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"Have you ever heard of a sheep without bones?" Édouard asked Sylvie, looking a little disgruntled as she dished out her couscous to him, Sally, and me one evening in 1995 at the Glissants' Riverside Drive apartment. (Sylvie apparently liked it without the bones, while he preferred it with.) The dinner had been arranged so that we could discuss a draft of "Shadowboxing in the Mangrove," a paper about *Éloge de la créolité* that Sally and I had sent Édouard a couple of weeks earlier.[1] After dinner, we went through it for an hour or two, and Édouard concluded that he would not argue with its substance—he was in broad agreement with its arguments—but, "*Pourquoi*," he asked a bit plaintively, "do you have to be so *durs*?" (hard on them).

In retrospect, he was probably right. The rather hard-hitting tone of that paper caused an unfortunate break between us and the authors of the *Éloge*.[2] But the fact that we found this nationalist

1 Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989); *Éloge de la créolité* / *In Praise of Creoleness*, trans. M. B. Taleb-Khyar, bilingual ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1993). Richard Price and Sally Price, "Shadowboxing in the Mangrove," *Cultural Anthropology* 12, no. 1 (1997): 3–36.

2 Chamoiseau had written an admiring review of my 1994 *Les premiers temps* (originally published as *First-Time: The Historical Vision of an American People* [1983]), which is set in Suriname, but the 2002 publication of *Le bagnard et le colonel* (originally published as *The Convict and the Colonel* [1998]), which is about Martinique and the *créolistes*, evoked a deafening silence, in contrast to the book's enthusiastic reception in the anglophone world as well as from our Martinican neighbors. Glissant, in personal conversation, was almost embarrassingly enthusiastic about *Le bagnard*, saying that had he been able to classify it as a work of fiction, he would have backed it for that year's Prix Carbet (the literary prize he established in 1990). Patrick Chamoiseau, "Les nègres marrons de Richard Price," *Antillia*, no. 576 (18 March 1994): 4–5. Richard Price, *Les premiers temps* (Paris: Seuil, 1994). Richard Price, *Le bagnard et le colonel* (Paris: PUF, 2002); see especially "Postface à la 2ème édition," *Le bagnard et le colonel* (La Roque d'Anthéron: Vents d'ailleurs, 2016).

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cri de coeur about Martinican identity to be at once belated, derivative, misogynistic, and benighted has not altered over the intervening years.[3]

I think I have now finally been able to put my finger on the main reason why we found the *Éloge* so weak, despite its sometimes muscular rhetoric. It stems from a distinction I would like to make between *creolization* with a *z* and *créolisation* with an *s*, the first being an analytical tool widely used by anglophone anthropologists and historians and the second being a philosophical concept championed by Glissant and diffused widely in *la francophonie*.

The term *créolisation*—with an *s*—is strongly associated with Glissant, who pioneered its modern use in French. Recently, when France's leading anthropological journal, *L'Homme*, published a special issue devoted to the subject, the majority of its fourteen contributions had *créolisation* in their title and referred repeatedly to Glissant.[4] For Glissant, as for the *élogistes*, *créolisation* is an abstract philosophical concept (which, in Glissant's later work, morphs into *la Relation*) and is infused with both *opacité* (opacity) and *imprévisibilité* (unpredictability).[5] For Glissant, as for the *élogistes*, it describes the transformative engine of *le Tout-monde* in which we will all soon be living—unless we are lucky enough already to be living in the blessed state of *créolité* in Martinique. As Jean-Luc Bonniol, the editor of the special issue of *L'Homme*, writes, "Les propositions d'Édouard Glissant et celles des *élogistes* semblent en fait s'inscrire dans un certain 'air du temps' interprétatif, transnational, imprégné par les idées de convergence, d'improvisation et de créativité," and he makes clear that he has in mind such anglophone cultural studies figures as Homi K. Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Paul Gilroy. Bonniol goes on to emphasize that in the thought of Glissant and the *élogistes*, "la créolisation n'est généralement pas explorée en termes d'événements ou de processus concrets: on y trouve surtout des spéculations sur *ce qui devrait advenir*. . . . [C'est] un *modèle pour*, digne d'imitation, relevant d'une conscience politique."[6]

