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Language (Re)Appropriation in the Francophone Caribbean Region: Challenges and Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

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Marky Jean-Pierre
University of Connecticut, 2015

The development of the subject depends on whether the subject re-appropriates his/her creation or remains alienated by it. In *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Daniel Miller describes the challenges and perspectives for the subject to re-appropriate his/her creation and what happens when he or she remains alienated by it. Miller combines the work of Hegel, Marx, Simmel, and Munn in an attempt to frame his theory of culture. The key concept that reverberates throughout Miller's reflection on Hegel, Marx, Simmel, and Munn is his notion of "objectification;" however, an analysis of his work suggests that perhaps Miller's greatest achievement is the way he theorizes the process of re-appropriation itself, and its implications for the development of the subject. This study examines linguistic forms and practices as taking shape via what Daniel Miller has described an exercise of reappropriation as part of "a dual process by means of which a subject externalizes itself in a creative act of differentiation, and in turn reappropriates this externalization through an act which Hegel terms sublation" (Miller, 28). While Miller bases his theory of material culture on the notion of "objectification" that he abstracts from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, this thesis draws on the notion of reappropriation, *per se* applying it to the context of the speech community of the francophone Caribbean region.

Language (Re)Appropriation in the Francophone Caribbean Region: Challenges and Perspectives

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APPROVAL PAGE

Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

Language (Re)Appropriation in the Francophone Caribbean Region: Challenges and Perspectives

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INTRODUCTION

Language (re)appropriation in the francophone Caribbean region: challenges and perspectives

Why have Caribbean subjects experienced such difficulties appropriating “la langue matricielle¹” to “élaborer son langage²” to ensure “accès à la La Langue³” as a way to converge toward “l’imaginaire de l’homme⁴” in the “chaos-monde⁵”? To address this fundamental dilemma, this study has re-conceptualized the language varieties spoken by Caribbean subjects i.e. Creole, as the product of underlying linguistic reappropriation as part of a process involving externalization of the self and its values, sublimation, and re-appropriation. Linguistic re-appropriation underlying the milieu of language in the Francophone Caribbean region is examined as occurring, and receiving its impetus within, a post-colonial framework marked by French-dominant language ideology.

This study examines linguistic forms and practices as taking shape via what Daniel Miller (1987) has described an exercise of reappropriation as part of “a dual process by means of which a subject externalizes itself in a creative act of differentiation, and in turn reappropriates this externalization through an act which Hegel terms sublation” (Miller, 28). It also emphasizes “the process of objective form arising both through fragmentation into the particular, and resolution through abstraction” and the conditions that turn to “preventing rather enabling the development of human social and material relations”. In this case, and as we will see later, the real crisis of human development can be conceived as a crisis of re-appropriation.

While Miller bases his theory of material culture on the notion of “objectification” that he abstracts from Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, this research draws on the notion of reappropriation, *per se*. Likewise, Miller uses the notion of “objectification” to refer to a subject, the culture as an externalized form of that subject and then the material objects that result from the

¹ Patrick Chamoiseau uses this concept to refer to what is usually considered as mother tongue. The closest English translation would be “matrix language”

² English translation: “elaborate one’s language”

³ English translation: “Access to one’s language”

⁴ English translation: “the imaginary of human beings”

⁵ The closest English translation might be “world chaos”

externalization of the subject. Drawing on this, this study considers the subject, language as a form of culture as an externalization of the subject and then the reappropriation of this externalized form by the subject to further his development. As Miller signals, whether one considers this process as individual or collective, is a matter of analytical level (81).

As Miller contends, the subject's development is contingent upon his reappropriation of the values that exist but his ability to reappropriate those values is not independent from his awareness that these values are a result of his own creation. The knowledge of one's ability to reappropriate the world is the very condition to reappropriate it. Not being able to reappropriate the values created by human beings may result in a rupture, in Miller's view. Applied to issues of language, not being able to reappropriate adequately the linguistic forms that constitute the linguistic configuration of the subject may result in a form of linguistic alienation that is likely to go counter to the development of the individual.

This study argues that the language situation in the francophone Caribbean region is part of a linguistic dialectic whereby speakers sublate the dominant language, French,⁶ and then reappropriate it through externalized linguistic forms that include Creole and different varieties of the French language. In the light of this framework, this study assesses specific examples of francophone Caribbean literatures re-conceptualized as examples of such processes of linguistic (re)appropriation. It links the evolution of language varieties to a long lasting colonial legacy where standardized French-dominant language ideologies serve as key parts of the framework in which linguistic (re)appropriation is either enacted or challenged. While this proposition draws on the tradition initiated by different Caribbean writers, such as Glissant, Chamoiseau, Barnabé, and Confiant, it also adopts a more pragmatic approach by looking at ways in which the Caribbean subject can both develop new insights about language and begin to apply those insights toward substantive change.

6. The African-based languages do play an important role in the process, but this will not be discussed here.

The thesis comprises ten chapters. Chapter 1 discusses how the formation of the francophone Caribbean linguistic communities reflects Miller's insights on how the individual can reappropriate its "act of externalization", the challenges he or she may face, and the consequences that may result in a possible rupture between the individual and his or her own creation when she or he fail to reappropriate it. This chapter focuses on an exploration of the notions of externalization, sublation and reappropriation as part of Miller's framework on a theory of culture as delineated in his book *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* in which he takes up the work of Hegel, Marx, and Simmel.

Chapter two extends the discussion on linguistic (re)appropriation by focusing primarily on an examination of the works of Michel DeGraff on *Creolization, Language Change, and Language Acquisition* as well as the three major approaches to Creole genesis, i.e., "universalist," "substratist," and "superstratist." More specically, this chapter takes a close look at DeGraff's "Uniformitarian-Cartesian linguistic" framework. Following a discussion of the notions of creation, appropriation/sublation and re-appropriation, this chapter offers an examination of DeGraff's two concepts of I-Creole and E-Creole, which he uses to discuss the development of the Haitian language as one of several modern languages labeled "Creole." I-Creole and E-Creole are described in terms of the dialectical individual-group movement in language development. After a brief sketch of early Haitian language development, the chapter concludes with a discussion of how creative linguistic acts operate and how to think about linguistic appropriation, both as understood specifically in relation to the Haitian language.

Chapter three explores how language ideology has contributed to the challenges that the francophone Caribbean speaking subjects face in reappropriating local, heritage, and environmental languages as possibilities for both self-development and the development of their communities. It offers a theoretical overview of language ideology, retraces the ideologically driven language practices in the francophone Caribbean region since the French 3rd Republic that initiated a movement of linguistic unification of France to the detriment of the regional languages during the

second half of the 19th century. It also analyzes the role of language ideology in the evolution of language practices, in the reappropriation of linguistic resources, and in power afforded through such linguistic resources. This chapter addresses the question how such movement of linguistic unification since the French 3rd republic contributes to the the ideologically driven language practices in the francophone Caribbean region and how they interfere with the challenges of language (re)appropriation in the region.

Chapter four discusses the work of Paul Celan, considered by John Edwin Jackson as primarily a project of *contre-parole*, which in the context of this study can be considered as a prime example of a work of language re-appropriation, even as we acknowledge that this German-language poet born to a Jewish family in Cernăuți, in the then Kingdom of Romania is, geographically at least, far from the Caribbean indeed. In the same context, this chapter discusses other important examples of *contre-parole* and language re-appropriation in the works of Mauthner, Canetti, and Kafka who faced major language dilemmas, but were able to engage in language re-appropriation to find their voices. This transformed their dilemmas into a productive reflection on language. In this sense, the emblematic work of Kafka on “Minor Literature” is particularly emphasized as it indicates the underlying product of language re-appropriation by a subject who has overcome the tyranny of language.

Chapter five, six, and seven focus on language and literatures in the francophone Caribbean region as exemplars of linguistic reappropriation. Drawing on Bakhtinian conceptualizations of voices, polyphony, and dialogicality, it studies the voices of three important francophone Caribbean authors as expressed in their literary works. Miller's theory of culture involves the key aspect of "externalization," or “the creation of particular form,” and that such forms can be “words, institutions, objects and actions” (28). In this case, literary works provide the vehicle of externalization from which the voices and utterances of the authors, in a Bakhtinian sense, may be discerned. Significantly, the particular voices illustrate a re-appropriation of language, in this case French, as a tool to construct or find one's voice. Thus, Césaire's epic poem *Notebook of a Return to*

the Native Land, illustrates how he uses language to embark Caribbean readers into a dialectical discourse on identity, notably an identity reappropriated through the same language by which it could have been silenced, if not lost. In another example, Chamoiseau's novel *Texaco* presents a typical case of a colonized subject sublimating language that could otherwise articulate a voice of subjugation. The Bakhtinian concepts of polyphony and multivocality (or multivoicedness) come into play in Jacques Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* (*Master of the Dew*) where the author uses multiple voices to depict the lot of the Caribbean individuals and bring them face-to-face with their responsibility to reclaim their destiny. More specifically, chapter five discusses how Aimé Césaire, through his work in *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, re-appropriates the French language channeling it to develop a discourse that challenges colonial discourse. In doing so the writer also challenges the construction of the Caribbean as a space that harbors subaltern subjectivities. This chapter looks at the problematic of time and space in this novel, and then at the literary devices Césaire uses to construct a discourse of contre-parole, thus engaging in an act of language re-appropriation. Chapter six discusses how Jacques Roumain, the author of *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* (*Masters of the Dew*), engages linguistically in a dual re-appropriation: a re-appropriation of language and a re-appropriation of discourses. Using the method of social realism to capture the realities of the Haitian community of Fonwouj, Roumain sublimates both the French language and religious and classical discourses to construct a language of counter-parole. The chapter emphasizes how these discourses are channeled through a French language that many in the francophone Caribbean region use to harbor a deficit representation of communities like Fonwouj. In the same line of thought, based on the work of Patrick Chamoiseau, chapter seven discusses Caribbean identity by inscribing it into the frame of language re-appropriation that this work has elaborated. It examines how Chamoiseau re-appropriates the French language to express the Creole identity of Caribbean subjects as being textured with pluralism. This chapter outlines the way Chamoiseau accomplishes this, and the significance of his work for our understanding of the tensions surrounding language in the francophone Caribbean region.

Chapters eight and nine focus on the perspectives of language reappropriation. Chapter eight draws on the work of Chamoiseau, Jean Barnabé and Raphael Confiant in *In Praise of Creoleness* (*Eloge de la créolité*, 1989) to exemplify how the Creole language can contribute to revamping the agency of the Creole speaking population and to both ‘deliver’ and ‘protect’ them from loss. Chapter nine draws on the works cited in the volume and the Common European Framework of Reference Languages to outline the general contours of a framework that envisions a projected plurilingual Caribbean speech community. Chapter ten offers a reflection that takes up the major themes addressed throughout the work.

CHAPTER 1

The Notion of Re-appropriation and its Implications for Language Studies in the Francophone Caribbean Region: A Theoretical Framework

This thesis is rooted primarily in Daniel Miller's framework on culture as delineated in his work *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Miller combines the work of Hegel, Marx, Simmel, and Munn in an attempt to frame his theory of culture. In so doing, he abstracts from multiple fields, including philosophy, archaeology, anthropology, social theory, and, most importantly for this study, issues related to language particularly as it concerns culture seen by Miller a 'object'. Miller's interest lies in capturing the process by which the development of subjects may, on one hand, be constrained by their own creation, in this case any type of creation or 'things', 'objects' created by the subject or; on the other, how these creations contribute to their progress. The key concept that reverberates throughout Miller's reflection on Hegel, Marx, Simmel, and Munn is his notion of "objectification;" however, an analysis of his work suggests that perhaps Miller's greatest achievement is the way he theorizes the process of re-appropriation itself, and its implications for the development of the subject. The development of the subject depends on whether the subject re-appropriates his/her creation or remains alienated by it. After examining how Miller develops his theory of culture, this chapter assesses the implications of Miller's notion of re-appropriation for language studies in the Francophone Caribbean region.

Miller and Hegel, and the Notion of re-appropriation

Although Miller uses several authors to build his theory of culture, he admits that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* constitutes the crucial, unifying element. Miller proposes that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is "the single most influential work in modern philosophy and social theory" (19). As such, it has had a significant influence on the work of iconic authors such as Marx, Simmel, and Sartre. Rather than consider the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in its multifaceted entirety, Miller focuses specifically on the notion of "objectification" as a basis for his theory of culture.

Hegel uses the concept of “objectification” to address the question of subject-object dualism, a preoccupation to Western thought from Descartes to Kant. He is particularly interested in the dialectical relationship that exists between subject and object. The notion of “objectification” is based on the premise that subjects, in an ever-present search for meaning, embark on a series of engagements with the external world. According to Hegel, initially an individual is at the stage of *thingness*, devoid of self-knowledge. This stage is overcome through a transcendent process of creation. The subject observes the creation of something external to itself throughout this process of transcending the stage of thingness. A struggle ensues whereby the subject experiences the need to re-possess and re-appropriate the external thing. Success results in the achievement of what Hegel calls self-consciousness.

In the initial stage, the state of thingness, the subject is not aware of the other and also has no self-awareness. Given that self-knowledge is contingent upon the discovery of the other, the subject’s discovery of the other leads to self-awareness. This marks a progression to the level of differentiation from the other and self-consciousness. The concept of self-consciousness in Hegel’s work is one of the prime characteristics of a process that includes 1) simple consciousness, or the consciousness of oneself outside of (or without) the external world; 2) self-consciousness, or the consciousness of oneself not only in relation to the external world, but also in relation to the other, who participates in helping the subject to reach self-consciousness; 3) a third stage when the ‘other’ becomes self-conscious as well, at which point both individuals would attain self-consciousness. In the case of the master-slave relation, the process involves one subject objectifying the Other in the search for self-consciousness.

Miller defines the concept of “objectification” as “a dual process by means of which a subject externalizes itself in a creative act of differentiation, and in turn re-appropriates this externalization through an act which Hegel terms “sublation” (28). It is through the stage of externalization that creation takes place. Miller indeed equates the phase of externalization with “the creation of particular form” and proposes that such forms can be “words, institutions, objects and actions” (28). He also points out this process is always only partial.

The process objectification leads to the creation of a more complex self that Hegel calls "Spirit." Beyond an understanding of the existence of the external world that the subject has created, process objectification involves the creation of values by the subject that assume some form of their own beyond the subject-creator. The re-appropriation of values is crucial to the development of the subject. By such means, Miller thinks that individuals "become increasingly concretized into particular being" (22). As Miller writes, "The process of understanding permits the subject to reincorporate the increasingly complex external world it has created, and by so doing to emerge as an increasingly complex subject" (23). This more complex subject, a "more ambitious and encompassing phenomenon" (23) which Hegel calls "Spirit," can be "externalized through a series of ever more sophisticated forms" (Miller 23). This is also in line with the notion of reason in the work of Hegel: "...as reason develops it is externalized through a series of ever more sophisticated forms" (23).

The progress of the subject toward Spirit, then, is contingent upon its unity following its fragmentation. Miller contends that the awareness that the external world is the result of one's own creation is a necessary step in the efforts to re-appropriate it. Drawing on Hegel, Miller argues that true knowledge is contingent upon the knowledge or the awareness that the world is a result of our own projection. The absence of progress via re-appropriation leads to stasis in a state of alienation. In such a condition, the individual tends to see the world antagonistically: the world is either something to hate or to obey blindly. The subject's own creation becomes an alien entity upon which the subject can have no influence owing to a lack of understanding of it.

Miller recognizes that Hegel did not explicitly use the concept of "objectification" *per se* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. He argues that he uses the term "objectification" as "...an attempt to retain the original positive connotations of Hegel's view of moments of self-alienation and sublation as a progressive process" (Miller 28). The "progressive" nature of the process is what Miller builds from to construct and extend his theory of culture, which entails the perspectives and challenges of re-appropriating creative productions, including "goods" both in their material and immaterial forms. He situates development as part of the process of re-appropriation inherent to the subject's creative act. His interest in reconceptualizing the subject-object

relationship thus lies in how subjects re-appropriate their own creation to further their development. Yet, and again, in the view of Miller, the phase of re-appropriation is always partial.

In Miller's view, the act of sublation or re-appropriation "...eliminates the separation of the subject from its creation but does not eliminate this creation itself" (28). Miller insists that this creation "...is used to enrich and develop the subject" (28). Miller cites arts, religion, different institutions, and even society as forms of externalization of sophisticated subjects that have reached self-consciousness after discovering and re-appropriating the external world. He does not see culture as existing beyond the realm of subjects, but, rather, that subject and object exist "...in a mutually constitutive relationship which itself exists only as a part of the process of its own realization" (27). In this view, the development of human beings involves a non-linear, dynamic process in which the individual continuously self-alienates even as he or she creates an external object, which, in turn, needs to be re-appropriated in order for progress to continue. Given that it is a dynamic process, the subject does not accomplish the work of re-appropriation once and for all, but turns to confront again, and be confronted by, what has remained unassimilated (as well as what perhaps ultimately remain unassimilatable).

Miller's concept of objectification therefore is a theory of culture understood as "...the externalization of society in history" (33) having the potential for achieving the self-realization of subjects. Challenges lie in the process of self-realization and re-appropriation since individuals face risks associated with the failure to re-appropriate the forms that they have created. In this case individuals may be tyrannized, estranged, or alienated by their own creation instead of contributing to their development.

