

Taller 2: Creolización, créolité, criollismo

Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel
Critical Caribbean Studies
Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies
Comparative Literature
Rutgers University

Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphael Confiant.
In Praise of Creoleness. (1989)

- Creoleness encompasses and perfects Americanness because it involves a double process:
- —*the adaptation of Europeans, Africans, and Asians to the New World; and*
- —*the cultural confrontation of these peoples within the same space, resulting in a mixed culture called Creole.* (In Praise 93).

José Vasconcelos.

La raza cósmica (1925)

- Tenemos entonces las cuatro etapas y los cuatro troncos: el negro, el indio, el mongol y el blanco. Este último, después de organizarse en Europa, se ha convertido en invasor del mundo, y se ha creído llamado a predominar lo mismo que lo creyeron las razas anteriores, cada una en la época de su poderío. Es claro que el predominio del blanco será también temporal, pero su misión es diferente de la de sus predecesores; su misión es servir de puente. El blanco ha puesto al mundo en situación de que todos los tipos y todas las culturas puedan fundirse. La civilización conquistada por los blancos, organizada por nuestra época, ha puesto las bases materiales y morales para la unión de todos los hombres en una quinta raza universal, fruto de las anteriores y superación de todo lo pasado (1925, 4).

Creole

c.1600, from Fr. créole (17c.), from Sp. criollo "person native to a locality," from Port. crioulo, dim. of cria "person (especially a servant) raised in one's house," from criar "to raise or bring up," from L. creare "to produce, create" (see [create](#)). The exact sense varies with local use. Originally with no connotation of color or race; Fowler (1926) writes: "Creole does not imply mixture of race, but denotes a person either of European or (now rarely) of negro descent born and naturalized in certain West Indian and American countries." In U.S. use, applied to descendants of French and Spanish settlers in Louisiana from at least 1792. Of languages, from 1879. As an adj., from 1748. (Online Etymology Dictionary)

criollo

- ➊ Dícese de los idiomas que han surgido en comunidades precisadas a convivir con otras comunidades de lengua diversa y que están constituidas por elementos procedentes de ambas lenguas. Se aplica especialmente a los idiomas que han formado, sobre base española, francesa, inglesa, holandesa o portuguesa, las comunidades africanas o indígenas de ciertos territorios originariamente coloniales. DRAE
- ➋ Criollo- el europeo o africano nacido en y criado en las Américas. En el Caribe Hispano y en Latinoamérica criollo ha venido a ser equivalente a blanco de ascendencia europea que crece en el Nuevo Mundo. (Herman Bennett y otros han cuestionado esta definición explorando la identidad criolla negra en Latinoamérica).

créolité, creolización

- ➊ Altogether different is the process of Creolization, which is not limited to the American continent (therefore, it is not a geographic concept) and which refers to the brutal interaction, on either insular or landlocked territories—be it immense territories such as Guyana or Brazil—of culturally different populations: Europeans and Africans in the small Caribbean islands; Europeans, Africans, and Indians in the Mascarene islands; Europeans and Asians in certain areas of the Philippines or in Hawaii; Arabs and black Africans in Zanzibar, etc. Generally resting upon a plantation economy, *these populations are called to invent the new cultural designs allowing for a relative cohabitation between them.* These designs are the result of a nonharmonious (and unfinished therefore nonreductionist) mix of linguistic, religious, cultural, culinary, architectural, medical, etc., practices of the different people in question. (Eloge de la Créolité, 92)

Pasando del sujeto criollo a las lenguas criollas

- Alleyne, Mervyn. 1968. “The Cultural Matrix of Caribbean Dialects.” Mona: Creole Conference Paper, 1968.
- ---. 1987. “Creole Language and the Caribbean Community.” *Caricom Perspective*. (January-March): 24-26.
- Trouillot, Michel Rolph. 1998. “Culture on the Edges: Creolization in the Plantation Context” *Plantation Society in the Americas* 5: 8-28.