In contrast to this philosophical, quasi-utopian concept of *créolisation*, the anglophone term *creolization* has always had firm historical roots. And it is the power of this concept that I would now credit as lying behind most of Sally's and my critical thoughts about the *Éloge*. Before spelling out how creolization-with-a-*z*, as used by historians and anthropologists, differs from *créolisation*-with-an-*s*, let us glance back briefly at our main criticisms of the *Éloge*.[7]

Our argument in "Shadowboxing" began with a consideration of the engagement by previous writers (from V. S. Naipaul and Alejo Carpentier to Derek Walcott and Glissant) with Caribbean history and then moved on to a survey of previous identitarian movements in the region. We concluded

3 When Aimé Césaire famously dismissed *créolité* as little more than "*un département de la négritude*" he was saying something similar—his own identitarian movement paradoxically encompassed rather more than that of the *créolistes*. See "Entretien d'Aimé Césaire avec F. Bobin," *Le Monde*, 12 April 1994.

4 See "Un miracle créole?," ed. Jean-Luc Bonniol, special issue, *L'Homme*, nos. 207–08 (March 2013). For a review of the use of *créolisation* before Glissant, see Jean-Luc Bonniol, "Au prisme de la créolisation: Tentative d'épuisement d'un concept," in ibid., 237–88.

5 In this essay I use *élogistes* and *créolistes* interchangeably.

6 "The propositions of both Édouard Glissant and the authors of the Éloge draw on transnational, interpretive ideas that were very much in the air—about convergence, improvisation, and creativity"; Jean-Luc Bonniol, "Au prisme de la créolisation," 276. "Creolization is not usually explored in term of events or concrete processes: rather, one finds speculations about *what ought to happen*. . . . [It's] a *model for*, something to be imitated and arising from a political consciousness"; ibid., 279. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

7 See Price and Price, "Shadowboxing."

the opening section by arguing that in a broader (not just francophone) Caribbean context, the major programmatic claims of the *créolistes* had already been widely acknowledged. We then ran through their attempts to rewrite Caribbean history and what we saw as their misunderstandings of such figures as "Africa," "Maroons," "Indentured Indians," and "plantation slaves," all of whom they transformed into Glissantian-style archetypes of a purely literary rather than historical mode.[8] In our critique of the *créolistes*' discussion of *diversalité*, we faulted them for "peopling the island [Martinique] with a reified set of categories drawn from crosscutting kinds of schemata (class, 'race,' national origin, etc.)" and suggested that, from a broader Caribbeanist perspective, Martinique in fact "look[ed] anything but diverse."[9] We pointed next to the *créolistes*' lack of a Pan-Caribbean perspective (in any but a superficial programmatic sense) and their entrenched insularity ("their willful nonengagement with both the non-French Caribbean and nonfrancophonic scholarship").[10] Our detailed critique of their account of the development of Martinican Creole, which followed, was based on similar grounds, including their refusal to consider that language within the context of non-French-based creoles. We then tried to locate the emergence of the *créolistes* within the rapidly modernizing, assimilating, Europeanizing society of late-twentieth-century Martinique and the inevitable nostalgia for *an tan lontan* ("the good old days") that accompanies it. Next, we criticized the *créolistes*' sexual politics and its strong Martinican groundings. And we ended with an analysis of the 1995 film *L'exil de Béhanzin*, which we characterized as "a comprehensive allegory of the *créolistes*' vision of the post-emancipation history of Martinique: immigrants arriving from backward, monolingual lands to discover a sophisticated creole world-in-the-making that is bubbling with ethnic and linguistic diversity."[11] The *Éloge*, we concluded, is shot through with what Richard Burton called "nostalgic essentialism," which could be transcended only if the authors "mov[ed] from lip service to practice in the recognition of Martinique's fundamental Caribbeanness," to its place in the world of Afro-America, "adopt[ing] a genuine, as opposed to merely programmatic, opening to the whole of the Caribbean (from Cuba, down through Trinidad, to Suriname)—both to its thinkers/writers and to its political/historical/cultural realities."[12]