The present work extends Miller's argument to language issues given the status of language as a form of culture and human creation. In terms of language issues, re-appropriation would imply that the speaking subject develops self-awareness of the subject's linguistic creativity and needs to re-appropriate it – in various linguistic forms- for further development. This work also extends the argument to circumstances where the speaking subject fails to re-appropriate the language-object and is tyrannized, estranged, or alienated by it. The concept of re-appropriation is problematized in a way that captures both unconscious linguistic creativity and conscious acts of re-incorporation/secondary sublation via struggles against internalized subordination and

ideologically-driven forces that constrain and challenge the creative development of the subject. Indeed, for Miller, the process of re-appropriation is never complete. The unity of the subject with its creation presents major challenges. As we will see later, these are the challenges that are emphasized in discussing language ideology as concerns the francophone Caribbean region.

Miller cautions the reader that his use of the concept of "objectification" is an abstraction from Hegel, even noting that explicit use of the word is absent from the original German version of the *Phenomenology*. In "Objectification and Alienation in Marx and Hegel" published in the *Radical Philosophy*, Chris Arthur suggests Miller's use of the term "objectification" corroborates well with Hegel, but, along with Miller, cautions his readers about the lack of explicit reference to the concept of objectification in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Arthur clearly states that "...in not one line of one page of all the 765 pages of the *Phenomenology* does Hegel use the term 'objectification'" (19). In short, both Miller and Arthur seem to agree that the actual morphological configuration of the concept "objectification" may have not been present explicitly in the original German version, but that an analysis of the work justifies the interpretation pertaining to the concept of "objectification."

Arthur cautions us against interpreting notions of spirit and processes of objectification Hegel describes in the *Phenomenology* as merely an abstract gaming of the mind. The work instead is a story of the mind's "...gaining an objective existence ... a story whose meaning is understood by Hegel ... from the outset" (Arthur 19). Further, Arthur argues that "...the objective shapes given in consciousness are shapes of the existence of spirit itself" (Arthur 19). He contends that in the work of Hegel, "...the creation of spiritual forms, e.g. the state, religion, etc., is seen as a positive achievement of spirit" and that, with respect to forms, sublation is "...spirit's own work [that strips forms] of their 'external' character" (Arthur 21). Thus, according to Arthur, it is by expressing itself in a form other than itself that spirit can "know" itself. Spirit, as non-objective form, upon sublating its own externalization, takes on objective forms via a "...negation of the negation" (21). By this Arthur means that, after negating itself through alienation or externalization, spirit has to in turn negate this alienation or externalization through sublation. It is then that spirit re-appropriates its essence, its creation, in objective forms. In Arthur's view, "...spirit can come to itself only as the negation of the negation ... when spirit recognizes itself in these objective forms" (21).

While the present work endorses Miller and Arthur's development of Hegel's concept of objectification, its interest lays particularly in the stage of sublation and the issue of re-appropriation. We ask, if the external world is created from a subject's self-externalization during its development, how should we account for this external world in the absence of sublation, i.e., if the external world remained external and not re-appropriated? Let's now turn to the work of Marx.

Miller and Marx and The Notion of Re-appropriation

While Miller felt compelled to some extent to qualify the use of the concept of "objectification," describing it as an abstraction from the work of Hegel, this is not the case for his treatment of Marx, which Miller also uses to build his theory of culture. As Miller shows in his work *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, the concept of "objectification" is directly evident in the work of Marx. The concept is in fact one of the key elements in how Marx both critiques Hegel and draws from him to build his arguments about capitalist modes of production. As Miller recognizes, Marx felt that theoretical accounts of the world should be about its transformation as opposed to appropriating it through abstract philosophical grounds. In Marx's introduction to *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right,'* Marx writes "Man is not an abstract being, squatting outside of the world. Man is the human world, the state, the society" (53). In the same text he also proposes "...the criticism of heaven is transformed into criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics" (Marx 1978: 54).

Miller presents the issue of creation, understood as the development of the subject, as one of the basic differentiating elements in the writings of Hegel and Marx. As Miller contends, Marx believed that creation is not independent of the relationship between the individual and the external world. The quintessence and possibly the acme of this relationship is the moment at which the individual will re-appropriate the external world. At this moment of re-appropriation the individual can show humanity, or what Marx identifies as the "species-being" (Marx 1975: 329). Marx then makes explicit mention of the notion of "objectification." By investing labor in the natural world, the individual creates something, and anything created by the species-being constitutes the "...objectification of the species-life of man" (Marx 1975: 329), a process throughout which Marx recognizes that the subject may be able to observe before him the thing that he has created "...not

only intellectually, in his consciousness, but actively and actually" (Marx 1975: 329). For Marx, this is what makes the individual a "conscious species-being" (Marx 1975: 329).

Arthur illustrates an area of tension between Hegel and Marx in the treatment of re-appropriation. For Marx, Hegel presents the re-appropriation of the external world in "...a mystified form" (17). An "idealist character" in Hegel's dialectic of negativity leads Hegel to discover "...only the abstract speculative expression of the movement of history" (Arthur, 17). This is something that troubles Marx for whom, as we have seen, "Man is not an abstract being ...Man is the human world, the state, the society" (53). Drawing on Marx's account, Arthur notes: "Revolutionary practice reconstitutes reality by an objective re-appropriation of the estranged object, thereby producing a new objectivity free of estrangement from its producers" (17). In this sense, although Marx criticizes Hegel for conceiving the external world, e.g. "wealth, the power of the state" etc. "only in their thought form ... in consciousness, in pure thought, i.e. in abstraction" (EW 384), he also credits Hegel "...for giving philosophical expression in his formula 'negation of the negation' to the historical movement of human labor in its self-alienation" (Arthur, 17). Whether at the level of consciousness, "pure thought" or objective forms, re-appropriation remains the central element in the development of the subject.

As Miller suggests, while Hegel and Marx share the assumption that the individual can arrive at self-understanding only through creative acts of production, Marx, unlike the more abstract Hegel, emphasizes the process of creation as embedded in the physical world. It is the "physical aspect of this creation" (Miller 36) that matters for Marx, and this physical *embeddedness* has important implications for the efficacy of productive acts. For Marx, the objectification of the subject through production is constrained by the conditions of production that estrange individuals from their production. Miller correlates this phenomenon with Hegel's notion of "unhappy consciousness" whereby, at some point in the process, individuals fail to understand that objects created are a result of their own projection. Marx emphasizes the process as a rupture. In time objectification changes, from providing the possibility for self-creation or the development of the self, to drawing subjects to petrification, to becoming a mere object of the system of production. It does the work of "...preventing rather than enabling the development of human social and material relations" (Miller 41). Instead, subjects are alienated by their own labor through "...the legal and political forces which rest upon proper object of productive investment" (37). This difference between Hegel and Marx can also be seen by

comparing Hegel's emphasis on "... 'absolute knowledge' – knowledge as science ... brought forth within the self-alienating movement of Geist" (Arthur 15, 16), with Marx's emphasis upon how "...revolutionary practice reconstitutes reality by an objective re-appropriation of the estranged object" (Arthur, 17).

In shaping his theory of culture, Miller problematizes and reconceptualizes the notion of "objectification" with regard to "rupture" while adopting Hegel's framing of externalization "...as the process of objective form arising both through fragmentation into the particular, and resolution through abstraction" (42). For Miller, This positive and negative aspect of objectification, whereby the subject self-externalizes and re-appropriates this externalization represents a contradiction that the subject must reckon with, rather than to escape from.

For our purposes, it is "the process of objective form arising both through fragmentation into the particular, and resolution through abstraction" and the conditions that turn to "preventing rather enabling the development of human social and material relations" that are of interest in analyzing the issue of language re-appropriation in the francophone Caribbean region. The real crisis of human development is a crisis of re-appropriation.

Miller, Munn, and Simmel: Re-appropriation as Substance

Munn (1969, 1971, 1973a, 1973b, 1977, 1983), another author whose work Miller uses to develop his framework, lends authority to the concept of re-appropriation as an analytic tool in the resolution of subject-object dualism. Miller contrasts Munn's work with Hegel by proposing that Munn views culture as "...effectively lived through and experienced as being-in-the-world" (66). While qualifying Munn's work as a "...praxis rather than a philosophy" (66) and not focused on following a "developmental sequence" (66) of culture in the argument, Miller credits Munn's exploration of particular modes of objectification. Individuals and society are viewed as a collective subject where "...the individual is constructed in culture [through his] contributive act" (Miller 66).

Munn elaborates a concept of objectification in a discussion of the material culture of Australian aborigines by hypothesizing on how landscape serves as a substance representing an externalization of a

subject's perception of the external world. Through a process of objectification the physical landscape is transformed into a social landscape that a social group re-appropriates to further the development of the collectivity. Subjects "invest" themselves in the act of creating a cultural object,"...in this case the object of canoes that the group creates (61). Miller maintains that the modes of operation involved in creating canoes embody the aspirations of the group, as do their shape and color. The canoes inhabit the way the collectivity wants to be perceived by the external world –the canoes, in other words, constitute an externalization of their selves. Miller recognizes that a certain level of alienation is applicable in the way canoes are created to be used by people other than their creators. But he also recognizes that the subject-creator, the group of Australian aborigines, does receive another series of objects in exchange. These constitute a form of re-appropriation of their creative acts. Without re-appropriation, the situation would be indicative of how "...certain conditions serve to separate the creators from the object of their creative processes" (Miller, 62). Instead, the process illustrates the way "...the externalization of aspects of the subject in acts of self-alienation through which the subject develops further" (Miller, 62). In this sense, as Miller argues, "...objectification can here be understood as a process of externalization and sublation which is dependent upon the relationship between two societies, and not merely the internal workings of one" (62).

Munn's work allows us to direct our attention to Simmel, the other key author Miller uses to develop his theory of culture. Miller admits that Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* represents "... the most convincing analysis of modernity consistent with the concept of objectification" (68). In spite of the title, Miller thinks that the book is less about the economic form of money than an investigation carried into the way money represents a symbol or an instrument to evaluate the feebleness of human relations. According to Miller, for Simmel culture and society are the direct results of "objectification." Through the development of subject and object, the individual comes to be constituted and differentiates "Ego" from object. Similar to Hegel, once this stage of differentiation has been established, the subject moves to a higher level of humanity by developing an awareness of the other or the object. At this level "...the possibility of other values and social relations in the world" (71) has emerged and externalized.

But Miller notes that, for Simmel, the development of the subject and objectification functions differently from the way it occurs for Marx. To Simmel money is the means by which an individual

"...abstracts himself from, and imposes himself upon, nature" (72). Money is a primary tool by which objects communicate with each other through exchange, and, in its abstract form, can be a channel for freedom. Exchange functions as the process by which subjective values can be overcome. It can have an equalizing effect in society as people tend to be treated as unequal based on a differential amount of money as opposed to some inherent differences. As a mechanism for freedom, money allows individuals to express or externalize themselves through objects. Unlike Marx, who separates subjects from products, Simmel sees objects as participating in the positive development of the subject, who can attain self-consciousness with an ability "...to create form, ideas, values that oppose it" (Simmel 1968, cited in Miller 77).

As Miller notes, for Simmel, problems arise when individuals face situations whereby they are unable to re-appropriate the goods they create. In this case, Simmel broadens Marx's concept of possible rupture. Simmel argues that "our freedom is crippled if we deal with objects that our ego cannot assimilate" (Simmel 2011 499). A contradiction ensues when the subject faces major limitations in the ability to appropriate the multiple possibilities that the world offers. Although emanated from the subject's creation, an object may become independent when the individual becomes unable "...to assimilate it and subject the object to his or her own rhythm" (Simmel 497). In this case, subjects tend to be oppressed by their own physical and mental production or creation as a subject's own externalizations may be confronted as "autonomous objects" (Simmel, 499). Admitting that subjects do not stop producing objects even though "...objects and people have become separated from one another" (Simmel 499), a reconceptualization of the subject-object relationship is warranted. This process of reconceptualization draws Miller's attention as he juggles with different authors to elaborate his work.

Miller embraces Simmel's acknowledgement of enormous and diverse goods that populate the life sphere of the subject, and argues that the 20th century is effectively a century of unprecedented goods, both in their quantity and their variety, and have contributed in a major way to the development of 20th century societies. The new perception of how the individual deals with those goods - contrarily to Marx's argument that these goods constitute merely alienating apparatuses for the subject - is what draws Miller's attention, as he delineates his theory of culture and mass consumption.

Miller's Theory of Culture and the Notion of Re-appropriation

Material Culture and Mass Consumption, the book where Miller lays down his reconceptualization of material culture, and the work that serves as the framework undergirding the present work, was published in 1987, right around the time the world was about to witness a major revolution in human creativity: the Internet. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* was thus published about fifteen years before the end of an increasingly technologized century, the 20th century, a century that was in itself the dawn of another more highly technologized one. Miller's *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* thus pre-dated nearly thirty years of technology-based production. It is not part of the present work to update Miller's 1987 opus, but it is important to recognize that what Miller initiated in 1987 continues to permeate his scholarship, as evidenced in his article "How people make machines that script people," published in 2013 in *Anthropology of this Century*. In their book chapter "The Digital and the Human: A Prospectus for Digital Anthropology" published in *Digital Anthropology*, Miller and Horst Heather (2012) argue that "In the discipline of Anthropology, all people are equally cultural – that is, they are the products of objectification" (12). Yet, in his latest work, titled *Webcam*, co-authored with Sinanan Jolynna, we read statements reminiscent of his ideas regarding re-appropriating modes of creation or production, such as "Humanity includes a latency that may be realized through technological facilitation" (Miller and Jolynna 11)

For the purpose of this work, Miller's ideas are applied to a focus on the challenge that post-modern subjects face to re-appropriate objects resulting from their own creation. Whether in the work of Hegel, Marx, Simmel, Munn, or Miller's interpretation of these works, the issue of re-appropriation constitutes a common theme upon which the development of the subject is assessed. This thesis broadens Miller's theory of material culture by extracting from it the issue of re-appropriation and applying it to the study of language in the francophone Caribbean region.

Subject and object, speaking subject and spoken object/language

This work does not analyze speaking subjects independently from what they speak. Rather, it adopts a postmodern point of view, where speaking subjects and the language that the subject speaks are both mutually constituted. The merit of Miller's work lies in part in showing that subjects and objects do not exist

independently of each other, but rather are mutually constitutive. "There is no a priori subject which acts or is acted upon" (179), Miller claims. The viewpoint of "no a priori subject" is an idea circulated at least since Friedrich Nietzsche discussed it in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*: "There is no 'being' behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it" (26), Nietzsche writes. More recently Judith Butler has taken up this idea in problematizing the notion of gender seen often as a fixed category of identity. Butler argues "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (Butler 26).

A key theme in Miller's framework is that subjects and cultures, as objects, are expressions of each other. In his/her inherently dynamic nature, the subject externalizes through certain modes of production directly, or by adjoining with existing structures that create certain modes of production. The development of the subject rests upon "...the nature of its projections and experience" (Miller 179). In Miller's cultural theory, these modes of production, or "forms," may include "...language, material culture, individual dreams, large institutions or concepts such as the nation state and religion" (Miller 180). Miller admits that there might be conditions in which subjects experience feelings of being lost with regard to their own production, or subjects might encounter hegemonic forces that might make it difficult to recognize these "forms" as being a result of their own creative power. But even under such conditions, Miller argues that "...the tendency is always towards some form of re-appropriation through which the external can be sublated and therefore become part of the progressive development of the subject" (180). For Miller, this re-appropriation of the sublated external necessary for the progress of the subject is a "...return to essentially human values" (180). For Miller language is but one particular "form," a part of the process of "objectification" involving externalization and sublation. This work likewise studies language as "form," "mode of production," and, crucially, an "essentially human value."

The issue of subject and object that is taken up above parallels the dichotomy of speaking subject and language, considered in this work as a form of object. Language may at first appear to be uniquely expressive compared to objects. Speaking ordinarily implies the expression of an individual. Yet objects, to some extent, can be considered as the modes of expression of individual-users, as we have seen in the case of the canoes of the Guwa group studied by Munn. As Miller asserts "...although the object has different qualities from

language it may be equally impressive in the areas of expression and expression in which language is most esteemed" (98). This point provides insights to studying language as an 'object,' and offers ground to establish a parallel between the discussions of subject and objects on the one hand, and speaking subject and spoken object, that is, language itself as the spoken object, on the other. Recall that the challenge of the post-modern or contemporary subject lies in re-appropriating the object of his/her creation or production. Therefore, could we not assert that, in the case of particular linguistic communities such as the francophone Caribbean region, this challenge can be studied by considering how subjects are challenged in efforts to re-appropriate the language-object to further their development? This is more evident in the post-modern world where the subject is increasingly being pressured to interact and be literate in more than one language to further his or her development as a post-modern subject that is navigating – often contradicting, conflicting, and contested-multiple spaces. The problem of language in the francophone Caribbean is to be analyzed, as Simmel would state, with regard to the forces that hamper the possibility for the francophone Caribbean subject to re-appropriate both the Creole and the French languages in ways that contribute to their development as subjects. This viewpoint is in line with the idea discussed above with regard to the difficulty the individual may experience to re-appropriate the goods that they create as forms of externalization.

To summarize, in the francophone Caribbean region, at the level of language, this thesis argues that this work of re-appropriation is accomplished on the one hand throughout the emergence and development of a language among Caribbean subjects– the specific form of externalization being the Creole language currently spoken in the francophone Caribbean speech communities, i.e. Haiti, Martinique and Guadeloupe. On the other hand, it is also accomplished, or rather hypothetically and potentially, by mastery in French and the creation of a French variety spoken in the Caribbean region. But, as discussed above, problems arise when the process involving externalization and sublimation is incomplete, in which case the subject remains alienated and sees the object as having an existence that is totally external and antagonistic. This is the issue of estrangement in Marx, whereby the producer feels separated from the external world of objects. It is also the moment where Hegel refers to the problem of "unhappy consciousness" in which case the subject fails to understand that the external world is the result of his own projection. In cases like these, as Kojève would formulate it, the individual fails to dialectically overcome the object. In this case, this work examines linguistic

re-appropriation underlying the milieu of language in the Francophone Caribbean region as occurring, and receiving its impetus within, a post-colonial framework marked by a French-dominant language ideology. Again, the concept of re-appropriation needs to be problematized to account for the first order of sublation, which is indicated by linguistic appropriation as part of creative linguistic acts. Re-appropriation must also account for language re-appropriation proper, i.e., the struggle of the speaking subject against linguistic alienation and linguistic tyranny stemming from, and propelled by, language ideology.

