

KATIA MÉRINE

Creolisation and Translation of Creoleness in “La Passion de notre Seigneur selon Saint-Jean en Langage nègre”

The history of contemporary Caribbean societies is characterized by creolisation, a process that illustrates the many transformations brought about by plantation society structures and constant opposition/interaction between various ethnic groups (African, European, Asian). Contemporary societies are in turn defined as composite societies with plural cultures, languages and identities. The language/culture question appears to be complicated in post-colonial societies such as Caribbean societies as the official language imposed during colonisation co-exists with one or several mother tongue(s). The interconnectedness of language and culture is a complex relation that expresses our particular history, traditions and the ways in which we apprehend the world. Ngugi wa Thiong'o the Nigerian writer and essayist argued about the “dual character” of languages as “communication” (language as a complex system of expression) and “carrier of culture” (language purveys the particularities of the culture it belongs to).¹

The text we propose to study, a mid-eighteenth-century text written in Creole and entitled “La passion de notre Seigneur selon Saint-Jean en langage nègre” (“The Passion of Our Lord according to St John in ‘negro’ tongue,” referred to hereafter as *La Passion*), is a demonstration of that interconnectedness and of the ways in which language translates and constructs culture.² *La Passion* (an eleven-page manuscript) is a rather subversive translation of the biblical story of the Passion found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Indeed, it stands apart from the monolithic assimilating discourse of French language and culture in that it translates key biblical figures and concepts into Creole. The authorship of the manuscript remains ambiguous to this day: researchers believe the manuscript could have been written by a French Jesuit priest, named Boutin, or co-written.³ *La Passion* allows observations about the evolution of Creoles and creolisation in the French Antilles during the mid-eighteenth century.⁴ The translator(s) followed the general narrative but created a harmony of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, reconstituting and rewriting a creolised version of the story of Jesus’ last days among his disciples.

This study encompasses a cultural studies perspective, allowing space for a broader understanding of the concepts of transmission of culture within the process of creolisation in the French Antilles. *La Passion* will be analysed as a translation of Creole culture and the strategies used by the translator to make the cultural transfer successful will be highlighted. The article will assess how the translator approached the language/culture thesis and ask how successful the translation was. It is also concerned with the nature of creolisation in the Church as against the colonised dialogue during colonisation: it asks whether creolisation was a case of interaction or total acculturation.

La Passion was written during colonial times but in many ways resembles a postcolonial text; a text that challenges set rules about sociolinguistics. As a conclusion we will examine how *La Passion* compares with current debates about the re-evaluation of Martiniquan Creole identity. Indeed, one can draw a parallel between the translator's attempt to create a language that slaves in the Caribbean would understand and contemporary Martiniquan writers' attempt to conceptualise a Creole aesthetic.

***La Passion* as translation of a Creole culture**

This version of the Passion story written by a non-native priest is a precursor of contemporary French Antillean Creole prose texts. *La Passion* is first a Creole text because it is written in Creole. It uses Creole as the language of narration thus promoting its literary value. The origins of “the Negro tongue” effortlessly handled by the translator are unclear since this tongue presents many variations that are now specificities of French Antillean Creoles. Lambert Felix Prudent, a Martiniquan linguist specialist in creolophone studies, hypothesises a Creole diasystem with many variants which could have evolved later into specific Creoles, and secondly that the various characteristics could have been a strategy to enable appropriate modification depending on the user and the community in which the text would have been read or said.⁵ The tongue used in *La Passion*, a product of the interaction/opposition process between French, West African, and Amerindian languages, is at an intermediary stage between a pidgin and a dialect. The maturity of the tongue is evident in the development of the morpho-syntax and lexicon. But what about the cultural and linguistic transfer?

This mid-eighteenth-century translation of the biblical story of the Passion of Christ is a precursor of the contemporary development of the language/culture thesis in translations of what Said calls “exotic cultures.”⁶ Translators have demonstrated that translation “is not a simple linguistic or semiotic analysis with the outcome being a translated text based on equivalencies but a process that implies *intercultural transfer* and therefore cultural awareness.”⁷ We cannot affirm that the translator of *La Passion* was in any way conscious of this aspect of translation; however, he seems to have adapted and integrated both linguistic and cultural specificities of the colonial Caribbean. This adaptation gave a “local colour” to the text— local colour that we will name a literary, linguistic and cultural creolisation effect. The detailed representation of Creole culture is quite extraordinary at a time when the concept of nation language had not yet been explored or developed. Under the Code Noir, French priests were asked to teach slaves. The Bible was used as a key text as the priests focused on teaching Christian principles to the slaves, hoping they would become believers. Some priests recognised the usefulness of Creole as mode of communication and so the so-called ‘Negro Tongue’ progressively became part of the priests’ pedagogical method. *La Passion*’s primary *raison d’être* might have been to serve purposes of evangelism—this translation of the bible story is being reinscribed in a near-revolutionary way (the translator developed a scripsist/oralist contrast throughout his text, integrating the oral tradition of storytelling and inscribing Creole, an oral language only at the time)—ironically, the cultural and linguistic creolisation seems to have been integrated to clinch the assimilationist project.