8 As J. Michael Dash reminds us, the *Éloge* misuses Glissant's ideas, turning them into "ideological dogma" in terms that are suggestively reductionist. And this new dogma of *créolité* "lacks the ironic self-scrutiny, the insistence on process that is characteristic of Glissant's thought. Indeed, despite its avowed debt to Glissant, *Éloge de la créolité* risks undoing the epistemological break with essentialist thinking that he has always striven to conceptualize." J. Michael Dash, *Édouard Glissant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1995), 23.

9 Price and Price, "Shadowboxing," 10. Madeleine Cottenet-Hage notes further, quoting Maryse Condé, that the *créolistes*' proclamation of being "*ni* Européens, *ni* Africains, *ni* Asiatiques" ("*neither* Europeans, *nor* Africans, *nor* Asians") remains entrenched in "vieilles catégories de race, nationalité, territoire, auxquelles nous nous accrochons [et qui sont] en train de devenir caduques" ("the same old categories—race, nationality, territory—so dear to us [but which are] fast becoming obsolete"). Madeleine Cottenet-Hage, introduction to Maryse Condé and Madeleine Cottenet-Hage, eds., *Penser la créolité* (Paris: Karthala, 1995), 11.

10 Price and Price, "Shadowboxing," 11. We draw the contrast, for example, with the cross-language and island reading of the young Derek Walcott, who described his own literary "discipleship" to "the young Frantz Fanon and the already ripe and bitter Césaire [who] were manufacturing the home-made bombs of their prose poems, their drafts for revolution." And Walcott's own critical comments on the *Éloge*, written from his Caribbean subject position, fault it for being so predictably "French" and for its "emphatic isolation." Derek Walcott, "What the Twilight Says: An Overture," in *"Dream on Monkey Mountain," and Other Plays* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1970), 12; *What the Twilight Says: Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 223–24.

11 Price and Price, "Shadowboxing," 20.

12 Ibid., 24. See Richard Burton, "*Ki moun nou yé*? The Idea of Difference in Contemporary French West Indian Thought," *New West Indian Guide* 67 (1993): 5–32. Mary Gallagher expresses a similar critique: "Although the créolité vision is inherently programmatic and future-oriented, the aesthetic outlined in the main body of the manifesto is strikingly retrospective,"

Let us turn, then, to creolization-with-a-*z*. (With the excuse that not all literary scholars read articles aimed at anthropologists and historians, I recast here some of my recent observations about the concept, written for other purposes.)[13]

First of all, it is important to remember that "creolization" (like *créolisation*) is a metaphor. In its anthropological and historical sense, it was coined to describe the process by which people, flora and fauna, ideas, and institutions with roots in the Old World were born, grew, and prospered in the New. (As early as the sixteenth century, people were speaking of "creole" pigs and chickens, and they were soon also referring to people born in the New World but of at least partial Old World ancestry as "Creoles.") The first use I have found of *creolization* in English to refer to cultural as opposed to biological processes dates only from 1928.[14] It was during the course of the twentieth century that the term moved from the field of natural history to linguistics and thence to anthropology, then to history, and, latterly, to cultural studies and literature. In the 1960s, linguists and anthropologists began applying it to the unusual processes of rapid cultural change that first took place in the violent colonial cauldron of the early New World, and in those academic disciplines it soon replaced the metaphors of previous scholars, such as "acculturation" (Melville J. Herskovits), "transculturation" (Fernando Ortiz), and "cultural interpenetration" (Roger Bastide).[15]

Many anthropologists and historians of the Americas, following the lead of *The Birth of African-American Culture*, an essay that I wrote with Sidney Mintz in 1973, came to depend on the term *creolization* as the marker for the process by which enslaved and self-liberated Africans, against all odds, created new institutions (languages, religions, legal systems, and more)—for the ways that these people, coming from a diversity of Old World societies, drew on their knowledge of homeland institutions to create new ones that they could call their own and pass on to their children, who elaborated them further.[16]