The particular strength of Miller's theory of culture is in its reconceptualization of the condition of rupture between the individual and the external world, and in emphasizing instead the struggle for the subject to re-appropriate that which the subject has created. His notion of objectification allows, on the one hand, for an analysis of the emergence of linguistic communities in the post-slavery francophone Caribbean as a process of externalization and sublimation. In this process the speaking subject develops fragmentary linguistic forms and then re-appropriates them as a constituted language. On the other hand, this notion offers an analytic tool to studying the challenges and perspectives associated with this work of re-appropriation.

This work focuses specifically on the phase of re-appropriation, part of the process of "objectification," as the veritable battlefield for subject development. As will be shown throughout this examination, the development of francophone Caribbean subjects necessarily includes encountering the challenges and perspectives of language re-appropriation. This is illustrated in the studies on the formation of linguistic communities, in the literary works that are analyzed, as well in discussion of the ideological positioning that informs our understanding of language practices in the francophone Caribbean region.

Chapter 2

Creative Linguistic Acts, Language Appropriation and Language Re-appropriation: the Case of the Francophone Caribbean Speech Communities

Considering Miller's conception of externalization and sublimation as applied to language, where we locate the development of subjects in creative acts of re-appropriation through language, it becomes necessary to address how the theory of externalization and re-appropriation applies to the formation of speech communities, in this case to francophone Caribbean speech communities. In a personal act of appropriation stemming from my studies related to language issues and as a subject who has been navigating language dilemmas like Kafka, Mauthner, Canetti, Celan, Appelfeld, etc., in this chapter I illustrate a reconceptualization of how creative language acts and language (re)appropriation operate. I posit that language development can be assessed as a game of *va-et-vient*, a reciprocal give and take between externalization/creation, appropriation, and re-appropriation. Two primary questions that preoccupy us in this endeavor are:

- How does a linguistic creative act take place?
- b) More specifically, what forms do language creation and re-appropriation take in francophone Caribbean speech communities in particular?

To address these questions, this chapter takes a close look at DeGraff's "Uniformitarian-Cartesian linguistic" framework. Following a discussion of the notions of creation, appropriation/sublation and re-appropriation, this chapter offers an examination of DeGraff's two concepts of I-Creole and E-Creole, which he uses to discuss the development of the Haitian language as one of several modern languages labeled "Creole." I-Creole and E-Creole are described in terms of the dialectical individual-group movement in language development. After a brief sketch of early Haitian language development, the chapter concludes with a discussion of how creative linguistic acts operate and how to think about linguistic appropriation, both as understood specifically in relation to the Haitian language.

Creation, Appropriation/Sublation and Re-appropriation

Miller's concept of re-appropriation has already been introduced as a reconceptualization of the word 'sublation.' If we leave the work of Miller aside for a moment, we can identify multiple meanings for the word 'sublation.' Sebastian Gardner's *A Hegelian glossary* online, said to provide definitions compiled⁷ from the scholarship of several authors, provides the following definition of the verb 'sublate':

Sublate: Also translated as 'supersede' and 'sublimate'. It incorporates the senses of (i) to cancel out, abolish, do away with, or reverse (a judgment), (ii) to keep or preserve, and (iii) to lift or raise up. Sublation connotes progress, by virtue of (i)-(iii): when something is sublated, it is not done away with but retained and preserved in the higher product which supersedes it. Sublation involves mediation and (determinate) negation. Hegel speaks of both concepts and things as sublated.

The sense of the term sublation used in this work aligns most closely to that of iii, to "keep or preserve", which also implies some level of progression. With respect to "appropriation," the word in English can have multiple meanings, including the relatively negative sense of "take [something] for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission." Our use is closer to the French sense in *Le Grand Robert*, which defines 'appropriation' as "Action d'appropriier, de rendre propre à un usage." The dictionary provides as an example usage: "L'appropriation du style au sujet." The dictionary's use of "adaptation" and "appariement" (to 'pair with') as synonyms for 'appropriation' is useful for our use of the concept of 're-appropriation' in this work given that it indicates the moment at which individuals re-unite with their own creation in a different form.

The usage examples in *Grand Robert*, drawn from Proust and Taine, further illustrate our sense of the term 'appropriation.' The dictionary, drawing from Proust's *Jean Santeuil*, cites the term's use as

⁷ The list of works on which Sebastian Gardner claims to draw his *Hegelian Glossary* include: Inwood's *A Hegel Dictionary*; R. Solomon, *In the Spirit of Hegel*, pp. 273-87; H. Kainz's discussion of the translation of Hegel's terms in the Introduction to his selection from the *Phenomenology*, and the 'Notes to the Glossary' in Hegel's *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, ed. T. Geraets et al, pp. 347-52.

follows: Il avait ce charme d'un accord juste qui satisfait pleinement l'oreille, d'une église italienne qui n'est ni mesquine ni excessive, où la beauté résulte de la parfaite appropriation de toutes les parties à leur destination. (Proust, *Jean Santeuil*, Pl., p. 411, cited in *Le Grand Robert*).

Likewise, Taine's usage in *Philosophie de l'Art* is found in the following assertion:

Ici encore l'art est supérieur à la nature, car, par ce choix, cette transformation et cette appropriation du style, le personnage imaginaire parle mieux et plus conformément à son caractère que le personnage réel" (Taine, *Philosophie de l'art*, t. II, v, 4, 2).

In the pronominal form, the *Grand Robert* also defines 'appropriation' as "...action de s'approprier quelque chose, de faire de quelque chose sa propriété." These uses of the word 'appropriation' resonate with the way Miller uses it in his work. In this case the word 'réappropriation' in French only suggests "Fait de s'approprier à nouveau [quelque chose], Fait de faire sien, de se réapproprier [quelque chose.]" as in these cases cited in the *Grand Robert*: "La réappropriation par un citoyen de l'histoire de son pays. La réappropriation du mot 'nègre' par les écrivains africains et antillais."

Both "appropriation," understood as "the act of making one's own"(without negative connotation) and "re-appropriation" as "the act of re-making one's own" are useful for our discussion, and closer to the concept of "sublation" that we intend to use with respect to language studies.

The issue of 're-appropriation' was introduced in Chapter 1, but the concepts of 'creation' and 're-appropriation' as applied in particular to language have some particularities that we must recognize and explain.⁸ We must further problematize these concepts considering that, in terms of language issues, their interpretation is not as straightforward as it is when it comes to a more concrete type of object. Recall from the discussion in Chapter 1 that the object is created and the subject engages in the work of re-appropriation to avoid alienation. In the case of the canoe that Miller mentions, citing Munn, a canoe is created, left (i.e. separated from the subject-creator), then re-

⁸ The agency of this work, as Lacan, the author of "The Agency of the Letter in the Conscious or Reason since Freud" would have it, requires this problematization or reconceptualization.

appropriated in the forms of other objects, in this case the gifts that the community receives from the recipients of the canoe. The creative act is thus preserved. We see that the progress of the subject is contingent upon its unity following its fragmentation.

The linguistic case is more subtle. As a speaking thinker, the unity of the subject will be contingent upon the re-appropriation of the linguistic product, which results from a process of creation. But this process of creation itself includes a form of appropriation. In terms of language, fragmentation happens at the level of appropriation as part of the process of creation. In this case a creative linguistic act can be studied in terms of a process of appropriating existing linguistic features that are reconstructed in a way that fits the language needs of the speaking subject. This appropriation is best conceived of in terms of what DeGraff labels “restructuring,” and that takes the form of “overcoming” and “preserving,” in Kojève’s parlance. We can now discuss an understanding in linguistic terms both ‘appropriation’ and ‘re-appropriation.’

In our case the “object” is a set of existing ecological linguistic resources. Appropriation can be understood as a first-order sublimation where the object, linguistic resources, is overcome and preserved. While there are a series of linguistic structures in place, individuals are alienated by them because they cannot use them to further their development and enact their role as speaking agents. In fact, an individual initiates a process of creation by overcoming these existing linguistic structures. This is the first order of sublation, which involves first negating the object, and then negating this negation by transforming the object into a more appropriate object that fits one’s exigencies. Here, creation thus involves destruction, restructuring, deconstruction. This is “externalization” or “creation,” but, unlike the creation of another object, a creative linguistic act always implies some precedence – it does not happen in a vacuum and does not originate in a *tabula rasa*.

Thus creative linguistic acts are coupled with a first order of sublation consisting of the overcoming and preserving of existing linguistic structures. By surpassing, and transcending what existed, the speaking subject engages in a creative linguistic act by appropriating every element necessary to make up newly created structures. Note that an individual may remain at this first order

of sublation. At this level individuals are alienated, not by something created without their participation (as can be said of the precedent linguistic ecology), but by their own creation, i.e. the linguistic ecology in which they participate in creating. Again, ‘appropriation’ here can be understood as a form of destruction – “overcoming to preserve,” in Kojève parlance. The object is appropriated in its fragmented form and recreated anew. The newly created language object may be considered a creative act because it differs from what preceded it, i.e., the (formerly) existing ecological linguistic structures.

In this sense, all creation is a work of recreation, and creation thus must be distinguished from the notion of ‘original.’ There is no such thing as an “original” linguistic feature. We are beyond the moments of ‘original’ languages, if indeed we can ever trace them. An original linguistic feature would be a linguistic feature that is devoid of all antecedence. But a linguistic creative act is always context-dependent, be it upon a social, cultural, linguistic, or political context. It always succeeds and precedes other linguistic acts. It is created, recreated, restructured, or reconstructed because there is a need to do so in the context of its creation. No speaking agent voluntarily chooses to engage in creative linguistic acts if the conditions in place favored a smooth or not overly problematic acquisition of an existing language. In fact, adult acquisition of language is so difficult and frustrating that each new member of a social group who integrates into a society at an adult age would probably prefer instead to create a new language if language change and language creation were a voluntarily conscious choice independent of the social and ecological configurations of the milieu.

We take a moment now to consider the level of awareness individuals have with respect to the creative linguistic act, appropriation, and re-appropriation. I mentioned that the creative process includes a phase of destruction or negation of the spoken-object in the course of resisting the speaking subject. The spoken-object will be appropriated in its fragmented form and recreated anew. Importantly, appropriation is quite unconscious. It is also a delicate and unstable stage because, although individuals reach this first order of sublation, they have not yet developed a level of

conscientization (à la Paolo Freire) to understand the process at work. It is at the level of re-appropriation that individuals will develop the conscientization, or awareness, of the creative process. One might add that it is still the unconscious subject that is on a par with his creation, in other words, at the stage of thingness, one-on-one with the natural state or stage of the creative act. This is precisely because the process of appropriation is not a conscious process. The fact that individuals reject their creation implies that they do not yet understand the importance of this creation for their own development. Ideological forces also force individuals to downplay their creation and become alienated by them, as will be discussed later. A new battle, and maybe the “real” battle, will be waged at the level of re-appropriation, i.e., negating the negation of creation or externalization, in this case, the re-appropriation of the creative linguistic act that risks being lost.

We postpone close consideration of re-appropriation for subsequent chapters to focus instead on the work of creation, i.e. first-order sublation. The work of creation involves recognizing forces that hamper and intersect with subjects’ ability to use their creative acts for their own good, and instead, remain alienated by their own creation – in Kojève’s parlance, “the slave” of the situation.⁹

How shall we understand the work of creative linguistic acts in the case of the francophone Caribbean region? Positing that the language development of Caribbean speech communities is first and foremost a matter of linguistic creative acts requires that we state that these creative acts are not different from other creative linguistic acts that make possible the existence of other languages in the world. Thus, the Creole language spoken in the francophone Caribbean region cannot be reduced to a characterization as a “deviant” language. It must be recognized as on par with any language, including any dominant colonial language, be it French, Spanish or English, to name a few.

Although he is a linguist, DeGraff’s approach to the study of Creole development, by not neglecting sociocultural factors essential to studying language development, contributes to this discussion on the nature of creative linguistic acts and appropriation. DeGraff couples different

⁹ From this point onward, the concepts ‘appropriation’ and ‘re-appropriation’ will be used in reference to the discussion above and will not be interchangeable.

frameworks of language development, including post-colonial theory, as a way to deconstruct the discourse on Creole. In particular, in a critique of current mainstream theories on Creole studies, DeGraff poses an important problematic when he asks how the ‘genesis’ of the Creole language can be studied without postulating that Creole belongs to a category of language that sets it apart from other languages. DeGraff labels as “Creole Exceptionalism” the theoretical orientation that tends to make Creole belongs to a distinct category of language. DeGraff’s problematic takes us to the heart of the problem under consideration regarding the formation of linguistic communities in the francophone Caribbean region via creative linguistic acts, linguistic appropriation, and re-appropriation. We will look more closely at the way DeGraff as linguist and “linguist *engagé*,” as he puts it, addresses the issue.¹⁰

As already established, Caribbean region speech communities have resulted from the encounter of multiple groups speaking various languages. Since the population of the region has grown out of socioeconomic hierarchies, the languages they speak also reflect these hierarchies. Taken together, these language contacts make possible rich linguistic assets at the disposition of these communities. According to DeGraff, these assets are made primarily in the form of language variety developed in the colony. Linguistic forms exhibit certain structural correspondences with the prestige language of French, i.e., *acrolectal* features, and limited structural correspondences with African languages, i.e. limited *basilectal* characteristics (see DeGraff 2005, 2009, 2010 for a more developed discussion of these concepts). A crucial point in DeGraff’s work is his insistence on the fact that the emergence of Caribbean linguistic communities, as in the formation of all linguistic communities, involves both the individual and the group. DeGraff emphasizes language contacts, sometimes heterogeneous, in the emergence of any speech community. This is a point of great importance for our discussion here, given that we are dealing with creation, appropriation, and re-

¹⁰ DeGraff in fact states that he intends his work to “contribute to constructive conversations between creolists, historical linguists, and language acquisition researchers” (2009 891). It is our contention that this “constructive conversation” must involve those interested in philology, if we admit Schlegel’s view of philology as general studies of language (*Le Grand Robert*) and those invested in literature. For, what is literature if not a site where language and language users create and recreate each other?

appropriation. Since language is spoken by a whole group, seeing language as a creative act invites us to acknowledge both individual contribution and group contribution in language creation.

I-Creole and E-Creole

Drawing upon Chomsky's I-language theory, DeGraff develops the concepts of I-Creole and E-Creole as integral elements in defining creative linguistic acts and language appropriation and re-appropriation. According to him, I-creole, which concerns individual linguistic creativity, involves "...the development in individual speakers' mind/brain of a grammar that shows a certain typological distance from the grammars of the languages in contact..." while E-creole, involves the "...establishment of a new community language"(2009 901). DeGraff maintains that a focus on both I-creole and E-creole is key to understanding the formation of Creole languages. The mode of expression of the francophone Caribbean region, then, can be described as a non-linear, recursive process whereby there is an interplay between the individual and the group in the creation and re-appropriation of linguistic acts. At all levels of the process of language formation in the Caribbean region, it seems that it is indeed this process that is at work. If we admit that the process of externalization and re-appropriation is not a linear one, we are in a good position to add that the creative linguistic act and its re-appropriation are a *va-et-vient*, a type of recursive process. At some point, the two phases precede and succeed each other. This suggests that once the process has been set in motion, I-creole and E-creole constitute, again, a non-linear and non-structural process. Looking at the process through a post-modern lens, we can say that such language development is contested, discontinuous, ruptured, revamped, recreated, fragmented, and unpredictable. Indeed, some linguistic creative acts are re-appropriated, and others are ignored or rejected by both individuals and the group.

In what particular forms does this creative *va-et-vient* manifest itself? These creative linguistic acts, as DeGraff shows, include "...analogical change, lexical diffusion, grammaticalization, or post-vernacular language or dialect contact ...morphological or syntactic innovation... a newly constructed inflectional paradigm" (DeGraff 2009 909, 910). Many of these

might be described in common understandings as a mistake in language usage, or as grammatical mistakes, rather than being considered the creative linguistic acts they are. Every “mistake” is always a mistake relative to an established or accepted/legitimated norm. With regard to the creative linguistic act and language mistakes, DeGraff rightfully notes that “...every attained grammar will manifest some amount of innovations, be they called ‘grammatical inventions’, ‘errors’, ‘fossilization’, etc.” (2009, 911). To DeGraff’s great credit he recognizes that at some point there is a creative linguistic act that may be studied at the level of individual subjects, or individual minds, and yet he (DeGraff) does not condone the role of the group.¹¹ E-creole is conceived by Degraff as subsequent to I-creole: “...any E-creole is an epiphenomenon at best” writes DeGraff, following the work of Chomsky on E-language. For this DeGraff references the notion of “Historical Grammar” to conceive of E-creole as contingent upon “...the spread across time and across space of (some of) the innovative patterns produced in the I-creoles of the various individuals involved in Creole formation” (DeGraff 2009 905).