Before dealing with the ways in which the text reaffirms the colonial project, let us examine the various innovations, which make this version of the Bible story of the

Passion of Christ an exceptional text for its time. The writer/translator re-imagined and adapted the rather eurocentric vision of Christianity and Christian stories to the vernacular culture not only through language (creolised morpho-syntax, syntax and lexicon, the integration of Creole speech rhythm) but also through the exposition of that culture (culture-specific items drawn from flora, fauna, etc.). He used various translation strategies amongst which was the integration of culture-specific items (CSIs). Those CSIs are proper nouns, common expressions (objects, institutions, habits and opinions restricted to each culture), which are specific to only one culture or which would have another interpretation or meaning in other cultures in which those elements could be found.⁸ The CSIs found in the text are mainly substitutions that describe plantation society, the Creole culture of *béké* (white settler in the francophone colonies of the Americas) and slaves: *Savanne* (Garden), *Case* (house), *Coui* (Amerindian word for bowl), *Gamelle* (bowl, container), *Couyambouc* (carafe), *Liquier* (perfume, lotion), *Boucanné* (smoked, way of cooking meat in the Americas), *Coutela* (cutlass used to cut the sugar cane, a tool that became the slaves' second hand), *Billet* (legal notice used on the plantation to notify, while after emancipation “*an Billet-cé pa la penn*” was used to notify black workers on sugar plantations that they were no longer wanted), *Pian* (a widespread contagious and chronic skin disease among slaves, used as a synonym for leper), *Maite* (Master, related to the slave system), *Bequié* (used for white master figures), the *Béké* now used to designate a white person born in the Antilles, which reveals the ongoing hierarchy based on race derived from plantation society. There are also interesting examples reproducing sayings and common expressions: “*n’a pas la peine cassé bouche pour aryen*” (15) [“no need opening your mouth for nothing (no need

to ask)"] or "*Alors Soleil la té commencé vlé trempé dans Dio*" (15) ["While the sun was trying to go down in the sea" (At dusk)].

Apart from realising a linguistic creolisation of the biblical narrative, the re-writer/translator of *La Passion* married the textual and the oral. The text is written in an oral mode that will now be analysed. The narrator performs the story and becomes a storyteller. His hyperbolic free indirect speech, substitutions and additions give the story greater impact and make it more dramatic, even comical at times. The first example we will look at figures Jesus giving instructions to the disciples about preparations for the Passover: "*Zottes va suivre li jouque tant li entré dans case, tendéz;... Zottes va palé li comme ça, tendéz...*" (15) ["You will follow him until he gets to his house, understand... You will tell him like that, understand."] Note the repetition of the verb *tendéz* that recalls the "crick, crack" call/response of the Antillean storyteller with the crowd. The second example shows Jesus' announcement of his imminent death while eating with his disciples and here the writer creates his own equivalence:

zottes pas savé qui chose: avla Nous tous semblés, nous qu'a pleins vente nous bin bin, nous qu'a badiné, nous qu'a ris, nous tous qu'a palé; hé bin, zottes pas savé vrai, tini ïon Moune dans mitan zottes qui douet trahi Moé... (15)

[You know what? While we are all together filling our belly well, well, joking, laughing, talking, well you don't know really but someone among you will betray me...]

Suspense is introduced with the expression "*zottes pas savé*" a literal translation would read "you have no idea about," "you are not aware of," here we have translated it as "you know what?," as the expression is used as a rhetorical question that emphasises the storytelling mode around which the text is articulated. *La Passion* was obviously written

with an audience in mind—it is to be read and heard. The narrator seems to address an audience in the way he comments while telling the story (intratextual gloss):

Li té raison, car tout suite avla Gida (Cila moé té parlé vous qui té metté main dans gamelle avec Li) qui vini avec tout plein sodas qui té faire complot avec li (16)

[He was right, for Judas (the man I told you had put his hands in the bowl with Him) soon appeared with many soldiers who had plotted against Jesus.]