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, a former student of Mintz's and mine, viewed historical creolization as a kind of "repeated miracle":

> From the family plots of the Jamaican hinterland, the Afro-religions of Brazil and Cuba, or the jazz music of Louisiana to the vitality of Haitian painting and music and the historical awareness of Suriname's maroons, the cultural practices that typify various African American populations

and she notes that there is as well "a desire to freeze-frame '*creoleness*,' leaving time out of the reckoning," hardly the stuff to attract a historian. Mary Gallagher, "The *Créolité* Movement," in Charles Stewart, ed., *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast, 2007), 228, 229.

13 The articles I draw on include Richard Price, "On the Miracle of Creolization," in Kevin A. Yelvington, ed., *Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora* (Santa Fe, NM: SAR, 2006), 113–45; "Some Anthropological Musings on Creolization," *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 22, no. 1 (2007): 17–36; "Créolisation et historicité," *L'Homme*, nos. 207–08 (March 2013): 289–312; and "Creolization," in Joseph P. Miller et al., *Princeton Companion to Atlantic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 125–27.

14 Writing in English, using British spelling, Jonkeer L. C. van Panhuys, in a letter to Melville J. Herskovits dated 28(?) April 1928, described culture change among the Suriname Maroons as "creolisation" (creolization-with-a-*z*). Melville J. Herskovits Papers, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

15 See Melville J. Herskovits, *Acculturation: The Study of Culture Contact* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1938); Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (Havana: Jesús Montero, 1940); and Roger Bastide, *Les religions afro-brésiliennes: Contribution à une sociologie de l'interpénétration des civilisations* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960). The key marker of this shift was the 1968 University of the West Indies conference that resulted in the pioneering collection edited by Dell Hymes: *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

16 See Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston: Beacon, 1992); originally a paper for the Schouler Lecture Symposium, Johns Hopkins University, 9–10 April 1973.

> appear to us as the product of a repeated miracle. For those of us who keep in mind the conditions of emergence and growth of ideals, patterns, and practices associated with African slaves and their descendants in the Americas, their very existence is a continuing puzzle. For they were born against all odds.[17]

My essay with Mintz, which built on and extended Herskovits's ideas, emphasized that creolization involved rupture and loss, creativity and transformation, and celebration as well as silencing of cultural continuities. For the study of slavery across the Americas, it tried to lay out the kinds of constants (e.g., the realities of power differences) and the kinds of variables (e.g., demographic, cultural, geographic specificities) that merited scholars' attention. It assumed that, despite certain commonalities based on relations of power, slavery in nineteenth-century Virginia, for example, was in significant ways a different institution from slavery in seventeenth-century Mexico or slavery in eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue, and it tried to point to the kinds of specific historical contexts that brought about these differences. The clarion call of that essay was historicization and contextualization.

In *The Birth of African-American Culture* we sought an answer to certain kinds of questions (still hotly debated today) as a way of getting at more general sociocultural processes. How "ethnically" homogeneous (or heterogeneous) were the enslaved Africans arriving in a particular locality—to what extent was there a clearly dominant group—and what were the cultural consequences? What were the processes by which these imported Africans became African *Americans*? How quickly and in what ways did Africans transported to the Americas as slaves, and their African American offspring, begin thinking and acting as members of new communities—that is, how rapid was creolization? In what ways did the African arrivants choose to, and were they able to, continue particular ways of thinking and of doing things that they brought from the Old World? What did "Africa" (or its subregions and peoples) mean at different times to African arrivants and their descendants? How did the various demographic profiles and social conditions of New World plantations in particular places and times encourage or inhibit these processes?

In other words, as we laid down the gauntlet of creolization-with-a-*z* for future historians and anthropologists, we were trying to get at concrete problems through an insistence on contextualization and historicization—no search for opacity or *imprévisibilité* here.