However, for the purpose of the present work, more than a mere epiphenomenon, E-Creole is considered, with I-creole, part of the process of *va-et-vient*, or a recursive mode of operation of creative language acts along with first appropriation, and then re-appropriation. This is based on the very basic premise that if the group does not re-appropriate the individual creative language act along with language appropriation, the latter is null, unless the individual creator uses it as a ‘private speech act.’ In fact, the individual creative language act happens in response to a need that involves the ‘other.’ As we’ve already proposed, without the ‘other,’ the individual would be at the stage of ‘thingness,’ without the need to interact. We cannot fail to recognize this individual-group dialectical movement that facilitates the development of a rich platform of language data in a particular speech community. What DeGraff describes as I-creole and E-creole can be assessed as a dialectical movement between individuals and society. We live and speak within the context of a constant

¹¹ This acknowledgement of both the individual and the group is not only important for the present discussion, it also offers an alternative way of problematizing the schism between different schools of thought about language studies that often prioritize one over another.

movement of re-appropriation between ourselves as individuals and society. The creative language act seems to first occur on an individual level. This primarily individual creation then spreads into the group, our society, where it can be lost or preserved. As the individual speaking subject re-appropriates a creative act, it becomes a linguistic resource, or part of the platform for language data when the group re-appropriates it in turn. In other words, language is constantly being reconstituted. This is why it is best described as a subject-object movement. DeGraff describes the I-creole - E-creole relationship as a “complex relationship” (2009 905). This description can be said to reflect the complexity of the individual-society relation on one hand, and the subject-object relation on the other. If we consider our assertion of language functioning as an object to have any truth-value, then, any creative linguistic act can be seen as an act through which speaking subjects objectify themselves. The development of the subject, as speaking subject, is thus a constant movement of objectification involving the act of appropriation as part of linguistic creation. This movement is best described, following DeGraff, as a dialectical one.

According to DeGraff, in cases like that of the Caribbean population, E-creole is necessarily heterogeneous at the outset. This derives from its multiple forms of diversity, including “...typological variation among the varieties in contact, the social positioning and influence of their respective speakers, the nature of the contact (intimate vs. distant), the proportion of the native vs. nonnative speakers of the emerging contact language, etc.” (DeGraff 2009 1905). Importantly, and as DeGraff remarks, individuals exposed to this heterogeneous language asset develop I-languages that may vary from one individual to another. Therefore “...language change at the idiolectal level seems unavoidable” (DeGraff 2009 1905) given that an individual speaker and thinker develops idiosyncratic speech habits. In this case, the rich body of language data of the Creole community is necessarily heterogeneous. As DeGraff argues (2009 1906): “Mixed PLD¹² is the only kind of PLD.”

12 PLD: Primary Linguistic Data. In his *Aspects of Theory of Syntax* Chomsky maintains that Primary Linguistic Data “consists of a finite amount of information about sentences, which, furthermore, must be rather restricted in scope, considering the time limitations that are in effect, and fairly degenerate in quality” (1969 32)

Citing Andersen (1983: 15), DeGraff signals that, with regard to the relationship between I-creole and E-creole, a creole speech community develops as a result of I-creole spreading both its “acquired and innovated” linguistic forms into the community. The concepts of “acquired and innovated” linguistic forms are key concepts to consider in the topic under discussion. The issue of “innovated” linguistic forms relates to our conceptualization of the notion of the creative linguistic act along with appropriation, whereas “acquired” linguistic forms advances our discussion of re-appropriated linguistic forms. While it makes sense to locate the creative linguistic act at the level of idiolect, it is not counterintuitive to argue that the process of E-creolization also benefits from the stage of individuals contributing creative linguistic acts. As DeGraff maintains, the process of E-creolization is a “gradual” process: “E-creolization – the spread of I-creoles’ patterns in the developing Creole community and the concomitant fluctuation and accumulation of innovative features across successive generations of I-creole speakers – is thus expected to also be gradual” DeGraff (2009: 1907).

The I-creole creative linguistic act is not a one-time deed, and it cannot happen in a vacuum, in the absence of any trigger. As none other than Rousseau proposes, language comes as a result of need (see Rousseau, 1750, 199). This need may be material, but if the individual could satisfy this need on his own there would be no need of an ‘other.’ Consider a hungry person who walks by an apple tree along a road and decides to grab an apple to satisfy hunger. The person may satisfy hunger without communicating this situation to anyone. But if obtaining the apple is contingent upon the desiderata of another person, the hungry person needs to find a way to interact with that other person to acquire the apple. Language always involves self and other. Likewise, the presence of the ‘other’ is crucial in the enactment of both I-creole “innovated” linguistic forms and at the level of acquisition of linguistic forms. As for the “acquired” linguistic forms, one might ask why would the individual endeavor to acquire such linguistic forms if nothing has triggered such need? In fact DeGraff provides impetus for this viewpoint as well when he claims that idiolects are not automatically integrated into E-creole. He thinks that “It is only via repeated instances of their being ... reproduced

via (more or less successful) instances of acquisition within and cross generations that idiolectal innovations spread and become part of E-creoles” (DeGraff (2009 1908). So this is only one among the many reasons why the group may not re-appropriate the idiolect creative act. In fact the group may be wary of any “abrupt” idiolect (see DeGraff 2009 1908) that receives no currency. Even though the sign is “arbitrary” in Saussurian parlance, language development itself is not that arbitrary. The creolization of a speech community is not linear, but, still, it is a rule-governed process. In these ways, DeGraff’s framework of I-Creole and E-Creole contribute to our understanding of the creative linguistic act along with language appropriation.

Below we delve a bit more into the I-Creole and E-Creole discussion but this time in relation to individual-group dialectical movement in language development.

The I-Creole, E-Creole and the Individual-Group Dialectical Movement in Language Development

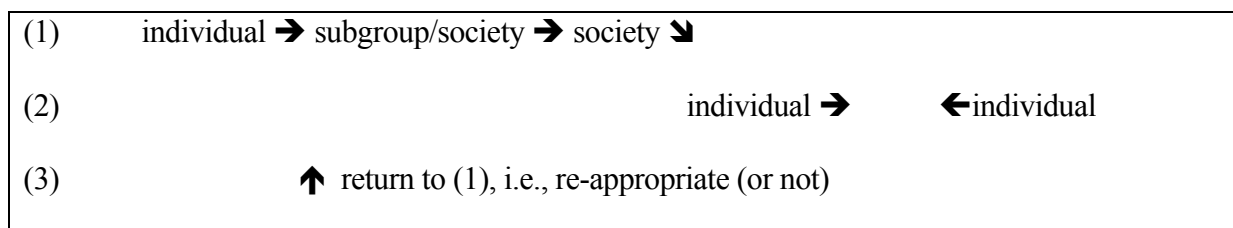
DeGraff further describes the process of the creative linguistic act in a refutation of Bickerton’s Language Bioprogram and Lefebvre’s notion of relexification. Bickerton is taken to task for limiting the development of Creole to “pidginized” languages, as well as Lefebvre for her relexification account that limits the development of to its substratum languages. In DeGraff’s more nuanced approach to the development of Creole, he does not deny the influence of the superstratum and the substratum languages. Rather, in his important argument about the creative phase in the Haitian Creole language: “Both superstrate – and substrate-influenced patterns in HC were (re)created by the agents of HC’s formation, and these patterns were integrated into native I-languages alongside ‘grammatical inventions’” DeGraff (2009 939). It is legitimate to consider these linguistic forms as results of creative linguistic acts given that they were not linguistic resources that existed *de facto* in either source language that constituted the linguistic ecology of the colony. They are to be considered as results of creative linguistic acts because they were not ‘there’ before. “The locally grown varieties manifested enough innovations to appear ‘new’” DeGraff (2009 940) says with regard to the

evolving creative linguistic act of the speaking subjects of the newly created society. Indeed, in regard to the evolving creative linguistic acts, the group that is involved in the innovated “locally grown varieties” is of particular interest in the development of the Creole language. The “innovated” or creative act of I-creole is not independent from the influence of the group and the sociocultural context that shapes the development of the group. Recall that, as DeGraff asserts, the I-creole–E-creole relationship is complex and not unidirectional.

This complexity should also be analyzed as the locus where the individual is shaped by language while shaping language. It is important to grasp the modes of operation at stake in creative language acts along with language appropriation. This mode of operation is to be conceived as a language game where linguistic forms are created, re-appropriated, rejected or lost. The study of I-creole and E-creole is a study of individual and group \ society, as well as the study of subject-object, with language being seen as an object in this case. However we look at it, one can hardly escape from a dialectical movement: the individual creates society and the latter tends to take on a life on its own, beyond the individual-creator. Likewise, the individual creates language and language takes a life on its own, once re-appropriated by the group.

Assessing the dialectical movement between the group and the individual requires that we also recognize that the group makes a secondary creative linguistic act by re-appropriating the individual creative linguistic act. The re-appropriation by the group of an individual creative linguistic act (identified as I-Creole by DeGraff) helps establish a platform of language data. It is at the level of the platform of language data that one can refer to E-creole as also a creative process. It is also at this level that one can study crises in re-appropriation, when the group relinquishes its right (partly due to internalized domination) to use this platform of language data to further the development of the group creator on the one hand, and the individual creators on the other. The dialectical movement in language change and language development is best described by DeGraff in this statement: “Innovations thus proceed from individuals, and thereafter these innovations gain currency through

the speech community, spreading from individual to individual” (2009 909). The process may be diagrammed as follows:



This implies that (1) the individual performs a creative linguistic act that receives currency within a subgroup or small group and then the larger group or society. The latter requires that: (2) the individual uses the creative linguistic act to interact with other individual members, given that what one sees is the individual, not the group. The group is powerful, but is nonetheless a fictive or abstract entity. The language of the native speakers of a creolized community is but the result of opportunities for (3) the re-appropriation by them of the creative linguistic acts of individuals. The sub-group/society mentioned above plays a predominant role in the spread of the idiolect and also in the formation of the Creole community, as in the case of the larger Haitian society. DeGraff indicates that some of the groups referred to above include groupings of what are known in Haiti as the “Rada Nanchon,” the “Ibo ‘Nanchon,” and the “Kongo Nanchon” that can be traced, respectively, from today’s Benin, Nigeria, and the Congo (see DeGraff 2009 926). These groups have been the locus of cultural transmission and maintenance, but also of language creation, language maintenance, language shift, and language change.

All in all, considering the dialectical movement between the individual and the group allows a study of the micro-operations that are at stake in the development of a speech community. For our purposes, it is the creative aspect of language and the modes of re-appropriation of it – or lack thereof – that retains our attention. One needs to recognize that language is too much of an all-encompassing human phenomenon to be the exclusive privilege of any field. Only interdisciplinary studies on language can shed light on its hidden areas. There is no reason why literature, philology, literary

studies and critical literary studies should be absent from this endeavor. While DeGraff's work is in linguistics, his approach to the issue helps us elaborate our view of individual-group dialectical movement in language development and contributes to our understanding of the modes of operation at stake in the creative language act along with language appropriation.

Locating the Agents of Early Development of the Haitian Language

To close the discussion on I-Creole and E-Creole, let us further look at the agents of the process. Addressing the modes of operation of creative linguistic acts, i.e., language appropriation and re-appropriation, entails also looking at the speaking agents involved in the early phase of the process. As implied in this work, we must recognize that the process of language appropriation, creation, and re-appropriation is far from being a neat, smooth, and rectilinear process. As DeGraff mentions, in the case of the Caribbean region, children born in creolized society were exposed not only to the language variety of their parents, but also to the language variety of Africans newly imported into the colony who obviously came with linguistic data from Africa. These children were exposed to their parents' already advanced Creole, the French spoken by French colonialists, and the speech of newly arrived Africans.

These children too faced social conditions that were conducive to creative linguistic acts, a situation that would produce the reciprocating motion described above. As stated earlier, this group plays a major role in a particular phase of development of Haitian Creole languages that can be best described as a dialectic process. The reason why this group is important in analyzing language re-appropriation is because it is a rare group in the colony that did not have another language on which it could rely. The colonialist could rely on French. The newly arrived Africans, even in small groups, could interact with each other. The domestic enslaved Africans and the affranchised subjects were in close proximity with the colonialists enough to progressively develop a second language to facilitate some level of communication.

What about the African children born in the colony? Reading DeGraff, this group plays an unequivocal role in the creation of the language that is now known as Creole, Haitian, or Haitian

Creole. The role of this group in such an endeavor may appear dubious but DeGraff's explanation turns to be convincing. In this case it is not age that matters, but the fact of being a thinking speaker. What DeGraff tells us is that these children "...would ...'inherit', modify and integrate, via their PLD, both substrate – and substrate-derived structural properties, along with structural innovations from prior instances of both L1a and L2A into their own native Creole varieties" (DeGraff, 2009 947). This group has been able to create a more stable speech community based on available language resources, but different groups participate in the process in their own ways. As per DeGraff, newly arrived enslaved Africans developed second language competencies in French, and their interlanguage was used to enrich the emerging Creole language. According to DeGraff (2009) "Serial verb constructions, nonverbal copula-less predication in matrix clauses, clefts with predicate copying" (947) are part of the ways in which the interlanguage of enslaved African adults influenced the emerging Creole language. What needs to be emphasized is that "...the first speakers of Haitian Creole created their grammars using all the primary linguistic data they could access from their linguistic ecology ... and the cognitive mechanisms provided by their language acquisition device" (DeGraff 2005 354). This is key, considering the modes of operation of the creative linguistic act along with language appropriation. Equally revealing is the fact that "such universal cognitive surely include the ability to recognize, and extrapolate abstract mental representations" (DeGraff 2005 354). All in all, the creative linguistic acts of the different subjects involved in the creation of the new speech community create linguistic forms that are relatively exclusive acts of the new language. With the help of DeGraff let us further identify some of the modes of operation of these creative linguistic acts, this time focusing on internal aspects of the language that we view as language appropriation.

How Creative Linguistic Acts and Linguistic Appropriation Operate

Let us turn our attention to some tangible cases of what we identify as creative language acts along with appropriation. Recall that a creative language act, along with language appropriation, does not entail the complete rejection of the linguistic values that would serve for the development of the

subject. Let's look at for example how Haitian Creole compares to French, its superstratum and its substratum African languages.

Since Haitian Creole is the language the whole society has been using for over two centuries, one should expect these creative linguistic acts to be numerous. Refuting the claim that Creole lacks “contextual inflection,” DeGraff provides data to show the existence of inflectional morphology in Creole as a form of “contextual inflection.” As an example of this class of verb, DeGraff mentions the short form of *gen* and the long form of *genyen*, both of which mean the same thing, i.e. to have. But they are used differentially depending on context: *mwen genyen w* (I have you – in the sense of I won over you) vs *mwen gen 10 dola* (I have 10 dollars). *Genyen* can be followed by a pronoun, but not *gen*, generally speaking. Among other forms of structured linguistic creative acts, DeGraff mentions “...subcategorization and selectional information, clausal complementation, cross-clausal dependencies, subject-object asymmetries, (long-distance) *wh*-movement, (long-distance) predicate clefts, co-reference properties of pronouns, etc. (see DeGraff 2009 951-953 for a full development).

Based on linguistic analysis, DeGraff found that Haitian Creole exhibits major differences in regard to both its superstratum, i.e. French, and its substratum (African) languages, such as Fongbe, Aboh, Gengbe, Ewegbe. He contends that “HC is not structurally isomorphic to its substratum – and neither is it isomorphic to its superstratum” and “...the distributional uniformity of HC objects and the morphological uniformity of HC pronouns ...distinguish HC from its major source languages, including French and Fongbe” (DeGraff 2005 304-305). An interesting illustration of the work of linguistic recreation, restructuring, or linguistic reconstruction in Haitian Creole is provided, as DeGraff remarks, in how French and Creole are in many ways etymologically similar, yet quite different morphosyntactically. DeGraff maintains that Haitian Creole primarily builds on French to create its morphemes, but he also recognizes that verbs and pronouns are quite differently inflected in Haitian Creole in comparison to French. For example the Creole verb *konnen* remains invariable whether one says *mwen konnen* (I know) or *li konnen* (He, she knows) or *yo konnen* (they know). It also remains invariable with regard to tense, mood, aspect: For example, in *yo te konnen* (they knew),

li pral konnen (he or she will know), *ou pral konnen* (you will know), *konnen* remains invariable. Whereas, in French, the verb *connaître* would vary in inflection depending on the pronoun used with it as well as with tense, mood, and aspect. This linguistic characteristic is not language deviance, jargon, or patois. Rather, it is the result of genuine creative language acts involving the appropriation and restructuring of the existing linguistic ecology, considered as object that resisted the speaking subject.

In the same vein, with regard to the linguistic restructuring that has led to the form of *pa* as a negative marker in Haitian Creole, DeGraff claims that: "...in creating their NEG+TMA system and much else in their lexicon and grammar, the creators of HC not only had to segment and reinterpret French phonetic shapes but also reanalyzed and grammaticalized certain French configurations" (2005 327). With regard to the formation of Verb-Phrase in Haitian Creole, DeGraff maintains that "parameter (re)setting in language acquisition, alongside substrate-influenced reanalysis and grammaticalization of superstrate patterns [are] crucial factors in the emergence of HC's extended VP (DeGraff 005 329). In spite of these creative linguistic acts, the process is nowhere different from how other languages develop. DeGraff is thus justified in writing voluminously against the idea of a supposed "Creole exceptionalism" advocated by some scholars.