Pasando del sujeto criollo a las lenguas criollas

- Craig, Dennis. 1999. *Teaching Language and Literacy. Policies and Procedures for Vernacular Situations.* Georgetown: Education and Development Services Inc.
- Faraclas, Nicholas and Marat Viada Bellido de Luna. 2004-2005. “Pidgin and Creoles of the Colonial Era: Languages of Social Contact or Languages of Social Contract?” *Sargasso. I. Creolistics and Caribbean Languages.*
- Muchos otros...

Cuestionando los creoles como fenómeno lingüístico único:

- DeGraff, Michel. 2003. “Against Creole Exceptionalism.” *Language* 79.2: 391–410.
- Ansaldi, U. and S. Matthews. 2007. “Deconstructing Creole: The Rationale.” *Typological Studies in Language* 73: 1–20 .

Pidgin

1876, from pigeon English (1859), the reduced form of the language used in China for communication with Europeans, from pigeon (1826), itself a pidgin word, representing a Chinese pronunciation of business. Meaning extended 1921 to "any simplified language.

("<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pidgin>)

Creole languages

- ❖ vernacular languages that developed in colonial European plantation settlements in the 17th and 18th centuries as a result of contact between groups that spoke mutually unintelligible languages. Creole languages most often emerged in colonies located near the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean or the Indian Ocean. Exceptions include Brazil, where no creole emerged, and Cape Verde and the Netherlands Antilles, where creoles developed in slave depots rather than on plantations. Most commonly, creoles have resulted from the interactions between speakers of nonstandard varieties of European languages and speakers of non-European languages.
- ❖ (Encyclopedia Britannica online)
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/142562/creole-languages>

Eventos históricos claves (1960s-1990s)

- 1960s-1990s: se aprueban los programas de educación bilingüe y multilingüe en el Caribe
- Cambio de paradigma en los estudios de creolización para incluir el estudios de lenguas en contacto en contextos diáspóricos
 - Surge la lingüística vernácula
 - Lingüistas caribeños estudian los creoles caribeños
 - Fundación de la Sociedad de Lingüistas caribeños en 1972.
 - Vincular el espanglés con estudios de “code-switching” en los creoles ingleses y franceses del Caribe

¿hubo o no creoles en el Caribe hispánico?-el debate

- Lipski, John. 1985. “Creole Spanish and Vestigial Spanish: Evolutionary Parallels” *Linguistics* 23.6: 963-984.
- McWhorter, John. 2000. *The Missing Spanish Creoles. Recovering the Birth of Plantation Contact Languages*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ortiz López, Luis. 1990. *El debate lingüístico sobre el español antillano caribeño: una mirada histórica y sincrónica*. Mayagüez: Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto Universitario de Mayagüez.
- Ortiz López, Luis. 2000. “El español de Puerto Rico en el contexto caribeño: el debate sobre su génesis.” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 27.1: 361-74.

Más allá del debate-el paso de “creolistics” a “contact linguistics”

- Rama de la lingüística que estudia la formación de creoles: creolistics
- Rama de la lingüística que estudia el contacto de lenguas: contact linguistics
- Pensar los creoles en el Caribe en conversación con el espanglés en el caso del Caribe hispano en la diáspora
- ¿Qué sucede cuando la lengua se utiliza como el fundamento para articular un proyecto identitario/literario/cultural en el Caribe?

Espanglés en el contexto del “contact linguistics”

- Lipski, John. 1985. *Linguistic Aspects of Spanish-English Language Switching*. Tempe: Arizona State University, Center for Latin American Studies.
- Urciuoli, Bonnie. 1996. *Exposing Prejudice: Puerto Rican Experiences of Race, Class and Language in the U.S.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview.
- Zentella, Ana Celia. 1997. *Growing Up Bilingual. Puerto Rican Children in New York*. Massachusetts: Blackwell.