We assumed that the post-Columbian Caribbean constituted a tumultuous stage for an unlikely and varied set of actors, from European pirates and buccaneers through African and African American Maroons to Caribs deported from the islands and large numbers of Native Indians. In this colonial arena, unspeakable greed, lust, and conquest rubbed shoulders with heroic acts of resistance and solidarity. Millions of human beings were killed outright by enslavement, forced labor, and disease. Yet in many parts of the region, vibrant new societies and cultures emerged from the ashes. Within this prototypical space of death—indeed, often within the complex interstices that divided it internally—displaced Africans, a motley crew of Europeans, and what remained of Native

17 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Culture on the Edges: Caribbean Creolization in Historical Context," in Brian Keith Axel, ed., *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 191.

American populations forged new, distinctively American modes of human interaction. Together, through the complex processes of negotiation between such individuals and groups, which we call creolization, they created whole new cultures and societies. That is the miracle. That is what creolization-with-a-*z* tries to investigate.

One contentious arena for such studies is research on slavery in North America. Here we can see clearly how studies of creolization, like African Americanist research more generally, remains enmeshed in the realities of North American (and Caribbean) racism. Studies of historical creolization continue to be deeply affected by scholars' ideological and political positions in the present. Perhaps nowhere is this influence of the present on the interpretation of the past clearer than in considerations of the role of African "ethnicities" in the development of African American culture and society. Many Africanist historians writing about the Americas (Michael Gomez, John Thornton) tend to emphasize the persistence of African ethnicities, while Americanist historians (Ira Berlin, Philip Morgan) tend to stress the malleability of identities and the importance of their new lives under slavery in cultural creativity on the part of the enslaved.[18] Nonetheless, most recent studies agree that, because of the diversity of labor regimes and the demographic mixes they brought with them, creolization proceeded in different ways at different times in North America and that everywhere there was constant reshaping of African ideas and practices to the immediacies of local North American life. Whether they take as their focus the development of slave institutions—material life, work in the fields, skilled labor, exchanges between whites and blacks, family life, religious life, and so forth—or the comparison of regions through time, the best of these studies suggest that African ethnicity was important at certain moments in certain places but was a variable that tended to fade relatively quickly, in terms of the slaves' own identity politics.

Given the variety of historical circumstances in which New World creolization took place and the weight on the field of presentist ideological concerns, I would suggest—as a scholar of creolization-with-a-*z*—that our best strategy in studying these phenomena might be to insist on some combination of careful historical contextualization and broader comparisons across the Americas. After all, it is speakers of diverse languages who meet and communicate languages do not. Human beings meet and engage one another; cultures do not. Individuals who claim multiple identities interact with one another; ethnicities do not. In my view, creolization (always with a *z*) remains a useful metaphor, an abstraction from the ways diverse individuals historically interacted and individually and together made meaning of these encounters. To my mind, those encounters took place in a very special place and time, not in somebody's imagined *Tout-monde*.

By the millennium, the concept of creolization-with-a-*z* had come under direct attack from two directions. Cultural studies scholars (James Clifford, Ulf Hannerz) were claiming that the metaphor was best used in a much broader sense to describe worldwide contemporary phenomena of mixing,

18 See Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ira Berlin, *Many Thousand Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1998); and Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

blending, and hybridization, whether in Tokyo, Lagos, or New York City—the ways consumers of culture were creatively adapting new offerings, transforming the global into the local and thereby indigenizing the global.[19] At the same time, some Africanist historians (Paul Lovejoy, Thornton) were claiming that these processes had been endemic in Africa and in fact long predated the beginning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, suggesting that the Americanist emphasis on the distinctiveness of the cultural creativity of enslaved Africans was misguided.[20] (They styled Mintz and me "creation-theorists.") More recently, a number of Caribbeanists (Mintz, Stephan Palmié, myself, Trouillot) have argued for the historical specialness of the early Caribbean (and the necessity for restricting the concept of "creolization" to it) because of the extraordinary social circumstances that had no parallel in "normal" conquests, mixings, and so on, such as those in precolonial Africa or elsewhere in the modern world.[21] The linguist Dell Hymes, comparing "creolization" to "normal" kinds of linguistic change, argued long ago that creolization is best used to refer to a very particular sociohistorical nexus, representing "the extreme to which social factors can go in shaping the transmission and use of language."[22] From this perspective, creolization could be said to describe a precise and unusual set of sociohistorical circumstances in which individuals from diverse societies and cultures are suddenly thrust together and create new social and cultural institutions under conditions of vastly unequal power.