Such evidence of Haitian creative linguistic acts poses a major challenge to those who advocate for an unconditional, simple relation between the Haitian language and French as superstrate language and the African languages as substrate languages. Studying the formation of the Creole language as part of language objectification, implying creative linguistic acts and movements of linguistic sublation, poses major challenges to any theory that assigns mechanistic and simplistic development to the formation of language. Nothing can be mechanistic and simplistic in regard to human development. In one example, Lefebvre's account of Creole formation falls short of taking into consideration a key aspect of the development of Creole by emphasizing what DeGraff labels "Strict Relexification" to the detriment of consideration for the creative linguistic act. In Lefebvre's view, "Creole lexical entries have the same semantic and synthetic properties as the corresponding

lexical entries in the substratum languages, but phonological representations derived from the phonetic strings of the superstratum language”. (48, cited in DeGraff 2005, 323).

It turns out that this is too straightforward, because nothing in human development can be so neat and predictable, particularly with respect to language. Describing the formation/development of a language must entail the description of something chaotic. As in all beginnings, Creole formation is necessarily tangled. As Kate Chopin writes in her novel *The Awakening*, “...the beginning of things, of a world especially is necessarily vague, tangled, chaotic, and exceedingly disturbing”[reference?]. This applies also for the formation of any language, including Creole languages. Theorizing them in terms of a few specific and exclusive steps is quite reductive to say the least. For that reason, one must be careful in drawing “nearly perfect isomorphism” (DeGraff 2005 330) between the Creole language and its source languages, particularly in the case of the substrate languages, which is what Lefebvre draws upon to develop her framework.

DeGraff commendably enhances the discussion by providing linguistic data from the Haitian language to counter the “nearly perfect isomorphism” claimed to exist between Haitian and its substrate languages. I will mention a few more cases from DeGraff. In one example, he examines the Haitian suffix ‘*yon*’ asking the very basic question “Is Haitian Creole –*yon* a productive suffix?” in a discussion of Lefebvre’s “relexification” hypothesis. Lefebvre posits that “...*yon* is only found in [Haitian Creole] words that correspond exactly to French words” (304, cited in DeGraff, 2005, 4). This statement, which DeGraff found very problematic, implies a serious lack of linguistic creation. Based on a linguistic analysis of the Haitian language, DeGraff found that, instead “...*yon* must be considered a productive Haitian Creole suffix ...Haitian Creole speakers have made creative (i.e. productive) use of the ending –*yon* to derive new lexemes” (2005 333). The idea of such structures as creative linguistic acts is further attested by DeGraff when he recalls that, contrary to Lefebvre’s position, there are Haitian words with the suffix ‘*yon*’ that have no counterparts in the French language. DeGraff cites *levasyon* (education, upbringing), *eklerasyon* (enlightenment), *pèdisyon* (false pregnancy, menorrhagia), *vivasyon* (conviviality) among such words with the suffix ‘*yon*’ and

that are not derived from French (see DeGraff 2005, 333 for a more complete listing). He maintains that these words “...have no apparent analogues in French; they are Haitianisms” (DeGraff 2005, 333).

Another example of a productive derivational prefix that DeGraff mentions is ‘*de*.’ DeGraff notes that Lefebvre maintains the Haitian affix ‘*de*’ is phonologically related to French and semantically related to Fongbe. But DeGraff maintains that “...the Haitian Creole privative *de-* is productive” (2005, 341), thus creative. He also mentions words such as *dechanse*, *degagannen*, *depalete*, *dekreta* that DeGraff translates in English, respectively as “to remove luck,” “to cut the throat,” “to remove from a goat, a pig, or a cow the shoulder (-blade) muscle called *palèt*,” and “to remove the crest” (see DeGraff 2005 341). Additionally, he notices cases such as *degrese* that may mean “to loose weight” or “to remove fat, grease”. In the same vein, DeGraff notices “an ‘intensifying’ function” of *de* in words such as *demegri*, *depale*, *deperi*, *derefize*, *devide* that he translates in English, respectively, as “to loose lots of weight,” “to ramble,” “to waste away,” “to refuse emphatically,” “to empty out”. These are exemplars of creative linguistic acts of Haitian speakers.

In addition to these, DeGraff maintains that “...many other uses of Haitian Creole *de-* are part of now-lexicalized neologisms (Haitianisms) with unpredictable semantics (2005, 343). Identifiers of inhabitant names provide further examples of creative linguistic acts. DeGraff criticizes Lefebvre who argues for a “one-to-one correspondence between the [Haitian Creole] and Fongbè ... place of origin affixes” (Lefebvre 324, 420 n. 9, cited in DeGraff 2005, 343). As DeGraff argues, Haitians draw toponyms in regard to several contexts. First, some Haitian toponyms are a re-appropriation of French etyma. For example Haitians use the derivational suffix *è* to produce or create inhabitants’ names. This is the case with *Leyoganè* as a re-appropriation of the *Léoganais* in French. Notice that the same *è* is used elsewhere in words not tied to those ending in *ais* in French: we have, for example, *mantè* for *menteur* in French. In addition, words such as *wangatè* show the suffix *è* in words that have no French etyma correspondence.

Haitians use *moun* before a place name to indicate where someone is from: *moun Laskaobas*, *moun Jeremi*, *moun Jakmèl*; respectively *lascahobassien* / *lascahobassienne*, *Jérémien* / *Jérémienne*, *Jacmélien* / *Jacmélienne*, in French. Note that the word *moun* is used regardless of the gender of the person in question. Yet, Haitians do have ways of using a gender marker for places of origin, particularly when the need for specificity arises. For example, instead of *moun Laskaobas*, *moun Jeremi*, *moun Jakmèl*, Haitian speakers utter *fanmn Laskaobas*, *fanm Jeremi*, *fanm Jakmèl* to specify these places in relation to female inhabitants, and utter *nèg Laskaobas*, *nèg Jeremi*, *nèg Jakmèl* to do the same for males. Yet, when the speakers want to be sexist about the good or bad habits of the males of a certain region, they are more likely to use *gason*; for example they will utter *gason Laskaobas*, *gason Jeremi*, *gason Jakmèl* not only to specify that such inhabitants are males, but also to convey a particular message about those males. For example, they might say *gason Jeremi manje anpil lam* (men from Jeremi like to eat breadfruit a lot).

These addresses exist in addition to the gender markers *yen/yèn*, *wa/waz*, *è/èz*, as in *Pòtoprensyen* / *pòtoprensyèn* (from Port-au-Prince), *Mibalèwa* / *Mibalèwaz* or *Kapwa* / *Kapwaz* that Haitians speakers use for some places. This set of markers are appropriated suffixes tied to linguistic creative acts contra Lefebvre, who reduces Haitian Creole to “...only two affixes for the derivation, of inhabitant names or nouns of origins” (DeGraff 343) that are directly from substratum Fongbè. Drawing on these examples and other linguistic data brought forth by DeGraff, the following two points are worth our attention:

1. “Haitian Creole has word-order patterns that straightforwardly contradict the claim that parametric values and their morphosyntactic reflexes should be systematically isomorphic between Haitian Creole and its substrate” and
2. Haitian Creole has word-order patterns that straightforwardly contradict the claim that the superstrate language exerts an overriding effect on the major-category word-order patterns of a creole” (DeGraff 2005, 368).

DeGraff states in his own way what we proposed as creative linguistic acts along with language appropriation and language re-appropriation. Again, these are not examples of deviance or the like, but creative language acts.

Conclusion

Our goal in this chapter was to examine the modes of operation of creative language acts and language (re)appropriation. We started by asking what language creation and re-appropriation imply in the case of the francophone Caribbean speech communities. We asked about the process involved in language creation, in other words, how a linguistic creative act takes place in this context. After problematizing the concepts of the creative linguistic act, language appropriation, and re-appropriation, the chapter examined DeGraff's concept of I-Creole and E-Creole, the individual-group dialectical movement in language development, and agents in the early development of the Haitian language. Doing so allowed us to theorize, with the help of DeGraff's scholarship, the modes of operation involved in creative language acts along with language appropriation and re-appropriation.

This chapter highlighted: 1) How the agency of this work allows us to deviate a bit from Miller's work by analyzing "appropriation" separately from "re-appropriation" and considering re-appropriation as part of creative language acts and by assimilating it with Kojève's concept of 'overcoming and preserving. 2) Drawing upon DeGraff's study of I-Creole and E-Creole, and on data on language development in the case of the Haiti, we can refute the labels of "language deviance," "patois," and "jargon". We are prompted to see this language as part of language objectification, implying the struggle between subject and object, in this case, speaking subject and spoken-object, i.e. language.

To offer tangible cases of creative language acts and how they are appropriated, we have referred to the work of DeGraff in identifying a limited number of concepts and usages currently in use in Haitian society that we can ascribe to creative language acts along with language

appropriation. As discussed earlier, we have considered these data mostly as language appropriation and as part of the process involving creative language acts. In terms of language, appropriation can be conceived as part of a creative process of overcoming and preserving, where a spoken-object resists the speaking subject.

The remaining part of this work will center on language re-appropriation proper and the challenges and perspectives of re-appropriating language. I will be dealing with literary works to a great extent. The chapter that follows addresses the problematic of language ideology as part of the challenges and perspectives of re-appropriating language.

CHAPITRE 3

Francophonie, Longstanding Language Ideology and the Rupture of Language Re-Appropriation

To this point we have described how the external world is created by subjects via self-externalization, with the possibility of subsequent re-appropriation. One might reasonably wonder what happens if the external world remains external for subjects? In other words, what lies behind cases where re-appropriation does not occur? I will argue such cases are accounted for by ruptures that intervene in subject development. For our purposes, these ruptures must be understood specifically in terms of language in the francophone Caribbean. This chapter argues that language ideology plays an important role in the challenges and perspectives surrounding language re-appropriation in the region. Thus, explaining how ideology functions in language practices is key to understanding re-appropriation. The matter is vital because re-appropriation in this region may be understood as in effect contributing toward a post-modern plurilingual Caribbean society, a movement beyond language alienation.

This chapter discusses the following questions: (a) If ideology is conceived as a set of ideas, which ideas drive the ways Caribbean speakers perceive language? (b) How do these ideas intersect with language re-appropriation, both in terms of French and Creole?

The chapter is divided in three parts: First, it offers an overview of the concepts of ideology and language ideology. Second, it investigates the formation of French language ideology from the 16th century to the contemporary era. Third, drawing on historical accounts, it correlates French language ideology to language ideology in the francophone Caribbean

region, and emphasizes the importance of this correlation for the challenge of language re-appropriation.

Ideology: The History of a “System of Ideas”

Given the multiple and sometimes-pejorative connotations that are often attributed to the concept of ideology, it is useful to look at how the concept originated before discussing it in relation to language. According to Kennedy “few concepts have differed so greatly as ideology in their original and later connotations” (46). “In America ‘ideology’ and ‘ideologue’ are still taken by most thinkers as derogatory terms, and are used to condemn or stigmatize,” says Roucek (479). But the author recognizes “to understand their meaning in sociological analysis, it is necessary to forget this connotation” (Roucek 479). The concept of ideology stems from the heated political tensions that emerged around the time of the French revolution, an event to which one might even argue the term owes its origin. The concept became popular following Napoleon’s betrayal of the group that contributed to his ascendancy to power, namely, the 18 Brumaire (see Emmet Kennedy, p 3). Although the term appears in the reflections of Cabanis and his colleagues, such as Bichat, Vicq-d’Azyr, Condorcet, Turgot, Diderot, Destut de Tracy, Volney, Dégérando, and Garat,¹³ we owe its promulgation into the early 19th century to Destutt de Tracy in particular, who took up Napoleon’s ironic appellation of “ideologues” and turned it into a school of thought in relation to a “science of ideas” when publishing his *"Memoire sur la faculté de penser"* in 1796. In this memoir Destut de Tracy sealed the concept of ideology by referring to its Greek etymological origins as the "science of ideas." Tracy argued that ideology refers to

13 See Notice Historique et Philosophique sur la Vie, les Travaux et les Doctrines de Cabanis by the editor of the second edition of the volume 1 of Cabanis’ book titled *Rapports du physique et du moral de l’homme et lettre sur les causes premières* p 8.

"knowledge of effects and their practical consequences" (Destut de Tracy cited in Kennedy, p 355). Since then, the concept has attracted the attention of many.

The pejorative connotation of the concept stems from Napoleon Bonaparte's mistrust of Tracy and his group composed of Cabanis and other friends. Napoleon characterized them as metaphysicians and labeled them 'ideologists.' In light of the pejorative connotations, Picavet mentions several definitions for "ideology" considered "des définitions bien peu précises" (20). Reflecting on some of these "*définitions bien peu précises*" by Littré, Picavet argues that Littré cites only adversaries of the notion of ideology in defining the term. Picavet notices that Littré even fails to mention Destutt de Tracy, whom Picavet considers as the inventor of the word "*idéologie*." Picavet claims Littré failed to differentiate the term "*l'idéologue*" that Tracy and Cabanis used from the term "*l'idéologie*" that Chateaubriand and Napoléon scolded (see 21). Picavet leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader about what Destutt de Tracy meant by the concept "ideology."

Dans son premier mémoire, il montrait que la connaissance de la génération de nos idées est le fondement de la grammaire, de la logique, de l'instruction et de l'éducation, de la morale et de la politique. Puis, critiquant la formule "analyse des sensations et des idées", les mots "métaphysique" et "psychologie", il proposait de designer la science dont s'occupait spécialement la seconde classe par le mot idéologie, traduction littérale de science des idées (21).

Emmet Kennedy, a well-regarded authority on Destutt de Tracy, helps us to further clarify Tracy's non-pejorative view of the concept of ideology in his *A Philosopher in the Age of Revolution – Destutt de Tracy and the Origins of "Ideology"*. The issue of immediacy of the needs of human beings is significantly emphasized, as indicated in the following assertion:

The new name which Tracy proposed to use for the cumbersome science of "the analysis of ideas and sensations" as "ideology," which, he explained, was the literal translation into Greek of "science of ideas" or "study of perception". . . . Ideology was the true science of thought, as opposed to metaphysics or false science, to which it bore the same relationship as astronomy to astrology. . . . Tracy never envisioned "ideology" as limited to psychological analysis and to pure as opposed to applied

philosophy. His grievance with metaphysics was essentially Bacon's – that metaphysics went beyond man's capacities and neglected his immediate needs. "Ideology" was to be "positive, useful, and susceptible of rigorous exactitude" (Emmet Kennedy 46-47).

Kennedy's interpretation of the concept of ideology ascribes a great deal of substance to the term. As we will see later, it parallels Foucault's use of the notion of discourse as something tangible, consistent, and with its own form, its own density. The issue of "man's ... immediate needs" is not to be taken lightly, particularly as it contrasts with metaphysics that Emmet Kennedy claims "went beyond man's capacities and neglected man's ... immediate needs (46-47).") Kennedy's interpretation of the concept of ideology conforms to the way Tracy envisioned the concept, as evidenced in the following passage from Tracy's *Projet d'éléments d'idéologie à l'usage des écoles centrales de la République Française*:

En effet nous avons vu en quoi consiste la faculté de penser ; quelles sont les facultés élémentaires qui la composent; comment elles forment toutes nos idées composées; comment elles nous font connaître notre existence; celle des autres êtres leurs propriétés, et la manière des les évaluer; comment ces facultés intellectuelles se lient aux autres facultés résultant de notre organization; comment les unes et les autres dépendent de notre faculté de vouloir; comment toutes sont modifiées par la fréquente répétition de leurs actes; comment elles se perfectionnent dans l'individu et dans l'espèce; et enfin quels nouveaux changements y apport l'usage des signes. C'est bien là, je crois, ce qui constitue l'idéologie (353).

This early example of Tracy's conceptualization of "idéologie" is consistent with the idea of ideology as "positive, useful." It corroborates Emmet Kennedy's insight with regard to "man's ... immediate needs" and exemplifies Tracy's preoccupation of ideology as a framework that remains within "man's capacities" as opposed to metaphysics that tend to go beyond such capacities and needs (ibid.)

In a discussion of the origin of the concept of ideology, Roucek reviews the work of various social scientists who have investigated the problem of ideology. He traces the concept to Marx, and acknowledges that "the Marxian approach is the closest to our modern attempt to analyze the social dependence of human thinking in all its aspect" (Roucek 483). Roucek also maintains that "Marxism has given a powerful impetus to the fruitful scientific

investigation of ideology” (6). Roucek also cites Vilfredo Pareto whose work significantly addresses the problem of ideology, and for whom human action can be both “logical” and “non-logical” (Roucek 484). Roucek mentions Karl Mannheim, who described ideology as “the pattern of ideas underlying social action” (Roucek 486). Other scholars that Roucek mentions in relation to the concept of ideology include Sorel, Durkheim, Nietzsche, Max Weber, and Max Lerner. Concluding his *History of the Concept of Ideology*, Roucek recognizes:

The more we reflect on the attempts of various social scientists to investigate the problem of ideologies, the more clearly do we perceive that in the domain of the social sciences, or more broadly, of the nomothetic sciences dealing with man and with human societies, any hard and fast differentiation between a "non-evaluating," empirically minded worker and a "social worker" (that is, the scientist interested in social action) is difficult to establish, not only in view of the methods of the one and of the other, but above all because of the psychological attitude they adopt with regard to their respective functions (488).

Because the concept of ideology owes much of its popularity to Marx (and Althusser) in the contemporary era, it deserves special attention. Marx’s insights regarding ideology was informed by the work of several writers. Indeed, when Marx writes about it in “The German Ideology” in 1845/46, the concept had already undergone many challenges. Note that, in addition to Napoleon’s derision, Comte saw Tracy’s ‘ideology’ as another word for metaphysics. As Kennedy asserts:

Marx inherited the word "ideology" not from Hegel, who used the word once in reference to the French Ideologists and therefore cannot be, strictly speaking, credited with an explicit theory of ideology, but only from the cumulative usages current in the 1830s and 1840s and specifically from Destutt de Tracy (366).