The two final examples, in which comedy and drama co-exist, introduce comic speeches in tragic moments (which is also a characteristic of Caribbean storytelling). The first figures Jesus on the Mount of Olives with some of his disciples, praying not long before his arrest:

tout din coup Li senti lestomac faire Li mal; quier li commencé faible, Li dire... Moé Malade: Jacques, Moé vlé mourir. ïo dire Li... qui ça vous tini Maite? Vous vlé vomir? Vous vlé nous bougi dlo bas vous boire? (16)

[His stomach started aching suddenly, his heart weakening, he said... I'm sick: James, I want to die. What's wrong Master? They asked him... You're going to be sick? You want us to boil some water for you to drink?]

This version of the translator can be compared with the same passage taken from Matthew's Gospel that reads: "He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.'"⁹ *La Passion's* detailed rewriting of Jesus' time of sorrow can seem rather comical to the point of caricature to a contemporary reader, but slaves in the mid-eighteenth century might have been able to sympathise with Jesus' moment of distress and sorrow. In their enslavement they had certainly experienced similar feelings of being overwhelmed to the point of

death. Moreover, many illnesses, stomach-ache and *pian* (skin disease) affected the slaves on plantations in the Caribbean, thus the mention of warm water to cure nausea. The writer/translator constructed images drawing from elements of the island context the listeners (the slaves) could identify with. Once again the comic aspect of the following scene makes one wonder about the priests' intentions—the example reveals the use of chilli to counter sleep. It portrays Jesus coming back after praying to find that his disciples had yet again fallen asleep although they had been told to watch: “*io frotté gié io metté pimen ladans malgré ça io pas capable poussé dromi la allé*” (16) [“They had rubbed some chilli in their eyes but it did not help them to stay awake.”]

The narrator takes on another multifaceted function and becomes an *oralitourain*, that is, one who manipulates the oral and the written or one who can translate orality within the written.¹⁰ The text is a remarkable work of cultural transfer, of adjustment to the vernacular culture of the French colonies, which reveals specificities of the Creole culture of the mid-eighteenth century—the translation is successful because the translator considered both the linguistic and cultural aspects of the target audience. However, the expression of creoleness in *La Passion* is as ambivalent as the missionaries' role and teaching in the colonies. It will be interesting to address this ambivalence or sometimes striking antagonism (interaction and acculturation co-exist and intertwine), through an analysis of the nature of creolisation in the Church/colonised relation in French Caribbean plantation society.

Creolisation and the Church's discourse: assimilation or interculturalisation?

Linguistic assimilation was an important element in the colonists' attempt to annihilate opposition and maintain social cohesion. As a result the slaves were forbidden to speak their mother tongues (still there was no abandonment of those languages). The colonists would use slaves who had been in the colony for a certain amount of time, which meant that they knew the rules of the plantation society and could understand some French, to instruct new slaves. "As a force for the transmission of culture 'this apprenticeship' facilitated the maintenance of some old elements and the acquisition of new ones."¹¹ This apprenticeship method was also used by the Church to teach the Gospel to slaves in the French Antilles. However, the approximate translations by these so-called experienced slaves and the start of the *mise en place* of an interactive religious instruction saw missionaries and priests, especially Jesuit priests, taking to learning the "Negro tongue." This tongue was soon to be used for catechisms and sermons, hence the Creole version of *La Passion*.

Transmission of culture in slave societies was and is understood as a unilateral process of acculturation operated in the coloniser's language, for it meant assimilation to the dominant culture, to European aesthetic norms. Sylvia Wynter's definition of creolisation as "a 'false assimilation' in which the dominated adopt elements from the dominant culture in order to obtain prestige or gain status"¹² supports that idea. The historical reality was nevertheless more complex. Terms such as "assimilation" and "acculturation" are often an easy way of maintaining the idea that vernacular cultures of the French Caribbean are the sole product of the dominant culture (European). Françoise Lionnet observed that it "had of course been ideologically convenient for the dominant