In a certain sense, Glissant, and later the *élogistes*, anticipated the globalizing moves of Clifford, Hannerz, and the cultural studies crowd. (Or perhaps, as Bonniol suggested in "Au prisme de la créolisation," there was simply "un certain 'air du temps' interprétatif, transnational" that all partook of.) The *élogistes* align themselves with late Glissant in, for example, claiming, "Le monde va en état de créolité. . . . Le fils, né et vivant à Pékin, d'un Allemand ayant épousé une Haïtienne, sera écartelé entre plusieurs langues, plusieurs histoires, pris dans une ambiguïté torrentielle d'une identité mosaïque. . . . *Il sera en état de créole*."[23] They stand, then, with those cultural studies scholars in believing that *créolisation* (with an *s*) is the apt metaphor for what Charles Stewart has characterized as "eating a Big Mac in Tokyo, belonging to the Madonna fan club in Singapore, or even moving from Nigeria to the United Kingdom and becoming naturalized as a British Citizen."[24] In other words, for the *élogistes*, *créolisation* is a state of being, an essence—not, like historical creolization, a process. (This, in fact, is precisely what Glissant had in mind when he faulted *créolité*

19 See James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Cultures, People, Places* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

20 See Paul E. Lovejoy, "Identifying Enslaved Africans: Methodological and Conceptual Considerations in Studying the African Diaspora" (paper presented at UNESCO/SSHRC Summer Institute, York University, 1997); and Thornton, *Africa and Africans*.

21 See Sidney W. Mintz, *Three Ancient Colonies: Caribbean Themes and Variations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Stephan Palmié, "Is There a Model in the Muddle? 'Creolization' in African Americanist History and Anthropology," in Stewart, *Creolization*, 178–200; Trouillot, "Culture on the Edges"; and Richard Price, *Travels with Tooy: History, Memory, and the African American Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

22 Hymes, *Pidginization*, 5.

23 "The world is moving into a state of creolity. . . . The son, who was born and resides in Beijing, of a German man who married a Haitian, will be torn between several languages, several histories, caught in a torrential ambiguity of an identity in mosaics. . . . *He will be in a creole state*"; Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant, *Éloge / In Praise*, 51–52 (italics in original).

24 Charles Stewart, "Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory," in Stewart, *Creolization*, 4.

for being "une visée à l'être [qui] régresserait vers des négritudes, des francités, des latinités, toutes généralisantes—plus ou moins innocemment."[25])

I would guess that from the perspective of the *créolistes*, or that of just about anyone who lives in the intellectual orbit of *créolisation*-with-an-*s*, our own criticisms ultimately carry little force or interest.[26] Yet there are political as well as more "scientific" reasons to insist upon the importance of creolization-with-a-*z* in the Caribbean. Mimi Sheller argues that the concept "is not simply about moving and mixing elements. . . . It is deeply embedded in situations of coerced transport, racial terror, and subaltern survival. . . . Creolization is 'a process of *contention*.'" She notes how "creolization has transmogrified from a politically engaged term used by Caribbean theorists in the Caribbean in the 1970s [Brathwaite and Nettleford, as well as Mintz and me], to one used by Caribbean diaspora theorists located outside the Caribbean in the 1980s [Hall, Gilroy], and finally to non-Caribbean 'global' theorists in the 1990s [Hannerz, Clifford]." And she calls for "returning to the Caribbean roots of the concept of creolization, regrounding it in its specific social and cultural itineraries" in order to "recover the political meanings and subaltern agency that have been barred entry by the free-floating gatekeepers of 'global' culture."[27] Where do the *créolistes*, who certainly do have Caribbean roots but who stress a poetic and artistic rather than a "grounded" perspective, fit into these debates?