Even if one cannot credit Marx with an explicit theory of ideology, the concept comes to be a toolkit in Marx’s works. This is, in part, because Marx had always emphasized the physical structures, the objective forms of human beings lives over a its abstract, less tangible - though not less powerful – forms. For his general conceptual orientation Marx

found inspiration in De Tracy's articulation of the concept of ideology. With respect to that, Kennedy maintains:

Ideology, thanks to Tracy, became for Marx neither simply science of ideas nor liberal political theory, but a system of thought which seeks to justify the existing mode of production and the social relationships which spring from it. ... The word that was to supplant metaphysics and denote something more scientific and positive had undergone a metamorphosis in the Empire due to its political connotations and to what Napoleon considered, in spite of Tracy, its metaphysical character. By the time Marx used the word it had already acquired a pejorative sense, but it was specifically Marx's reading of Tracy's economics in the *Eléments d'idéologie* which led him to associate the word with bourgeois class interests-and that despite the high pedigree of nobility of the Comte Destutt de Tracy (368).

Since Marx, many authors have taken up the concept of ideology in their work, although for varying purposes. Althusser drew on this concept to build his framework on the “reproduction of the conditions of production” in which the author distinguishes between a “repressive” state apparatus, including the army, police, courts, prisons, etc) and an “ideological” state apparatus, which includes religious, political, legal, communication, cultural, educational, trade-union, and family institutions (Althusser 142-144).

In addition to defining ideology as a “belief system” (728), Schull likens the concept of ideology to discourse: “An ideology should rather be understood as a form of discourse or a political language – a body of linguistic propositions expressed as speech-acts and united by the conventions governing them” (729). Schull's view of ideology as discourse is appealing:

A discourse is not located in people's minds; it is a set of linguistic events and the conventions they embody, which exist in a social space shared by the members of an ideological community. A discourse, unlike a belief system, is shared not aggregatively but intersubjectively; the sharing is itself a collective action. Its propositions do not become part of the discourse because they are 'in the head' of each of the ideology's adherents; they exist 'out there' as part of the social world that the adherents share (Schull 731).

Given the body of works that have been produced on the notion of ‘discourse’ the parallel that Schull establishes between ‘ideology’ and discourse would be warranted, but it is not our intention to engage in such endeavor in the present work. What may need to retain

one's attention is that, in his parallel between 'ideology' and 'discourse', Schull recalls and equates discourse to "a set of linguistic events and the conventions they embody" (ibid.)

Another important name in the reflection on ideology after Marx is Hamilton. After consulting 85 sources discussing the concept of ideology, Hamilton combines 27 different definitions, resulting in the following composite definition:

An ideology is a system of collectively held normative and reputedly factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of social relationships and arrangements, and/or aimed at justifying a particular pattern of conduct, which its proponents seek to promote, realize, pursue or maintain (p 38).

Destutt de Tracy's definition of ideology as a set of ideas, Mannheim's view of ideology as the pattern of ideas underlying social action, Marx-based views emphasizing ideology as a system of thought justifying social relationships springing from the existing mode of production, and Shull's definition of ideology as a form of discourse / political language shared intersubjectively are all useful for the study of language ideology considered in this work. Our endeavor consists in identifying the process that is involved in the formation of ideology, in its various aspects, as it underlies the relationship that the francophone Caribbean speaking subject maintains with language.

Language Ideology – A Hierarchy of Languages

Like ideology, the concept of "language ideology" is complex. Blommaert recognizes that "the historiography of *language ideologies*¹⁴ is something that remains to be construed" (1). Woolard and Schieffelin's comprehensive study on the subject identifies several relevant research areas, including the ethnography of speaking, which relates language ideology to power, and issues related to monolingualism and multilingualism. They discuss the importance of "language contact, competition, and politics" which lead to the

¹⁴ Italics in the original.

tendency for languages to be placed into hierarchies in many geographical contexts, some groups using grammar to disregard languages other than their own. Woolard and Schieffelin recognize that researchers have “distinguished language as an index of group identity from language as a metalinguistically created symbol of identity, more explicitly ideologized in discourse” (61). Thus “language ideologies are significant for social as well as linguistic analysis because they are not only about language” (55). They give due attention to the historical basis of cultural norms and how they relate to power relations, noting that the term ideology “reminds analysts that cultural frames have social histories and it signals a commitment to address the relevance of power relations to the nature of cultural forms and ask how essential meanings about language are socially produced as effective and powerful” (58). With regard to language issues in colonial spaces, Woolard and Schieffelin recognize that certain beliefs about language “have contributed to profound decisions about ... the civility or even the humanity of subjects of colonial domination” (63).

The Formation of Language Ideology in France.

The French language has a long history, but the 15th and the 16th centuries mark a turning point in the ideology of the French language in France. It was around that time that, under François I, the French language became the language of administration. The Royal Court legitimated the idea of establishing a French linguistic community. Douglas Kibbee tells us “*in 1539, dans les célèbres Ordonnances de Villers-Cotterêts, François Ier a demandé que la justice en Provence soit faite en ‘langage maternel François et non autrement’*” (5). The revolution-inspired decision of the King to promote the acceptance of his language by establishing it as the language of administration and schooling, in effect imposing it as the *langue nationale* was key to the development of language ideology in

France, and an ideology of the French language in particular, which Kibbee recognized as “*la mythologie de l’origine de cette langue*” and “*la mythologie de ses qualités particulières.*” Both of these mythologies have followed French speakers wherever they have implanted the seeds of colonization, suggesting the domination of the French language over the other languages. Likewise, Kibbee contends that these mythologies contributed to the creation of the French academy and parochial schools. Importantly, notices Kibbee, they have played an unequivocal role in the “*création d’une théorie linguistique (l’équivalence langue=logique de la Grammaire Générale et Raisonnée) et la création du mythe de la clarté de la langue française*” (Kibbee 2012). Kibbee signals that the legitimated language was arbitrarily implanted so as to limit access to the dominant class. In his view, “*ce n’est certes pas un manque de catégories grammaticales qui a tué les dialectes gallo-romans, mais plutôt la volonté d’une monarchie toute puissante*” (Kibbee 6). This willingness of the monarchy to build a mythology around the French language was part of a bigger and broader agenda by which French values would be considered as universal values and part of ‘universal reason’. This tendency of France to hold such a particular “universalist” model is rooted in France’s own claims to the role of ‘nation of universalism’ that begins in the Enlightenment and flowers with the French Revolution. Yet, this centralizing practice of France from the Middle Ages to the present can be discerned since the earliest unifying practices of kings, to the Jacobins, to the policies of the Third Republic, and beyond.

During the revolutionary era, the notions of liberty, equality, and fraternity brought forth by the Revolution required that the State consider the languages spoken across the country. The country had then to choose between imposing the French language as the unique official language in the name of equality, or to accommodate various local languages

by ensuring translation of official documents into all of these languages and allowing them to be the language of instruction for their respective speech communities. According to Kibbee, the government decided to translate official documents into the local languages. But Kibbee also argues that the government failed in ensuring proper translations of official documents: *“une affaire frauduleuse entreprise par un traducteur malhonnête a nourri une mythologie de la langue nationale qui informerait par la suite la politique jacobine”* (p. 7). The idea of accommodating local languages reached a deadlock, and the movement in effect ended. In 1794, the French language was declared to be *“la langue obligatoire de toute activité juridique et administrative”* (7). One might wonder if there is any difference between the request of François I in 1539 requiring that *“la justice en Provence soit faite en ‘langage maternel François et non autrement”* (5) and the decree of the Convention in 1794 declaring French as *“la langue obligatoire de toute activité juridique et administrative”* (7). The same year the Convention decreed *“seul le français serait admissible dans l’éducation nationale”* (7). According to Kibbee these legal decisions shaped once and for all the thought of French citizens about language. If under the ancient regime, the language of the king was imposed as the language of justice based on the *“mythologie dominante...du ‘génie de la langue française”* (8), under the IIIrd République, this language came to be imposed to the nation as the language of liberty and *“la langue de raison”* as well (8).

By this time an ideology of the French language was in place that set it apart in a privileged pyramidal relationship with respect not only to local languages in France, but also existing languages abroad, including the relatively newly developed modern languages in the French Caribbean known as Creole. As indicated above, scholars such as Kibbee tend to trace the development of French language ideology from 1539 onwards with the edict of

Villers-Cotterêts, but for some scholars the edict of Villers-Cotterêts was part of a broader worldwide language ideology already being unfolded in the interest of French as a superior language. Referring to several studies such as Nacq (1979), Henry Boyer (2012) points to the following as evidence: “*la majorité des acts notariaux étaient rédigés en français et non plus en latin ou en vernaculaire* (2).

Our reflection on the broader worldwide language ideology being unfolded, since the 16th century, in the interest of French as a superior language links language ideology in the Caribbean region to its development in France. The formation of a francophone world is, indeed, in direct relation to the mythology of French as a superior language and the premise that local languages in France, and wherever French maintains geopolitical dominance, are inferior or corrupted languages.

According to Boyer, historically, language ideology in France has operated in two complementary ways. On one hand, it has operated according to an “intralinguistic unilinguism¹⁵” strictly emphasizing linguistic norms in France, and on the other, according to an “interlinguistic unilinguism¹⁶” targeting the exportation and imposition of French values. As stated earlier, and as Boyer reiterates, intralinguistic unilinguism in France can be traced to the beginning of the French monarchy, and it accelerated by the Republican Regime of the French Revolution. According to Boyer, this linguistic domination found its clearest expression in the 20th century with the inclusion into the French Constitution of the statement “*La langue de la République est le français*” (Boyer 95). A key element of this ideology in France is the “*l’uniformisation de l’usage de LA langue par le respect scrupuleux d’une*

15 Henry Boyer’s original French concept is “unilinguisme intralinguistique.” Henry Boyer’s text is published in French. I cite the quotes in French in this chapter, but I translate a few concepts to English.

16 Henry Boyer’s original French concept is ‘unilinguisme interlinguistique.’

norme unique, du Bon Usage” (96, italic and capital letter in the original). Drawing on Trudeau (1992), Boyer locates the “normativity” of the French language from the publication of *Champ Fleury* by Geoffroy Tory in 1529 to the publication of *Remarques sur la langue française* by Vaugelas in 1647. Claiming a correlation between the François I’s edict of Villers-Cotterêts and an emphasis on the normativity of French, Boyer maintains that “*ce n’est pas un hasard si l’Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêt est édictée durant les périodes de la normativisation de la langue française*” (96). Boyer argues, along with A. Decross, that “*la politique linguistique énoncée par François Ier et l’Humanisme [...] verrouillera l’enceinte de la nation sur l’Etat et l’amour de la langue française*” (A. Decross 1986, cited in Boyer 2012 96). The French language had become more and more an object of precious values tending to coincide with the interests of the State.

The Operation of French Language Ideology

Boyer identifies three key factors in the construction of French language ideology. First, he mentions a hierarchical representation of language according to which French has a “genius,” and more than certain other languages, has the right to be used “*sans limitation d’espace ni de domaine*” and has “*vocation à l’universalité*.” Second, the ideology of the French language operates according to a “*représentation politico-administrative de la langue*” that is exclusive in regard to any other language, including regional languages ascribed to have an inferior politico-administrative capability. Third, Boyer mentions a set of mechanisms described by the phrase “*le droit d’être utilisé*.” These mechanisms aim to “*détruire entièrement les patois*” (Boyer 2) while deifying the French language, ascribing to it a certain ‘genius’ that is thought to be exclusive to it. As Boyer says, since the early development of the French language “*au lieu d’installer des normes grammaticales,*

lexicales, orthographiques...ouvertes, indispensables à la maturité de la communauté linguistique, à la normalization de ses usages, on a sacralisé une norme de français, on a idéalisé un usage puriste de la langue, on a institutionalisé – et donc solidifié – le Bon Usage” (Boyer 3, italic in the original).

As Bourdieu has noted in his discussion of language and symbolic power, sustaining a language ideology requires a body of lawmakers and agents of implementation and control to produce and reproduce the mental structures that corroborate and legitimate the ideology. Arguably, this function was served by names such as Vaugelas and Richelieu who emphasized a highly normative language since the dawn of the modern era. As Boyer, citing Caron and Kibbee, argues, when Vaugelas published his *Remarques sur la langue française* in the first half of the 17th century, he had before him “*le modèle absolutiste de son défunt patron [Richelieu]*” (96). Recall that Richelieu was the one who created the French Academy in 1635. Boyer establishes a correlation between the evolving rigorous normativity of the French language and the absolutism of the French monarchy of the 17th century. He argues that since then, “*un idéal de langue*’ based on a “*phénomène singulier de ‘verrouillage’ de la grammaticalisation*” was being unfurled.

A key representative of this language ideology and “*fétichisme de la langue*” (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1975) is l’Abbée Henri Grégoire. In his *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d’anéantir les patois et d’universaliser l’usage de la langue française*, Grégoire sees linguistic pluralism “*comme obstacle à une communication politique satisfaisante, obstacle donc à la Révolution*” (Boyer 95). Indeed, in this report submitted to the French Convention in 1794, the author makes the following injunction: “*que dès ce moment l’idiôme de la liberté soit à l’ordre du jour, & que le zèle des citoyens proscrive à jamais les jargons,*

qui sont les derniers vestiges de la féodalité détruite” (Grégoire 1794 13). Regarding the language of the francophone Caribbean region and its speaking subjects, Grégoire had this to say: *“les Nègres de nos colonies, dont vous avez fait des hommes, ont une espèce d’idiome pauvre comme celui des Hottentots, comme la langue franque, qui, dans tous les verbes, ne connoît guères que l’infinitif”* (3).

While not hesitating to disparage the idioms of the “sous-hommes” of the colonies, Grégoire did not notice how he failed to employ the “richness” of French language discourse to acknowledge that part of the French way of making these “sous-hommes” become human was by means of stamping them with a hot iron. We should hasten to emphasize that we are not ascribing a poverty to the French language itself. Rather, it is the poverty of Grégoire’s reflection that deserves criticism. Grégoire’s assertion illustrates how leading exponents of French language ideology demonstrated a flagrant ignorance of basic linguistic principles and the basics of language creation and development. Undoubtedly, these sets of ideas, this frame of thought, this “pattern of ideas underlying social action” (Mannheim), this “system of thought which seeks to justify” (Marx), this mythology of a superior French language, this “form of discourse or ... political language” (Shull), and this hierarchy of language based on who speaks it would seal an ideology of the French language right on into the present.

In addition to those surrounding Grégoire, another body of “lawmakers and agents of implementation and control,” led by Jules Ferry, the Minister of Public Instruction, is worthy of note. Walter Kusters (2011) describes how the elections of October 1877 marked an important period in the development of language and educational policy in France. The birth of a New Republic would replace a Second Republic engraved in the memory of French citizens for its failures to keep cherished national ideals following the Prussian occupation.

The Third Republic concluded that education constitutes a key element in strengthening the nation, and Jules Ferry rose as an emblematic figure for pushing forward this agenda. Stating that “*le travail de la Révolution de 1789 ne serait achevé que lorsque la dernière des inégalités – celle du droit à la connaissance – serait éradiquée*” (Kusters 3), Jules Ferry demonstrated his commitment to the agenda of the “*projet culturel*” (Kusters 3) of the Third Republic. With the law of June 16, 1881 and that of March 28, 1882 proclaiming the principle of free and compulsory education for children 6 to 13 years, Jules Ferry turned the teaching profession into a public service. The primary school teacher was not only a teacher, but also a “*maître à penser*,” in Bourdieu parlance, in the name of the République. Jacques Ozouf and Monaf Ozouf (1992) capture this quite well when quoting an instructor, who, referring to the relationship between school and the Third République, maintains “*On les voit, écrit l’un d’eux, pâlir et briller ensemble, l’École et la République, elles ont même vie, même propos, mêmes déclins. L’histoire le montre, la raison démontre*” (in Ozouf and Ozouf 1992 152).

If the Third Republic needed a fervent leader in the persona of Jules Ferry to institutionalize primary school at this level, it was necessary that another leader - perhaps equally fervent, though more enthusiastic to French language ideology - join in to deal with the language question. No one was more adept to play this role than Irénée Carré, a teacher who became Inspector. Carré is known for his aversion to the regional languages in France. As the author of the eponymous method “*La Méthode Carré*,” his plan consisted in using French, considered by him to be the “*véritable langue*,” as a substitute for the regional languages that he considered so corrupted. He intended to do so via “*l’officialisation de la méthode directe comme moyen de diffusion de la langue nationale*” (Cortier 3). Indeed, he

described Breton, one of the regional languages in France that is spoken in the Western part of the country, as “*débris corrompu du celtique. Elle ne se renouvelle plus, elle se déforme chaque jour davantage. Elle n’a pas gardé son unité*” and states “*je ne verrais aucun inconvénient à ce qu’en France personne ne parlât plus Breton*” (Carré 1880 cited in Boutain 1998 para 17).

Roots of the Language Dichotomy in the Francophone Caribbean Region

All the aforementioned historical events contribute to the erection of the edifice of French language ideology claiming French as a superior language. But how did this “system of thought” intersect with language ideology in the francophone Caribbean region? How does it help explain the language dichotomy in the francophone Caribbean region that tends to establish a hierarchy between the Creole language and the French language? Looking at the history of the French language, it is plausible to assert that the sets of ideas about language in the francophone Caribbean has much to do with the historically-rooted language ideology in France. Govain (2006) found that Haitian young adults he studied tended to have a representation of the French language that sets it apart from other languages, particularly Creole. Through a discourse analysis of adjective-signifiers, Govain attempted to understand the values they ascribed to the French language. The adjective-signifiers reflected their perception of this language, the set of related ideas conceived of as their language ideology. In his interview, Govain found that these college students consider the French language as:

Admirable, preferable, considerable, estimable, appreciable, precious, charming, prestigious, rich, living, commercial, useful, knowledgeable, innovating, vital, consequent, simple, classic, noble, expressive, stylish, civilized, universal, fine, nice, punctuated, fantastic, precise, attracting, polished, love, loving, joyful, beautiful, exquisite, seducible, fascinating, fertile, superb, elegant, strict, captivating, abundant, scholastic, scientific, literary, important, dynamic, cultural, academic, antique, vast (Govan, p. 65)¹⁷.