cultures to entertain the fiction of ‘assimilation’ as means of incorporating—‘civilizing’—those cultures viewed as too different and ‘inferior’ to be comfortably accepted into their norms.”¹³ Creolisation was also a process of adaptation of European and African people of various cultures to the Caribbean milieu, resulting in the formation of vernacular cultures distinct both from that of the colonists and that of the African slaves. Nigel Bolland says, “Creolisation is not an homogenising process, but rather a process of contention between people who are members of social formations and carriers of cultures,”¹⁴ thus highlighting the process of interculturalisation rather than acculturation to the dominant culture. French assimilation policy articulated itself around the propaganda of French aesthetic norms, language and culture, and the Catholic Church was to be the vehicle of that assimilation. Peter Roberts alludes to the fact that “the European-Catholic response to the peoples (natives and others) of the New World in certain ways allowed for greater cultural diversity than the English-Protestant response.”¹⁵ The translator’s use of Creole as mode of narration and of items specific to the Creole culture challenges accepted conceptions of Church/slave relations. It highlights the missionaries’ interactive participation in the process of creolisation and their own creolisation, for that matter, since this version in Creole supposed a study and understanding of the functioning of the Creole world, its cultural specificities. In French colonies Jesuits played an important role in the maintenance of social cohesion, and in the management of African slaves’ adaptation to the American milieu and progress in the Christian faith.¹⁶

By its very existence *La Passion* challenges the idea of apocalyptic acculturation, of the meek and powerless African slave. Although it remained very much along the lines of the general discourse of inferiority of the slaves, its teaching was controversial in that

it was going against the established law of separateness, and prejudice against slaves and free coloured: teaching meant the accession to a certain degree of equality. Some priests noted the good level of education of the slaves, their ability to read and write—the French priest Du Tertre noted, “Ils étaient bien instruits... notre Amérique”—while others commented on the slaves’ intelligence and facility in learning and understanding instructions in French.¹⁷ That education started by priests teaching the Gospel to slaves was carried farther over the passing years and became a way of gaining access to better positions and of escaping bondage. Slaves had developed modes of survival using the smile and mimicry in order to cope on the plantation—Edouard Glissant the Martiniquan essayist, writer and philosopher defined this art of survival as “detour.”¹⁸ Despite the teaching of the priests, plantation slaves retained some of their socio-cultural and religious practices, and they were progressively creolised. Religious western values became intertwined with African religious values thus modifying existing forms of worship and belief systems and giving birth to new forms of identification. An example of creolisation of beliefs is evident in the way slaves perceived death. Indeed, the idea of going to heaven taught by the Catholic Church fused with African beliefs of meeting with the ancestors—the scene featuring an angel visiting Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane could have been interpreted as an ancestor returning to give guidance to the living. Slaves usually celebrated the departure of a loved one since they believe the deceased would return to his/her native land, Africa. Death was celebrated with dances and songs during procession to the burial ground. These were forms of cultural *marronage* that existed within the confines of the slave society.

On the other hand the translator(s) made sure the text did not threaten the legitimacy of slavery, for the agenda remained the “civilising” of slaves, by the imposition of European-Catholic ideologies and culture. We cannot but notice the implicit condemnation of maroons (runaways) and *marronage*, considered as a menace by the plantocracy and the state. The ideologies of slavery and the hierarchy of the plantation system had to be respected so as to maintain that legitimacy and the power of the Masters and it is illustrated by Jesus’ arrest.

Moé di vous, semblé Nègre Maron io quiembé dans falaise. Pierre voi ça li dire... Oh! Maite Li voleur donc pour zottes maré Li comme ça pour aryen? Qui ça Li faire zottes? Largué Maite Li pas maron, Li pas voleur (17)

[I tell you it was like they had caught a maroon on the cliffs. When Peter saw that he said... But my Master is not a thief, why you’re tying him so? What he did do to you? Leave my Master alone, him not a maroon, him not a robber.]

In every original version of the Bible (original as in standard version, translated from the original Greek and Hebrew books approved be it in French, English, German), Jesus is the one to ask the soldiers about their coming with swords and clubs, while the translator uses Peter in his version. Peter opposes Jesus’ innocence to the slaves’ guilty act of *marronage* that deserves punishment. We can guess that the priest might have intended to use or used that account as an oblique way of reminding the slaves that they ought not to flee but remain obedient to their masters. There was no concession for *marronage*, the act of rebellion *par excellence*. Jesus’ opposition to the laws observed by the Pharisees (equivalent to the Masters of plantation society) is punished by his being flogged and crucified: “*Pilate voir ça: li commence faire io maré Li, tayé Li, tayé Li, moi di vous, jouque tant tout corps a Li haché coups de fouet.*” (18) [“When Pilate heard that he had

him tied and he was flogged again and again, I tell you, till his body was in tatters from the whipping.”] An obvious parallel can be drawn with the Code Noir’s stipulation of death for rebels. Indeed priests and missionaries had to make sure that their teaching did not go against the Code Noir¹⁹ legalisation of slavery and of certain corporal punishments. Article 38 of the Code Noir states:

A fugitive slave who shall have escaped for a month,... shall have his ears cut off and be branded with a fleur-de-lis on one shoulder; and if he repeats the offense for another month..., he shall be hamstrung, and branded with a fleur-de-lis on the other shoulder; and for the third time, shall be punished by death.²⁰

The teaching of divine grace was therefore limited as far as the slaves were concerned. Catholic priests deliberately studied the New Testament concepts of salvation and freedom for the Christian after death, rather than the Old Testament account of the history of the people of Israel, as slaves in Egypt who gained freedom from bondage. The latter presented a threat to the slave system in its depiction of anti-slavery concepts such as freedom on earth gained through opposition, the breaking from chains and escape from an unfair enslavement. The notion of obedience to God and his words was twisted to mean obedience to the white Master and his rules. From then on they entered into processes of “contamination,” of colonisation of the mind—the slaves were made to believe that they were pagans and the masters holy; that black was bad, and white good. The priests’ teaching of the Gospel would soon be revealed to be incompatible with the slave system they totally or partially tolerated and/or supported, an incompatibility they would come to face when landowners would refuse the instruction of their slaves and their attendance at Sunday services. Following their call to preach the Gospel and grace

of God, missionaries would soon be confronted with the aberration of the slave system. It was that confusion that would later lead many to believe in the necessity of the abolition of slavery.

***La Passion* and conceptualisation of a Creole identity thesis**

Contemporary French creole societies like Martinique are still struggling with their identity that is influenced by a history of assimilation to France both during colonisation and after. Current debates in the Antilles (Martinique, Guadeloupe) about the question of status (Martinique and Guadeloupe are French overseas departments, part of the EU), Creole history, culture and language have revealed the fragility of that sense of belonging. How does a Martiniquan understanding of Creole identity fit into the established understanding of the creolisation process and the postcolonial? French Caribbean writers and theorists have engaged with new conceptualisations of Creole identity using terms such as *Créolité* (creoleness) and creolisation.

The disintegration of the slave trade and subsequently the abolition of slavery brought a shift in power relations between the black population and white settlers. The binary hierarchical order based on race and/or nationality in the plantation society was moved to multiple differentiations of class and colour, and so the notion of race progressively became irrelevant.²¹ Indeed, as new groups appeared (free coloureds, mulatto) the concept of colour (light skin/dark skin, brown skin) superseded that of race as mode of dissociating and classifying groups of people. A new set of rules relating to socialisation and language used were established: Creole, a language which had been used by both white settlers and slaves, was repudiated as black people's talk in favour of

the more honourable French language. Social stratification was also maintained. A few hundred years later, the emergence of national consciousness and nation-language theses brought Caribbean writers to rethink their use of language in literary genres (such as poetry and the novel). They gradually became more critical of linguistic and cultural assimilation and decided that the language they use in literature had to reflect or rather translate their world against the colonisation of the Caribbean imaginary. They thus challenged the linguistic boundaries that had been established so as to integrate Creole in art as a vehicle of the Creole “I”. The progressive eroding of the long-standing dichotomy between subservient/dominant language, and oral/scrival, allowed creative linguistic productions through hybridisations of vernacular and standard languages. Despite the changes, very few contemporary Caribbean writers use Creole as an independent literary language (readership and production are obstacles) while *La Passion*, a mid-eighteenth-century text, promotes both the vernacular language (gives Creole its *Lettres de Noblesse*) and the vernacular culture, which were stigmatised as non-historical until very recently. It is not only the Creole language that gives the text its sense of Creoleness; however, it is important to note that *La Passion*, unlike many contemporary Caribbean texts, is written in Creole. It echoes the agenda of *In Praise of Creoleness*, a manifesto co-written by the well-known Martiniquan writers, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphael Confiant, and Martiniquan linguist Jean Bernabé, which promotes the importance of writers expressing their cultural diversity in their literature and making Creole the vehicle of that creoleness whenever possible.²² Most contemporary Caribbean writers use a hybrid language, a creolised language that reflects the multiculturalism and multilingualism of their islands. It is evident that Creole societies constitute a laboratory

to explore possible meeting points, a *modus vivendi* in the context of globalisation, where movements of people and adaptations of cultures are progressively becoming the norm. Contemporary Caribbean texts work against monolithic conceptions. *La Passion*, a precursor of these new strategies, constitutes a valuable text to discover in the light of current debates about the exploration and re-exploration of postcolonial Creole identity in the French Antilles, as it gives credence to discourses and theories developed around the notion of diversity.

