*, p. 55: "Et, même dans un bronze, jamais je n'ai vu un aussi beau jeu de muscles. Un professeur d'anatomie aurait pu s'en inspirer comme modèle. Un sculpteur, voulant créer un type de Mercure, se serait contenté de prendre un moulage de ce corps, sans songer à y apporter la moindre modification."

[78] Jean-Baptiste du Terte, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 466.

[79] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 466.

[80] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1952), p. 7: "Le Blanc est enfermé dans sa blancheur. Le Noir dans sa noirceur."

[81] Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique, Volume 1* (Paris: Michèle Lévy frèwa, libraries éditeurs, 1864), pp. 60-61: "Dans le sein de cette Europe brillante et littéraire, jamais peut-être l'idée des droits n'avait été plus complètement méconnue ; jamais les peuples

n'avaient moins vécu de la vie politique ; jamais les notions de la vraie liberté n'avaient moins préoccupé les esprits…"

[82] Edouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, p. 237.

[83] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français*, p. 483: "Tous les esclaves d'une même famille bâtissent leurs cases en un même lieu, en sorte néanmoins qu'ils laissent dix ou douze pas de distance. Quand ils sont beaucoup ils font ordinairement un cercle, et ils laissent une place commune au milieu de toutes les cases, qu'ils ont grand soin de tenir toujours fort nette."

[84] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 467.

[85] Victor Schœlcher, *De l'esclavage des Noirs et de la législation coloniale* (Paris: Paulin librarie, 1833), p. 40 "…et l'on a vu, il y a un an en Martinique, une jeune fille de couleur *flagellée publiquement pour avoir chante une chanson contre les blancs !"*

[86] Lucien Peytraud, *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises avant 1789*, p. 324: "Les nègres domestiques, imitateurs des blancs qu'ils aiment à singer, dansent des menuets, des contredanses, et c'est un spectacle propre à dérider le visage le plus sérieux que celui d'un pareil bal, où la bizarrerie des ajustements européens prend un caractère parfois grotesque."

[87] Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyage aux Isles, tome deuxième*, p. 393" "...ces Nègres…joignent l'Arche avec Dagon, et ils conservent en secret toutes les superstitions de leur ancien culte idolâtre, avec les cérémonies de la Religion Chrétienne. On peut juger qu'elle espèce de Christianisme il y a en ce païs-là."

[88] Walter Jekyll, *Jamaica Song and Story* (New York: Dover, 2005), p. 3.

[89] Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac, *Voyages aux Antilles, première partie* (Paris: Editions Dauvin et Fontaine Librairies, 1842), pp. 220-224, in *Les Cahiers du patrimoine*, Conseil régional de Martinique, *Le Carnaval : sources, traditions, modernité*, numéro double 23-24, Martinique, Musée régional d'histoire et d'ethnographie de la Martinique, pp. 58-59: "J'ai assisté au Fort-Royal, le dimanche gras, à un bal de nègres esclaves, tous domestiques, donné par invitation…L'orchestre était composé de militaires blancs, payés par les esclaves ; car les blancs étaient humiliés ce jour-là, et tout était conçu dans le meilleur goût…jamais de ma vie je n'ai vu autant de bijoux, de turquoises, d'émeraudes et de perles ; elles avaient des brassées de colliers et une charge de bracelets…Et lorsque je me retournais, ébahi, pour voir entrer ces personnages, j'apercevais un Congo…ou une capresse…nous sommes loin du bamboula et de son tambour. Ici, en effet, nous étions en plein dans les manières élégantes; et les nègres ce soir-là, parlaient tous le français."

[90] Henriette Levillain, *Mémoires de békées*, p. 24: Maman Loulou…les contes qu'elle nous disait le soir étaient à son image. Ces récits, choisis dans les recueils à l'usage de la jeunesse d'Europe avaient toujours un but moral, un enseignement…se déroulait dans des cadres fort distingués de châteaux français. C'était joli, et tout à fait en harmonie avec la charmante conteuse aux sages bandeaux gris, mais combien plus vivants et plus amusants étaient les récits créoles de Maman Nènène! Celle-là ne dédaignait pas le folklore local et puisait largement dans les exploits de Compè Lapin et de Compè Tig. Mimant leurs actions, chantant avec verve les rengaines, parfois sans queue ni tête, inventées par les noirs, Maman Nènène nous rendait parfaitement l'atmosphère de son enfance àelle, bercée par ces récits d'esclaves. Avec elle, c'était tout le passé de notre île qui nous pénétrait, nous imprégnait pour toujours d'une poésie spéciale."

[91] Edouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, p. 21.

[92] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles,* tome 2, p. 473.

[93] Victor Schœlcher, *Des colonies françaises*, p. 26.

[94] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, pp. 486-487.

[95]Victor Schœlcher, *Des colonies françaises*, pp. 30-32: "Ils sont nourris comme les poules, avec le maïs (blé de Turquie) et encore on donne pas toujours l'ordinaire. Quelquefois on reste plusieurs semaines sans donner l'ordinaire; si les nègres demandent l'ordinaire, on les bat avec le fouet ; nos poules, on les fait tuer par les soldats qui gardent les canots, enfin, c'est là qu'il faut aller pour voir si les nègres sont bien."

[96] Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, tome 2, p. 478.