Perhaps they are simply nonparticipants. If one were to ask what the influence has been of the *créolistes*' manifesto since its publication in 1989 (in Martinique, in the broader Caribbean, in the world at large), I would answer, "Surprisingly little." Its appearance, as we know, provoked a few critical rejoinders, from Martinicans, from other Antilleans, and from Caribbeanist scholars.[28] But, to my knowledge, it has had very little impact on writers, artists, or others discussing questions

25 "A target state of being that regresses in the direction of [categories such as] Negritude, Frenchness, Latinness, all generalized, more or less innocently"; Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 103. He in a sense prefigured his critique of the *Éloge* when, in 1981, he wrote that *créolisation* "en tant que proposition, n'est pas d'abord l'exaltation de la formation composite d'un peuple" ("as an idea is not primarily the glorification of the composite nature of a people") but rather "la Relation n'est sans cesse que relais" ("Relation is unceasingly simply a process of transformation"). Édouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Paris: Seuil, 1981), 250, 252.

26 Mary Gallagher notes dryly that Martinican writers are particularly drawn to the "ideational, universalizing tropism widely regarded as characterizing Metropolitan French culture, in contrast, for example, to the more empirical spirit of 'Anglo-Saxon' thought" ("The *Créolité* Movement," 221). It may be relevant that the Mintz's and my essay has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch but has never aroused the interest of French scholars or publishers. Indeed, France has traditionally lagged far behind the anglophone, hispanophone, lusophone, and Dutch-speaking academic worlds in the study of the Caribbean and of slavery.

27 Mimi Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies* (London: Routledge, 2003), 189, 194, 196.

28 For example, Michel Giraud, "De la négritude à la créolité: Une évolution paradoxale à l'ère départementale," in Fred Constant and Justin Daniel, eds., *1946–1996: Cinquante ans de départementalisation outre-mer* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), 373–403; Condé and Cottenet-Hage, *Penser la créolité*; Burton, "Ki moun"; and Price and Price, "Shadowboxing." In a recent interview, Chamoiseau claimed that the *Éloge* in fact evoked considerable debate in Martinique (though I was unaware of it, living much of the period in the United States). He told Luigia Pettano that its impact was "terrible" (very strong), and goes on to say, "Il y a eu une contestation violente. Les débats ont duré plusieurs années. Il a eu beaucoup d'opposition. . . . Dans tous les domaines: politique, littéraire, artistique. Les gens étaient pour ou contre. Ils étaient surtout violemment contre. Non, non, ça a été chaud. Et nous, on répondait dare-dare. C'était une période assez polémique. Mais c'est vrai que l'opposition a été forte. D'autant plus que Glissant aussi a tout de suite pris ses distances en disant: 'Pas la créolité, mais la créolisation, pas l'essence, mais le processus.' Ce qui était, à mon avis, un peu un artifice de sa part" ("There was violent criticism. The debates went on for years. There was a great deal of opposition. . . . In all disciplines: politics, literature, the arts. People were either for or against. They were mainly violently against. No, no, it was really hot. And we, we responded quickly. It was a fairly polemical period. But it is true that the opposition was strong. Even more so because Glissant also quickly distanced himself, saying, 'Not creolity but *créolisation*, not essence, but process.' Which, in my opinion, was a bit of an artifice on his part"). Luigia Pattano, "Entretien avec Patrick Chamoiseau," 5 January 2011, mondesfrancophones.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Entretien_avec_Patrick_Chamoiseau_version_PDF.pdf, 4.

of Caribbean identity in the 1990s and beyond.[29] Indeed, like the philosophical and poetic works of its godfather Édouard Glissant, the influence of the *Éloge* would seem to be largely restricted to particular circles within *la francophonie* and to university departments of French literature or French studies.[30]