Para una nueva literatura: la lengua le abre paso a una literatura caribeña

- *History of the Voice*, Kamau Brathwaite (1983)
 - “nation language”
- *Eloge de la créolité*, Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant (1989)
 - créolité
- *Growing up Bilingual* by Ana Celia Zentella (1979-1997)
 - Espanglés, code-switching, “anthropolitical linguistics”

History of the Voice, Kamau Brathwaite (1983)

- We in the Caribbean have a similar kind of plurality: we have English, which is the imposed language on much of the archipelago. It is an imperial language, as are French, Dutch and Spanish. We also have what we call creole English, which is a mixture of English and an adaptation that English took in the new environment of the Caribbean, when it became mixed with the other imported languages. We have also what is called *nation language*, which is the kind of English spoken by the people who were brought to the Caribbean, not the official English now, but the language of the slaves and labourers, the servants who were brought in by the conquistadors. Finally we have the remnants of the ancestral languages still persisting in the Caribbean. There is Amerindian, which is active in certain parts of Central America but not in the Caribbean because the Amerindians are here destroyed people, and their languages were practically destroyed. We have Hindi, spoken by some of the more traditional East Indians, who live in the Caribbean, and there are also varieties of Chinese. And, miraculously, there are survivals of African languages still persisting in the Caribbean. (1995, 5-6)

History of the Voice, Kamau Brathwaite (1983)

- I think, however, that language does have a role to play here, certainly in the Caribbean. But is an English which is not the standard, imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience and sensibility, which has always been there and which is now increasingly coming to the surface and influencing the perception of contemporary Caribbean people. It is what I call, as I say, *nation language*. I use the term in contrast to *dialect*. The word ‘dialect’ has been bandied about for a long time, and it carries very pejorative overtones. [...] Nation language, on the other hand, is the *submerged* area of that dialect which is much more closely allied to the African aspect of experience in the Caribbean. [...] I am going to give you some examples. But I should tell you that the reason I have to talk so much is that there has been very little written on this subject. I bring to you the notion of nation language but I can refer you to very little literature, to very few resources. I cannot refer you to what you call an ‘Establishment.’” (1995, 13)

History of the Voice, Kamau Brathwaite (1983)

- ❖ In the Caribbean our novelists have always been conscious of these native resources, but the critics and academics have, as is kinda often the case, lagged far behind. Indeed, until 1970, there was a positive intellectual, almost social, hostility to the concept of ‘dialect’ as language. But there were some significant studies in linguistics: Beryl Loftman Bailey’s *Jamaican creole syntax: a transformational approach* (Cambridge 1966), F.G. Cassidy, *Jamaica Talk* (Kingston 1961), Cassidy and R.B. Le Page, *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (Cambridge 1967); and, still to come, Richard Allsopp’s mind-blowing *Dictionary of Caribbean English*; three glossaries from Frank Collymore in Barbados, and A.J. Seymour and John Rickford of Guyana; plus studies of the African Caribbean language by Mervyn Alleyne, Beverley Hall and Maureen Warner Lewis. In addition, there has been works by Douglass Taylor and Cicely John, among others, on the aspects of some of the Amerindian languages; and Dennis Craig, Laurence Carrington, Velma Pollard and several others, at the University of the West Indies’s School of Education, on the structure of nation language and its psychosomosis in and for the classroom. (1995, 14-15).

Eloge de la créolité, Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Conifiant (1989)

- ✿ During the first periods of our writing, this exteriority provoked a mimetic expression, both in the French language and in the Creole language. We unquestionably had our clock-makers of the sonnet and the alexandrine. We had our fabulists, our romantics, our Parnassians, our neoparnassians, not to mention the symbolists. Our poets used to indulge in bucolic drifts, enraptured by Greek muses, polishing up the ink tears of a love not shared by the Olympian Venus. This was, said the critics and they had a point, a more than secondhand cultural dealing: it was a quasi-complete acquisition of another identity. (1989, 77)