Notes

¹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "The language of African literature" in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader* (England: Harvester Wheatsheaf, [1993] 1994), 439.

² The eleven-pages manuscript of "la Passion selon St. Jean" was found between the pages of a book in 1985, in France, at a second-hand bookseller's by professor Francois Moureau. In this article we are using Lambert-Félix Prudent's printed version of the text (five single-spaced pages long) as presented in Lambert Félix Prudent, "La Passion de Notre Seigneur selon Saint-Jean en langage nègre: premier texte créole de l'Histoire Linguistique Martiniquaise" in *Etudes Créoles*, vol. XXI, n.2, 11-35. Hereafter, we will refer to "La Passion selon St. Jean" as *La Passion*. Translations are mine.

³ Lambert-Félix Prudent, "La Passion selon St. Jean", 25.

⁴ All quotations from *La Passion* are from this edition and are accompanied by a page reference. All translations of these quotations into English are mine except where otherwise stated.

⁵ L-F. Prudent, "La Passion selon St. Jean", 26.

⁶ In his seminal work *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, [1978] 1995), Edward Said made a harsh critique of Western scholars' eurocentric way of defining the Orient and Orientals as passive, backward and exotic.

⁷ Katia Mérine, "Language and power in literary translation and text transfer with reference to David Dabydeen's *The Counting House*" in Danielle Tranquille and Soorya Nirsimloo-Gayan, eds., *Rencontres* (Moka, Republic of Mauritius: the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Press, 2000), 12.

⁸ Javier Franco Aixelá, "Culture-specific items in translation" in Román Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal, eds., *Translation, Power, Subversion* (Clevedon, Philadelphia, Adelaide: Multilingual Matters, 1996), 58.

⁹ From *Matthew 26*, v. 37-8, *New International Version* (Glasgow: Omnia Books Ltd, [1973] 2001).

¹⁰ Raphael Confiant and Patrick Chamoiseau introduced the concept of *oraliturain* in their *créolité* (creoleness) thesis in order to define Caribbean writers' double role as writers and storytellers. For a better understanding of the concept, see Raphael Confiant, *Les Maîtres De La Parole Créole* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1995); Ralph Ludwig, ed., *Écrire "la Parole de la Nuit" : La nouvelle littérature antillaise* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1995).

¹¹ Peter A. Roberts, *From Oral to Literate Culture: the colonial experience in the British West-Indies* (Barbados: University of the West Indies Press, 1997), 37.

¹² Carolyn Allen, “Creole: the problem of definition” in Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards, eds., *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture* (London: James Currey Publishers, 2002), 55.

¹³ Françoise Lionnet, *Post-colonial Representation: Women, Literature and Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 9.

¹⁴ O. Nigel Bolland, “Creolisation and creole societies: a cultural nationalist view of Caribbean social History” in Shepherd and Richards, eds., *Questioning creole*, 38.

¹⁵ Peter Roberts, *From Oral to Literate Culture*, 137.

¹⁶ L-F. Prudent, “La Passion selon St. Jean,” 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 118,

¹⁸ Edouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* (Poétique III), (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

¹⁹ Joan Dayan, “Codes of Law and bodies of color” in Maryse Condé et Madelaine Cottenet-Hage, eds., *Penser la Créolité* (Paris: Karthala, 1995), 50-60, analyses the Black Code promulgated in 1685 by Louis XIV. Supposedly a slave’s welfare act, the sixty Articles legalised slavery, sealed the slaves’ deprivation and inferiority, and reaffirmed the Master’s rights over his slaves. Joan Dayan remarks that this Code implies that “slaves must remain like animals on a farm or furniture in a house, in colonies in turn defined as the property of France” (M. Condé et M. Cottenet-Hage, *Penser la Créolité*, 50).

²⁰ Condé et Cottenet-Hage, eds., *Penser la créolité*, 50.

²¹ Race (set groups of individuals, white/black, who share physical characteristics, colour of skin) became less important than colour (skin tone, what in the Anglophone Caribbean is known as shadeism) which was associated with your social group.

²² Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, *Éloge de la Créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).