Perhaps I should leave the last word to the late Michel-Rolph Trouillot:

> Theories of creolization or of creole societies, assessments of what it means to be "creole" in turn, are still very much affected by the ideological and political sensibilities of the observers. . . .
>
> . . . All seize creolization as a totality, thus one level too removed from the concrete circumstances faced by the individuals engaged in the process. All these models invoke history; some even use it at times. Yet the historical conditions of cultural production rarely become a fundamental and necessary part of the description or analyses that these models generate. Calls for a more refined look at historical particulars [and here he points in a footnote to my essay with Mintz] remain unheeded. . . .
>
> . . . We have not thought enough about what went on in specific places and times to produce a framework sensitive enough to time, place, and power.[31]

Finding such a framework, one "sensitive enough to time, place, and power," might even involve finding a new metaphor. As Hannerz once wrote of "creolization," "Whenever one takes an intellectual ride on a metaphor, it is essential that one knows where to get off."[32] Whether it is time to get off or not, it is useful to recognize that with *créolisation*/creolization, we are dealing with two metaphors, not one—the first the domain of poets and novelists, the second the bailiwick of anthropologists and historians.[33]

29 One interesting local exception is the Martinican movement called Tous Créoles!, founded by some *békés* and trying to bend the words of the *Éloge* to their cause, which is a kind of "We Are the World" or "United Colors of Benetton" celebration that, by strictly avoiding any discussion of class, property, or inequality, makes Martinique the world's most wonderful place—it is one logical extension of the *Éloge*, and it is at once almost comical and potentially dangerous.

30 A recent example of the exaggeration of Glissant's importance among specialists in French literature is provided by Mary Gallagher, who claims, "Édouard Glissant is the writer who . . . most trenchantly identified the plantation as the cultural heartland not just of the Caribbean, but of what he called the *autre Amérique*—that belt extending from the US 'deep South' down into South America, via Central America and the Caribbean[,] . . . the crucible in which creole culture developed its most potent or intense manifestations." Mary Gallagher, "Review of José Manuel Cruz Rodriguez, *Analyse du discours littéraire antillais*," *New West Indian Guide* 88 (2014): 205–06. But the idea of "Plantation America" as a core cultural area has been widely used in anthropology, history, and geography ever since the end of World War II. See, for example, Charles Wagley, "Plantation America: A Culture Sphere," in Vera Rubin, ed., *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium* (Kingston: IESR, University College of the West Indies, 1957), 3–13; and Edgar T. Thompson, *The Plantation: An International Bibliography* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1983). Thompson's bibliography contained 1,362 items at the time of publication.

31 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Culture on the Edges: Creolization in the Plantation Context," *Plantation Society in the Americas* 5, no. 1 (1998): 8, 9, 20.

32 Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 264.

33 In a persuasive piece that I read only after completing this essay, Dominique Chancé argues that the early Glissant, the author of the *Discours antillais* and the novels right through *Mahagony* (incidentally, the "Glissant" that has always attracted me intellectually), stood close to what I describe here as the anthropological/historical approach to creolization and only moved toward the aesthetic/poetic version (the one most closely associated with his thought today) later in his life. See Dominique Chancé, "Édouard Glissant, de l'anthropologie à l'esthétique," in "Entours d' Édouard Gliisant," ed. Valérie Loichot, special issue, *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, no. 309 (2013): 37–53. I should also mention that the anonymous reader of this article for *Small Axe* helpfully pointed out that the concepts discussed herein are increasingly relevant for research in many other areas of the world beyond the Caribbean, from Indonesia and the Indian Ocean to Macau and South Africa, pointing to studies by scholars ranging from linguist Charles Baissac in the late nineteenth century to more contemporary scholars such as Laurence Pourchez, Françoise Lionnet, Françoise Vergès, and Robin Cohen. Fitting my present comments, focused on the Caribbean (and solicited specifically to deal with the *Éloge*) into this broader geographical scope will have to await another occasion.