17 The words are directly translated from French by the author of the present study.

As Govain (2006) notes, words such as “exquisite, captivating, charming, attractive, fascinating, passionate, joyful, loving,” etc, indicate that the students construct the French language as inherently absolute, compared to Creole and other languages. The superiority of French over Creole is reflected in adjective-signifiers like “precious, rich, civilized, vast, commercial, classic, stylish, scholastic, prestigious, universal, and vital.” The sets of ideas that these young adults have constructed vis-à-vis the French language even make them assign mysterious or divine values to French. Govain quotes a student saying: “*Je ne suis pas satisfait de mon degré de maîtrise du français parce que je n’arrive pas à percer le mystère de la langue française* (Govain, 2006, p. 67).” Likewise, Govain (2006) found that some middle class families try to avoid using Creole with their children, even if they themselves have limited mastery of the French language (p. 19). As Govain explains, Haitian students, and even a great part of the population, tend to consider knowledge of the French language as knowledge itself. Indeed, Dejean¹⁸ (2006) recalls and laments the fact that Haitian students have all their content subjects books in French, a language Dejean considers to be a foreign language in the Haitian school context. Dejean makes this remark while noting, rather shockingly, that all around Haiti “there are no groups of citizens that use their home language without that language being Creole. There are no groups of Haitian citizens that need a translator to communicate with another group of citizens (34)¹⁹.” Dejean (2006) also argues that the student population, as well as the teachers, do not know any language other than Creole even when they keep all textbooks in French. Zephyr (2004) recalls that students used to be required to wear a dunce hat if they were caught speaking Creole in classrooms. He

18 Yves Dejean obtained his PhD in Linguistics from Indiana University. He is the author of several books and articles on Creole. He is one of the rare Haitian scholars to publish a whole book in Creole. The book is entitled: “Yon Lekòl Tèt Anba Nan Yon Peyi Tèt Anba”

19 Translated by the author of this paper.

reports a statement from a college professor who told a student who asked him a question in Creole: “If I were emperor I would prohibit you from speaking for three thousand years (Zephyr, 2004 p.97).²⁰ According to Zephyr, many Haitian intellectuals believe there is nothing serious they can do with the Creole language.

An interview conducted with Pierre Vernet, former Dean of the School of Applied Linguistics of the State University of Haiti, shed light on the sets of ideas that Haitians harbor about language. According to Vernet, Haitians often seek a prestige that they think they can find in French as opposed to Creole. Educated Haitians in particular often try to embed French concepts in their Creole speech to show off an advanced proficiency in French. To Vernet, this behavior demonstrates their internalization of the principle of French language superiority so much that they may not even always be aware of it. Thus, although the Creole language has progressed considerably in linguistic terms, but the views that Haitians hold with regard to their language has not followed suit. More Haitians speak Creole than before, but they do so because this is the only choice they are given and the only language easily accessible to them. According to Vernet, Haitians fail to consider the intrinsic value that a language has. They tend to value French over Creole by assuming that through the French language one acquires civilization, culture, and knowledge, and they devalue the Creole language by considering it limited in this regard. Thus Vernet’s interview suggests that, for many Haitians, the French language has the aforementioned qualities as intrinsic values – qualities that are not available, alternatively, by means of what speaking subjects do with the language.

20 Translated from Creole to English by the author of this paper.

Noting that Haitian students have limited competencies in French, and that very little effort has been made in Haiti for Haitian children to learn the Creole language, Vernet seeks to understand what interferes with the ability of Haitians to be competent in both languages. What prevents Creole from being used as the primary medium through which they could develop robust academic skills? Undoubtedly, Vernet points to the impact of language ideology. The Creole language is the primary medium of Haitians reality and identity. Because Haitian children grow up with a mental schema which sees the Creole language as not prestigious, they become more interested in developing interest and competencies in French rather than in Creole. Vernet equates the lack of confidence and investment of Haitians in Creole, their primary language, with a deficit and diminished view of themselves: “*On appelle ça la négation de soi,*” Vernet says.

This recalls Fanon’s observations about the self-conception of speakers in Martinique. For Fanon, francophone Caribbean subjects have learned to construct a set of subjectivities that make them see Creole as a second-class language. Fanon tells us that “In school, the children of Martinique are taught to scorn the dialect” (1952, p. 20). He also observes that many Antilleans would speak Creole only to their servants. This is something Fanon clearly deplores, as expressed in this passage from his *Black Skin White Masks*, where he cites a verse from Leon-G Damas’ poem titled “Hoquet” where the poet captured the perception of a mother in her interaction with a child about language:

That child will be a disgrace to the family
That child will be our curse, shut up I told you you must speak French
The French of France
The Frenchman’s French
French French
(Leon-G. 1948, cited in Fanon, 1952)

Leon-G's verse expresses the hostility francophone Caribbean speaking subjects have against their own language. A parent desires that a child speak "French French," rather than the child's mother tongue, Creole, whose use by the child the parent considers "a curse, a disgrace." Language ideology operates partly by the internalization of subjective beliefs. In the case of France, as Kibbee demonstrates, French citizens have internalized the mythology of French language superiority and the constructed ideal of unilingualism in the interest of liberty and equality. In the francophone Caribbean, the internalization of these same subjective beliefs runs counter to their growth as speaking subjects. As Fanon stated,

(...) There is a constellation of postulates, a series of propositions that slowly and subtly – with the help of books, newspapers, radio – work their way into one's mind and shape one's view of the world of the group to which one belongs. In the Antilles, that view of the world is white because no black voice exists (p. 152, 153).

Fanon notes that someone with advanced fluency in French is seen as quite remarkable. "In any group of young men in the Antilles, the one who expresses himself well, who has mastered the language, is inordinately feared; keep an eye on that one, he is almost white" wrote Fanon (1952) in discussing the topic *The Negro and Language*. As Govain (2006) amply describes it, this is the way for the French Caribbean subjects *to be*, to exist, to impress, to be educated, to have an identity. It is remarkable how the set of ideas that francophone Caribbean speaking subjects maintain about language parallel those maintain by the body of laws and agents of implementation and control of the French language referred to earlier.

The Maintenance of a Deficit View of Creole

Govain, Vernet, Zephyr, Dejean and Fanon all provide substance for an understanding of the way francophone Caribbean speaking subjects harbor a deficit view of their language while deifying the French language. But how exactly do these speaking

subjects maintain such deficit views of their Creole language, especially with respect to the French language? We will attempt to address this question by referring to two factors: to the phenomenon known as internalized subordination, and to the history of domination and colonialism that links France with the francophone Caribbean region.

With regard to internalized subordination, we will limit our scope by making the following point: As Bourdieu amply describes in talking about symbolic violence, a relationship of domination tends to lead the dominated subject to internalize the oppressive beliefs held by the dominant class. In the case of the francophone Caribbean region and the language issue, internalized subordination, or what is the same, internalized oppression, may be illustrated by the ways in which the francophone Caribbean speaking subjects ascribe higher value to the French language than to the Creole language. Undeniably, this phenomenon is key in the construction and maintenance of language ideology.

As for the historical aspect, it is useful to review key historical accomplishments related to the evolution of the French language. Recall that 1697 marks the official date for the establishment of the French colony in the island natively called Quisqueya. This followed the adoption of the Treaty of Ryswick that sealed the separation of the eastern part of the island, which remained under the dominion of Spain, from the western part, which became a French territory. This demarcation occurred over 500 years after several critical developments in the evolution of the French language, including the publication of *La Chanson de Roland* at the end of the 11th century as part of the *Chansons de Geste*, and *la littérature courtoise* of the 12th century extending onward until the dawn of the 16th century Humanism. *La Chanson de Roland* was not only the first well-known literary oeuvre in French, but certainly also an example of an advanced stage of development of the French

language in France. Note that the 16th century is also the century of the celebrated three-volume *Essais of Montaigne* (1580-1588), a work that influenced many French thinkers, including Descartes and Rousseau. Similarly, note that the works of Descartes, considered founding works of modern philosophy, were written during the first half of the 17th century, particularly 1618 through 1649 from *Extraits du Journal de Isaac Beeckman* to *Correspondence avec Elisabeth* (1643-1649) written just before his death in 1650.

By the time the French established their colony on Haiti, the French language was already a moderately stable language, to the extent that, a century later, this language would play a major role in the political struggle that France found itself in at the time of the French Revolution. By the time that Irénée Carré was establishing the “direct method” as part of the agenda of Jules Ferry, the ideology of French as a superior language could already rely on intellectual and political tools. These include, but of course not limited to, the works of the Middle Ages, the 16th century (e.g. *Les Essais*, etc), the 17th century (e.g. Descartes, etc), the famous edict of Villers-Cotterêt in 1539 when François I requires that justice be delivered in “*langage maternel François et non autrement*” (Kibbee 5), as well as the report of Henri Grégoire to the French Convention in 1794. As the colony was being forcibly peopled with subjects of African descent, and as the sociocultural context of the colony continued to be conducive to language change and language creation during the 18th century, French language ideology was increasingly taking shape in France. Arguably, since the colony was a property of France, we can expect the colonies not to be totally estranged from the influence of the trends of thought that traversed French society. It is thus tenable to assert that, before

Haiti claimed its independence in 1804, a great part of the ideology of language had already spread in the veins of those who would become the future leaders of the country.²¹

Langue re-appropriation is contingent upon the modes of operation of language ideology and the set of mechanisms that contribute to the construction of this language ideology. Howard Zinn (2003) tells us “If history is to be creative to anticipate a possible future without denying the past, it should ...emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes of the past.” As our review of the history of the concept of ideology and French language ideology has shown, there are substantial “hidden episodes” that have hampered the ability of francophone Caribbean speaking subjects to: 1) develop insights about Creole as, not a second-class or corrupted language, but a useful one for all aspects of their development, 2) help appreciate the potential benefits of developing French competency in an effort to re-appropriate, as opposed to be tyrannized by, the French language. Until now, it appears that the francophone Caribbean subject is alienated by both the Creole language and the French language. We are witnessing a form of ‘rupture’ in language re-appropriation although the speaking subject has proceeded to language appropriation as, in regard to the Creole language, as discussed in the previous chapter. This ‘rupture’, this separation between the object created by the subject and the subject him / herself is propelled by how the subject sees him / herself, the set of ideas that inform his / her view of his / her own values and the values of others, the ideology related to language that determines that the social position of the speaking subject interweaves with the spoken object. If the work of language re-appropriation implies a process of language de-alienation, let us now turn to the subsequent chapters to see what this means in detail.

²¹ For a study of how language policies in Haiti historically reverberate this language ideology, see Jean-Pierre (2011, 2013).

CHAPTER 4

***Contre-Parole* and Minor Literature: Poetics of Language Re-Appropriation**

While we will discuss the issue of language re-appropriation in relation to the francophone Caribbean the issue at stake goes well beyond the speech community of this particular region. The first two chapters established the theoretical underpinnings of this study and the technical-linguistic elements involved in language creation, appropriation and re-appropriation, while the third outlined the challenges of language re-appropriation based on a study of language ideology. This chapter functions as a “bridge” or introduction to the next part of the work, which focuses on perspectives of language re-appropriation. Specifically, this chapter discusses the work of Paul Celan, considered by John Edwin Jackson as primarily a project of *contre-parole*, which in the context of this study can be considered as a prime example of a work of language re-appropriation, even as we acknowledge that this German-language poet born to a Jewish family in Cernăuți, in the then Kingdom of Romania, is, geographically at least, far from the Caribbean indeed. In the same context, this chapter discusses other important examples of *contre-parole* and language re-appropriation in the works of Mauthner, Canetti, and Kafka. These three major expressions of language criticism are the outcome of experience facing major language dilemmas. These authors of “minor literature” were able to engage in language re-appropriation to find their voices and serve to further inform our reflection on language issues in the francophone Caribbean region. In addition to Celan who engages in a project of *contre-parole*, Mauthner, Canetti, and Kafka each faced major issues of language conflict and ambivalence, but they transformed their dilemmas into a productive reflection on language. Throughout, I will refer

to Jackson's *Paul Celan: Contre-parole et absolu poétique* and work of Jacques Li Rider on Mauther, Canetti, and Kafka.

To begin with, we need to clarify the nuances that should be considered in using the concepts of language appropriation and language re-appropriation interchangeably for both Creole and French. As presented in chapter 1, language re-appropriation in the francophone Caribbean region is accomplished partly in the emergence and development of a language among Caribbean subjects – its specific form of externalization being the Creole language currently spoken in all three francophone Caribbean entities, Haiti, Guadeloupe, and Martinique. Hypothetically and potentially, it is also accomplished by mastery in French and the presence of a French variety spoken in the Caribbean region. In chapter II, I established the difference between a level of sublation identified as ‘appropriation’ and another level of sublation distinguished as ‘re-appropriation.’ Both levels apply to the Creole language, where Caribbean speakers appropriate the existing linguistic ecology in creative language acts. We discussed that this appropriation parallels what Kojève calls “overcome and preserve,” a mode of transformation that implies fragmenting the object, in this case the language object, and recuperating it afresh. We also observed that this is only part of the process, as two things can happen: 1) subjects do not develop the awareness of the object created, and thus remain alienated by it or, 2) subjects develop an awareness of the importance of their creative language acts, and then re-appropriate them to further their development. In chapter 2 we have shown that Caribbean speakers have experienced the former, alienation, and concluded that the challenge lay in achieving the latter, that is, re-appropriation.

However, in the case of the French language in the Caribbean region, can both of these steps apply? In other words, has the French language been deconstructed to the extent

that we may speak of substantial language appropriation, as we do for the Creole language? Can the level of creation and destruction that have accelerated the development of the Creole language be applied to the French language? Recall that, since the time of Thibault and Saint-Rémy in the early 18th century, the Creole language was already quite unintelligible to a French speaker. Equally, or maybe more so, contemporary Haitian Creole is quite unintelligible to a French speaker. The Creole language has been constructed in such a way that makes it quite ‘independent’ of its “parent languages,” as discussed in chapter 2. Can we say the same when it comes to the French language?

These questions make us skeptical about referring to French as a language that has been appropriated in the francophone Caribbean region given that the level of transformation that has occurred to engender the Creole language far exceeds that for French. Our contention is that, in the case of French, appropriation seems to concern the development of French in France in particular, as the language became creolized with reference to Latin, Greek, and maybe the local languages of the region, as parent languages.

In the context of this discussion, we must acknowledge that speakers tend to refer to ‘Caribbean French,’ implying a French variety presumably somehow ‘exclusive’ to the region. But I wonder if we can, or maybe if we can ‘yet,’ really speak of a French language that is so different from the French of France that it could be labeled ‘Caribbean French.’ In fact, one might even argue that the concept ‘Caribbean French’ itself presumably denotes a certain ‘inferiority’ of this particular ‘brand’ of French, as seems to be the case for any French that is not ‘French of France,’ and, more specifically ‘French of Paris’. This debate can go on forever, but let us agree that it is not quite necessary for the present discussion. What needs to be indicated, though, is that the concept of re-appropriation is relevant to both Creole and

French, but admittedly at two different levels. In the case of Creole, language re-appropriation implies an object that is created (through the process of appropriating / transforming / overcoming and preserving the existing linguistic ecology) and that needs to be re-appropriated to further the development of the speaking subjects of the region. By contrast, for French, language re-appropriation entails the ‘making one’s own’ of something, comparable to developing ownership of the object. In the francophone Caribbean region, particularly in the case of Haiti, Haitians can re-appropriate the French language in the sense of making it theirs, although this is yet *conjectural*.

We now take up the work of Paul Celan as an example of language re-appropriation. Jackson states that “La finalité du poème Célarien est de se réappropriier un Allemand contre l’Allemand et de se reconstituer une identité qui est inséparable de cette langue.” Here language re-appropriation is expressed in the constraints and the modes of resistance the language poses to its speaking subjects. As Jackson states, language re-appropriation is crucial for the development of the subject. However, this re-appropriation must be analyzed within the context of historical constraints rather than ontologically. The contradictory condition of re-appropriation will be shown to be the locus of individual liberation as much as it can be analyzed at a poetic or literary level and a social and academic level, as well as in terms of the socioeconomic and political ramifications that may follow from it. Individual liberation is an expression of the self through the articulation of events that affect one’s existential experience. In the œuvre of Paul Celan, this articulation of events takes the form of what John Jackson identifies as “contre-parole,” which can be translated as counter-

discourse or sublimated discourse.²² It is a discourse whose essence is the negation of other discourses. It is re-appropriated discourse. It is a discourse that overcomes another discourse and preserves the result as its own. In the case of Paul Celan, it is the whole discourse by which the Jews were defined and redefined by the Nazi regime that is re-appropriated through a poetics of poetics “contre-parole.” For Celan, language cannot be conceived as a naïve phenomenon given it is through language that sociopolitical orders are first established. In the case of the Nazi Regime, for example, Jackson reminds us that Nazi ideology starts by being first a question of language.