Eloge de la créolité, Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Conifiant (1989)

- ✿ French ways forced us to denigrate ourselves: the common condition of colonized people. It is often difficult for us to discern what, in us, might be the object of an aesthetic approach. What we accept in us as aesthetic is the little declared by the Other as aesthetic. The noble is generally elsewhere. So is the universal. And our artistic expression has always taken its sources from the far open sea. And it was always what it brought from the far open sea what was kept, accepted, studied; for our idea of aesthetics was elsewhere. What good is the creation of an artist who totally refuses his unexplored being? [...] Our refused bilingual richness remained a diglossic pain. (1990, 86-87)

Eloge de la créolité, Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Conifiant (1989)

- Creolesnness is the *interactional or transactional aggregate* of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements, united on the same soil by the yoke of history. For three centuries the islands and parts of continents affected by this phenomenon proved to be the real forges of a new humanity where languages, races, religions, customs, ways of being from all over the world were brutally uprooted and transplanted in an environment where they had to reinvent life. Our Creoleness was, therefore, born from this extraordinary ‘migan,’ wrongly and hastily reduced to its mere linguistic aspects or to one single element of its composition. Our cultural character bears both the marks of this world and elements of its negation. (1990, 87-88)

Growing up Bilingual by Ana Celia Zentella (1979-1997)

- Zentella proposes her study as an example of “anthropolitical linguistics” of the Puerto Rican community living in New York, whose objective is “to understand and facilitate a stigmatized group’s attempts to construct a positive self within an economic and political context that relegates its members to static and disparaged ethnic, racial, and class identities, and that identifies them with static and disparaged linguistic codes” (1997, 13).
- El estudio documenta el proceso de adquisición lingüística y alternancia de códigos o “code-switching” en el caso de 20 familias de puertorriqueños residentes en Harlem, pero con énfasis particular en cinco niños.

Growing up Bilingual by Ana Celia Zentella (1979-1997)

- ❖ Contribuciones de su estudio:
 - ❖ Valida el trabajo de campo del estudiioso que es nativo de la comunidad que estudia
 - ❖ Utiliza acercamientos interdisciplinarios para recoger su data.
 - ❖ el proyecto de investigación de Zentella abandona el reclamo descriptivo de la lingüística tradicional para proponer una intervención crítica, metodológica y política en la comunidad que se estudia.
 - ❖ Valida el bilingüismo de los hablantes nativos que hacen cambio de código (code-switching)
 - ❖ Incluye el género sexual, la etnia y el trasfondo cultural en su estudio (maternidad caribeña es “situation centered” y no “child centered”), el rol de las madres en la enseñanza de lenguas maternas.

Los textos literarios

- “Pollito, chicken”, Ana Lydia Vega (Puerto Rico) (1977-1981)
- *Abeng*, Michelle Cliff (Jamaica) (1984)
- *Exile according to Julia*, Gisele Pineau (Guadalupe) (1996)

Pollito, Chicken



Ana Lydia Vega, “Pollito Chicken” (1981)

- Lo que la decidió fue el breathtaking poster de Fomento que vió en la travel agency del lobby de su building. El breathtaking poster mencionado representaba una pareja de beautiful people holding hands en el funicular del Hotel Conquistador. Los beautiful people se veían tan deliriously happy y el mar tan strikingly blue y la puesta de sol --no olvidemos la puesta de sol a la Winston-tastes-good-- la puesta de sol tan shocking pink en la distancia que Suzie Bermúdez, a pesar de que no pasaba por el Barrio a pie ni bajo amenaza de ejecución por la Mafia, a pesar de que prefería mil veces perder un fabulous job antes que poner Puerto Rican en las applications de trabajo y morir de hambre por no coger el Welfare o los food stamps como todos esos lazy, dirty, no-good bums que eran sus compatriotas, Suzie Bermúdez, repito, sacó todos sus ahorros de secretaria de housing project de negros --que no eran mejores que los New York Puerto Ricans pero por lo menos no eran New York Puerto Ricans -- y abordó un 747 en raudo y uninterrupted flight hasta San Juan. (Vega, 75-6)

Ana Lydia Vega, “Pollito Chicken” (1981)

La tipa del 306 no se sabe si es gringa o puelorra, bródel. Pide room service en inglés legal pero, cuando la pongo a gozal, abre la boca a grital en boricua.

--Y ¿qué dice?, respondió cual coro de salsa su fan club de ávidos aspirantes a tumbagringas.

Entonces el admirado mamitológico narró cómo, en el preciso instante en que las platinum-frosted fingernails se incrustaban passionately en su afro, desde los skyscrapers inalcanzables de un intra-uterine orgasm, los half-opened lips de Suzie Bermúdez producían el sonoro mugido ancestral de:

- --¡VIVA PUELTO RICO LIBREEEEEEEEEE!

Abeng

- Abeng is “an African word meaning conch shell” that acquires a double meaning throughout history: “The blowing of the conch called the slaves to the canfields in the West Indies. The *abeng* has another use: it was the instrument used by Maroon armies to pass their messages and reach one another” (Cliff).

Michelle Cliff, *Abeng* (1984)

“Me no twon gal. And me no buckra. Me jus’ want to do something so dem will now we is smaddy.” [Clare said]

[Zoe responds:] “Wunna is town gal, and wunna papa is buckra. Wunna talk buckra. Wunna leave here when wunna people come fe wunna. Smaddy? Wunna no is smaddy already? Gal smaddy. Kingston smaddy. White smaddy. Dis place no matter wunna a-tall, a-tall. Dis here is fe me territory. Kingston a fe wunna. Me will be here so all me life—me will be a marketwoman like fe me mama. Me will have fe beg land fe me and fe me pickney to live pon. Wunna will go a England, den maybe America, to university, and when we meet later we will be different smaddy. But we is different smaddy now.” (Cliff 118)

Michelle Cliff, *Abeng* (1984)

- He only stared at her—slightly smiling at the sight of a naked and wet girl with a rifle—trying to be dangerous while protecting her private parts from his sight. She pointed the gun at him, laying the butt at her right shoulder, the barrel on the bone of her kneecap, tights clenched together. “Get away, you hear. This is my grandmother’s land.” She had dropped her patois—was speaking *buckra*—relying on the privilege she said she did not have. The man stood stock still—maybe he thought she was crazy. He knew now she was miss Mattie’s granddaughter and it was Miss Mattie’s canefields he was coming from. (122)

Exile according to Julia, Gisele Pineau (Guadalupe) (1996)

- Abruptly, she crosses the street and calls out to a group of nuns who are walking in twos, veil flying in the wind.
- “*Siouplait, Masé! Masé! Kí koté an dwèt pwan pou kontré Sakré-ké-la?* Please, Sister! Sister! Which way I must go to get to Sacré-Cœur?”
- Seeing right in front of them all of a sudden this black woman, speaking an African language and making large gestures, which threaten their immaculate veils, the good sisters quicken their pace (2003, 65)]

Exile according to Julia, Gisele Pineau (Guadalupe) (1996)

- The Creole that Man Ya spoke to us is here, in the street, in the market, in school, in freedom. It expresses moods and the weather, business, love and its games, the everyday, anger and excess. It is in the songs. It gives change, it insults, and sizes up, and woos. In Martinique! How to acknowledge this marvel? (2003, 132)]

Exile according to Julia, Gisele Pineau (Guadalupe) (1996)

- ❖ A strange thing, her children want to be like the children here. They force themselves to speak Creole. But their Parisian accent does not go away. In their mouth, the words get stuck and mangled. Daisy did not teach them Creole. What would they do with it? It only escaped her when she was angry, to tell them to be quiet, to put a stop to insolence, or to command patience.
- ❖ Speaking French is a sign of a good education and refined manners.
- ❖ A man who speaks to you in French is a civilized gentleman....
- ❖ A fellow who shouts at you in Creole is an old no good from a race with no upbringing, a *boloko*, of the first order, a slovenly fellow with fleas, a thief with fifty-four machetes, a womanizer, a king of the henhouse, a coward with long legs, Judas Iscariot, Beelzebub in short pants, spirits of hatred.... (2003, 158-159) “A stupid, ignorant person.” (Pineau 2003, 167)

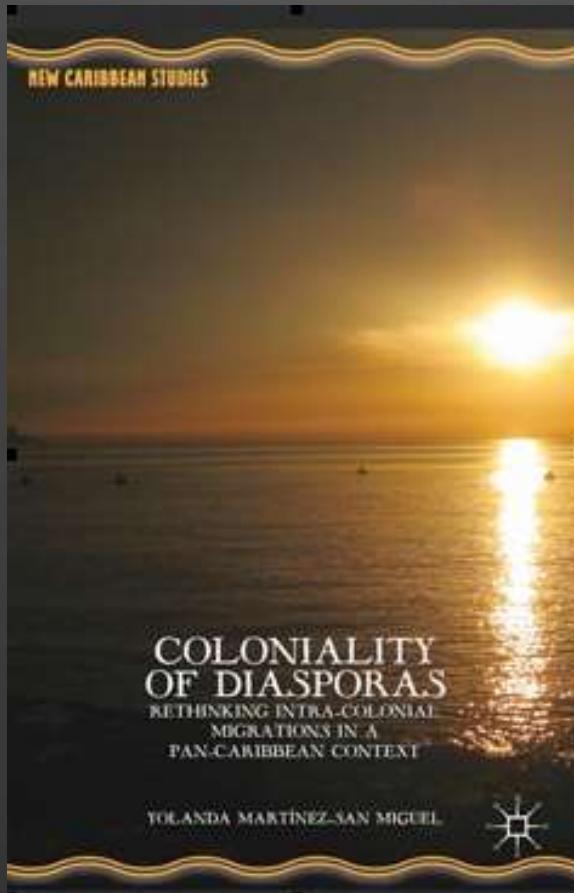
Exile according to Julia, Gisele Pineau (Guadalupe) (1996)

- ✿ Then we truly understood what Man Ya had done for us... Cleared the paths of her Creole language. Layered the feelings in the rest of us, pale, drooping young forests. Revealed perfumes. She had given us: words, visions, rays of sunlight, and patience in life. She had pointed out to us the three sentinels, past, present, future, that hold threads of time, has twisted them together to weave for us, day after day, a solid rope bridge between Over There and Back Home. (2003, 165)]

Algunas conclusiones: Creolización y la Confederación Antillana

- Reflexionar sobre el lugar de la lingüística en los debates identitarios caribeños, y cómo la lengua reinvierte la conversación sobre la identidad del cuerpo racializado al cuerpo en proceso de ejecutar (perform) una identidad.
- La importancia de la literatura en el proyecto de consolidación de un proyecto de identidad nacional.
- El mulataje como paradigma alternativo al mestizaje para pensar la identidad en el Caribe en un contexto que toma en cuenta la colonialidad de la diáspora en la zona.

Para más información, ver el capítulo 5
de mi libro, Coloniality of Diasporas
(Palgrave, julio 2014):



Discusión

- Creolización y el debate socio-lingüístico
 - ¿Qué lugar ocupa la lengua en el imaginario de la identidad?
 - ¿Cómo redefine la lengua el debate identitario racial en el Caribe?
 - ¿Cómo regresa la raza de un modo distinto en el debate identitario fundamentado en las lenguas caribeñas?
- Creolización y la creación de una estética caribeña
 - ¿qué sucede cuando un idioma construye su propia estética?
- Procesos de creolización y género sexual: por qué son las mulatas las que terminan representando esta relación problemática entre identidad, idioma y racialización