In terms of discourse, the Nazi regime started by defining and redefining the Jews as a group with some particular deviant characteristics (e.g. “parasitic vermin,” etc.) and, as Jackson states, in terms of syntax, words such as “displacement” and “regrouping” were used euphemistically to draw them to the podium of death. Death became the source of Celan’s poetics of “contre-parole,” and it is also this podium of death that would inspire Celan’s discourse of “contre-parole” and language re-appropriation: “La contre-parole s’origine dans la mort ... cette origine est aussi ce qui va lui donner sa force” (30), as Jackson formulates it. For Jackson, Paul Celan’s “contre-parole” illustrates 1) both the re-appropriation of the language of those who assassinated his parents and the reconquering of his Jewish identity, 2) a poetic of “renversement paradoxal” (paradoxical reversal), and 3) a “parole de résistance,” a reconstitution of a self that is strong enough to enter in conflict with poetics itself, considering how Celan laments the lack or absence of intervention of the God in whose name the Jews were being decimated.

22 John Felstiner, a translator of the work of Paul Celan from German to English uses the concept of “counter-word” to translate “contre-parole.” I translate the concept of “contre-parole” as “counter-discourse.”

According to Jackson, German is Celan's first language, his mother tongue, but it is also a language he had to challenge. He did so by first turning it into an external object through a poetics of intersubjective confrontation, and then by re-appropriating it through a poetics of reversal. In a speech Celan gave upon receiving the Büchner Prize in 1960, he sets the tone for literary oeuvres that Jackson baptizes as oeuvres of "contre-parole," based on a reference to Büchner's play *The Death of Danton*. In this play, Celan notes the role of Lucile, who embodies the idea of contre-parole. Lucile faces the bloody rostrum marking the guillotining of her husband Camille Desmoulins and her friends. As the executioners show up, which announces her turn, Lucile exclaims "Long live the King!" (Celan 402). Lucile's exclamation is not an expression of allegiance to the authoritative figure of the King, but rather one of profound irony. As Jackson remarks, Celan interprets Lucile's exclamation as a cry directed to the absurdity of human action. Celan writes:

"It is a counter-word, a word that snaps the "wire," ...it is an act of freedom. It is a step. This sounds at first like a profession of faith in the "ancient régime"...but... here there's no homage to a monarchy or to any so preservable Yesterday. Homage here is to the Majesty of the Absurd, testifying to human presence" (Celan 403).

Lucile's cry "Long live the King!" embodies a discourse that goes counter to the verbatim truth that the phrase could carry. As Jackson writes, "La révolte anarchiste de la parole devient son critère de vérité" (17). As Jackson describes, Lucile's phrase "Long live the King!" does not express her convictions, but rather indicates a discourse that counters the discourse of a nation that hails liberty while simultaneously she and her friends are being guillotined for the very expression of a desire for liberty. Celan terms this paradoxical situation "the Majesty of the Absurd" (423). Subtly, as Jackson remarks, Celan finds inspiration in Lucile's expression of "the Majesty of the Absurd" to describe the discourse by which Celan's mother and relatives were assassinated by the Germans. He found this to be a

discourse that required a counter-discourse, one served by a poetic “Majesty of the Absurd.” Considering “la responsabilité de la langue allemande dans la mécanique de la destruction” Celan “avait à retourner la langue contre elle-même” (Jackson 85).

Considering the German language as the language through which the order for the extermination of his parents, relatives, friends, and other Jews had been decreed, Jackson asserts that “la contre-parole de Celan sera d’abord adressée à la langue dans laquelle il écrit” (16). He maintains also,

Tout poème de Paul Celan relève de la contre parole, qui consiste non seulement à renverser les usages reçus de la poésie allemande, mais encore à les retourner contre eux-mêmes, de manière à permettre une réappropriation juive de la langue par laquelle des millions de Juifs ont été assassinés. (16)?

We may add here that discourse can be conceived as a tangible force that gives shape to events. Jackson’s statement above is reminiscent of Foucault, for whom discourse is something tangible, consistent, and with its own form, its own density. The work of Celan is clearly indicative of how language is active in events that shape history. Jackson captures this point quite well when he asserts “la contradiction ...ne porte pas seulement sur le fait, ou si l’on préfère sur le rappel, de la shoah mais encore sur la responsabilité de la langue et même de la poésie allemande, dans le mécanisme de la shoah” (Jackson 42). Jackson stresses that in Celan’s work it is not only the German political regime that is to be blamed, but also the political tradition of Germany. In his view, Celan’s work “expose la responsabilité de la culture allemande dans la création de la shoah” (Jackson 81). He also adds “...la musique allemande devient elle-même porteuse de mort, ou pour le dire autrement, révèle la responsabilité de la culture - musicale, mais l’analyse vaut pour les autres formes, artistiques ou littéraires – dans le processus de la destruction” (Jackson 83).

The indelible trauma that Celan faces following the death of his parents makes him question German language and culture: “And can you bear, Mother, as once on a time, / the gentle, the German, the pain-laden rhyme?” (Celan 11). These are the last two verses of Celan’s poem titled “Nearness of Graves (Nähe der Grabber)” written in 1944 in memory of his mother assassinated during the winter of 1942-1943. As Jackson notes, this poem is a vehicle by which Celan questions how to respond to question based in a dilemma: whether to adopt a German language that was simultaneously the language in which he learned the love and joys of family life and the language by which the symbol of this family, his parents, were silenced forever. In the poem the boy’s mother responds “no” to the question, this “no” expressing Celan’s own voice. It is the voice of an alienated subject facing the tyranny of the language-object that resists the subject. Later, however, Celan would resolve the dilemma:

Reachable, near and not lost, there remained in the midst of the losses this one thing: language. It, the language, remained, not lost, yes, in spite of everything. But it had to pass through its own answerlessness, pass through frightful muting, pass through the thousand darkness of death bringing speech. It passed through and gave back no words for that which happened; yet it passed through this happening. Passed through and could come to light again, “enriched” by all this (Celan, Bremen speech, 395).

This marks a crucial detour in Celane’s remarkable career as a poet. Note that Jackson considers Celan’s oeuvre as one of the most important in 20th century poetry, asserting that “...je ne connais aucune oeuvre qui me paraisse plus importante que la sienne” (Jackson 13). It is unlikely that without this detour Celan would have produced his oeuvre, this “geste de renversement” (Jackson 19). It is the oeuvre of a traumatized self that re-appropriates the language by which his trauma has been engendered. As Jackson proposes, the work of Celan is also a reaffirmation of his Jewish identity by being a competent and confident user of the German language, a channel that becomes the source of his healing

through his poetry as a manifestation of language. Reflecting on Celan's verses mentioned above in regard to the notion of counter-discourse, Jackson affirms:

La contre-parole est donc la parole poétique de celui qui, ayant à écrire dans la langue de ceux qui assassinèrent ses parents et son peuple ... doit en même temps se réapproprier cette langue sous le double signe d'une intégrité poétique reconquise et d'une identité juive réaffirmée. La contre-parole est, la contre-parole ne peut être qu'un geste de renversement.

According to Jackson, Celan expresses this gesture of reversal in metaphysical terms. For example, to Büchner's comments about Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz, he responds "...only it sometimes troubles him that he could not walk on his head," that "whoever walks on his head...has heaven as an abyss beneath him" (Celan, *The Meridian* 407). In Jackson's interpretation of Celan, language becomes an infinite space into which Celan is able to navigate given the morbid silence that existence could force him to adopt as a result of the annihilation of his parents and his people. If the situation forces him to walk on his head, he finds the consolation of having under his feet the sky, an infinite realm that can be compared with language re-appropriated. In the same sense, the discourse by which the Jews were defined and redefined by the Nazi Regime to justify their elimination is re-appropriated into a discourse affirming the self. In Celan's poetics of contre-parole, he remarks upon, or rather laments, the fact that the road toward the extermination of his parents and his people followed a straight path, with no curve or detour to delay it or divert it: "...are there such things: detours?" asks Celan (395). The question is rather a wish, but a wish that lamentably comes after the fact. This straight, detour-less path was the "natural" way for the Nazi Regime. But Celan contrasts it with a different and personal feature, the shape of his nose, considered by the Nazi Regime as a deformation, a reason for not being perceived as worthy of enjoying the fundamental status of human being, of having access to existence itself. His

shape was naturally “crooked, the path I took was / crooked, yes / because yes / it was straight / He-ho. / Hooked, so goes my nose. / Nose” (Celan 161, in *The No-One’s –Rose*). This counter-discourse, counter-word, contre-parole is a language re-appropriated to serve a different end. As Jackson writes:

La contre-parole du poète coïncide, comme on le voit, avec un emploi paradoxal du langage destiné à court-circuiter les pseudo-évidences déposées dans une langue qui véhicule, sans s’en rendre compte, les “mille ténèbres des discours porteurs de mort”, en retournant ceux-ci contre eux-mêmes: les clichés anti-Sémites – les Juifs aux nez crochus – sont repris en charge par la langue du poème mais pour être renversés (24).

Likewise, Jackson notes that Celan sublimates the German language to create a language that allows him to articulate a new discourse pertaining to Jewishness. This is accomplished by destroying and reconstructing the German language, re-appropriating it in and on his own terms. He does so in part with the suffix “Aum” that he uses to reaffirm the identity of being a Jew. It is a fallen tree, through death, that regains its power through a living language re-appropriated. It is a paradox, as Jackson remarks: “...le poète n’a pas d’autre langue que celle de ceux qui ont causé la perdition. La poésie est placée sous le signe du paradoxe” (49).

As part of his literary analysis of Celan’s work, Jackson calls attention to how Celan uses the agglutinated German word “Mandelbaum” or “almond tree,” with “Mandel” being almond and “baum” denoting tree. Jackson writes about this work of language by Celan “si obstinée que soit sa volonté de contre-parole, la poésie doit compter avec la contamination de la langue dont elle se sert” (48). In the spirit of the present work, we do not see Celan’s work as a “language contamination,” but rather as an effort of language objectification that implies a creative language act that necessarily passes through a stage of destruction and re-appropriation, or what Kojève terms “overcoming to preserve.” Celan faces the language-

object, which resists him and his soul given its status as the language that has gone “through the thousand darkness of death bringing speech” (48). But instead of remaining alienated by this ‘other,’ this language-object assimilated with unbearable pain and death, he proceeds to an act of language creation that includes deconstructing the object and re-appropriating it afresh. There are conditions in life that cannot be seized through existing words. This is why language creation is infinite because human life is unpredictable and generates events that call for discourses that existing languages cannot always account for. As Jackson says, language, itself as a phenomenon, must account for this.

To return to Jackson’s discussion of how Celan re-appropriates the German language, Jackson recalls that “Mandel,” or Almond, is a key concept in Celan’s oeuvre, and tends to emblemize the assassinated Jews. In the poem “Count up the Almonds,” the last poem in the collection titled *Poppy and Memory*, the verses “Render me bitter / Number me among the almonds” indicate, according to Jackson’s interpretation, the bitter expression of melancholy of Celan in his attempt to self-identify with the assassinated Jews. “Mandelstam,” the name of a Russian poet that Celan translates into German, becomes “Mandelstamm,” with double ‘m.’ This is a work of language, specifically metathesis, that Jackson attributes to Celan’s reference to the root, or the Jewish people. Jackson goes on to draw a parallel between Celan’s use of Mandelbaum and Mandelstamm, which likewise shows Celan re-appropriating the German language. He uses mathathesis as literary device to transform Mandelbaum, interpreted by Jackson, as “l’arbre ou la lignée des amandes” (the tree of almond or the lineage of almonds), into Baundelmaun, which Jackson sees as “la négation, la décapitation de ceux-ci” (the negation, the decapitation of the almond trees).

Jackson tells us that this nonsense poetry illustrates what happened to the tree symbolizing the Jews or the Jewish people:

La contre-parole est donc une parole de résistance née sur le sol d'une expérience de la destruction dont la langue doit en même temps rendre compte. Elle naît de l'ambiguïté du statut de cette langue qui est à la fois celle de la mort et celle de la survie. Il s'en faut toutefois que cette ambiguïté se limite pour Celan au statut de la langue comprise comme moyen de résistance à la barbarie (45).

“Mandelstamm,” “Mandelbaum,” “Baundelmaun” are not examples of “deviant language,” as someone like l’Abbée Grégoire would characterize it. They are creative acts of language by the author to serve his cause. In this sense, and as Jackson proposes, “it is the pendulum that strangles the rope – not the rope that strangles its pendulum” (23). The German language is thus for Celan the language through which the death of his people was articulated, and therefore the language that ultimately put him in a state of extreme existential crisis, but also the language through which he renews himself to seize the dimension of “the Majesty of the Absurd,” at least until language was no longer able to help him bear its absurdity. As Jackson remarks, Celan’s counter-parole also addresses the very discourse that constitutes the Jewish community, and in the name of which they were decimated: “...la contre-parole n’hésite pas à se tourner contre le Dieu même, le Dieu judaïque au nom duquel les Juifs ont été assassinés” (34).

The work of Celan, along with Jackson’s interpretation, thus offers a sophisticated exemplar of a language re-appropriation that we can draw upon to look at the challenges and perspectives of language re-appropriation beyond the particularity of Celan’s own situation.

In addition to viewing the work of Paul Celan as one of counter-discourse and language re-appropriation, as Jackson tells us, we may consider his work in a larger context for the present work that further contributes to our understanding of language in its socio-

political dimension in general. We learn in Celan's work that language is not naïve, uninformed – language can bring darkness, death, destruction, even as it can also light, life, and construction. All those dimensions of language are independent of inherent properties of language or the abilities of individual speakers; as a result, the historical, social, and political dimensions of language cannot be neglected when we undertake to observe and analyze the forces that intersect with and shape language practices.

The way Jackson enlightens us on this point in a comparison with the work André du Bouchet will help us further make the case for language re-appropriation in the francophone Caribbean region. If language differentially affects different groups of speaking thinkers based on their historical and socio-political experiences, which is to say, if language negatively impacts some and positively shapes the course of life of others, this suggests that, in spite of the agency of language, speaking subjects cannot be held unaccountable for how language is oriented in one way rather than another.

In a presentation at a conference in College de France in 2012, Jackson states that writing, whether in literature or another field of knowledge, always requires some distance. This distance is less about a choice than the effect of a historical, as opposed to an ontological, constraint. Comparing the work of Paul Celan with that of André du Bouchet, John Jackson remarks that the emphasis on historical versus ontological constraints constitutes a fundamental difference between the works of the two authors. In Jackson's view, the difference between the authors is that "Dans le cas de Paul Celan cette distance ou plutôt cette situation d'extranéité serait un effet nécessaire de l'histoire tandis que dans le cas d'André du Bouchet elle se comprendrait dans une structure inhérente à l'axe de parler" (25)

According to Jackson, the works of Celan and Bouchet should be analyzed differently. Celan's work should be analyzed according to its historical context and the implicit or explicit role of language in this history. That of André du Bouchet should be approached via the syntactic disarticulation that follows from a poetical reflection. Jackson contrasts Celan's historical and political vision with André du Bouchet's structural, or even essential, orientation with regard to language. In a lecture in College de France, Jackson maintains,

La différence essentielle entre les deux poètes serait que dans le cas de Paul Celan cette distance ou plutôt cette situation d'extranéité serait un effet nécessaire de l'histoire tandis que dans le cas d'André du Bouchet elle se comprendrait dans une structure inhérente à l'axe de parler [...] La poésie de Celan, cette, indéniable ne peut se penser que dans son historicité propre et dans l'inscription explicite ou symbolique de cette historicité dans le langage. La poésie d'André du Bouchet traduirait plutôt cette historicité en terme de réflexion poétologique ainsi que sur le plan de la désarticulation syntactique qu'elle donne à voir ».

Reading Jackson, the difference between the work of Celan and that of Du Bouchet we are dealing with an approach to language and literature that one can consider in its political and a historical tones, or as Jackson says an approach « proprement politique ou historique », in the case of Celan; compared to one that is closer to a structural approach, « structurale voire essentielle », as Jackson puts it, in the case of Du Bouchet. According to Jackson, it is this historical, and perhaps paradoxical, lens that one needs to emphasize in discussing struggles toward re-appropriating language. This work hopes to shed light on the very constraints and its modes of resistance involved in such re-articulation. Celan's work provides a worthy guide allowing us to analyze language re-appropriation, so crucial to the development of the subject, via an assessment of historical constraints rather than through an ontologically-driven reflection (with their tendencies toward deficit approaches to language development and language fluencies). The importance of the opposition between Celan and

Du Boucher as poets, as described by Jackson advances our reflection on how the formation of the Creole language is informed by the history of its speaking agents who engage in a work of language appropriation and re-appropriation. This results in a language spoken by millions. If they do not speak French, it is not because they have anything inherently wrong as speaking subjects; it is just because the history that favors and accelerates the formation and development of the Creole language disfavors the French language. Yet, as in the case of Paul, re-appropriating the French language by which the Caribbean subjects have been oppressed is an act of courage, lucidity, and even humility.

We maintain that there is nothing ontological about whether a francophone Caribbean subject produces a literary piece or not, or becomes a respected fluent speaker of French. It is the social, historical, cultural, ideological, and political dimension that accompanies such fluency, or the lack of fluency, that needs to be taken into consideration. That being said, one might even consider it an obligation for the francophone Caribbean speaking subject to re-appropriate the French language. As in the case of Paul Celan, this is “a step, a gesture,” a tree that needs to stand tall and face the Majesty of the Absurdity embodied in a discourse of dehumanization that paints the francophone Caribbean subject as deficient. After Descartes, drawing on the work on Montaigne, made his renowned pronouncement “I think therefore I am,” he added that it is through speaking that others can know what a person thinks, and thus discover that person’s quality as a “thinking thing.” One might therefore argue that, consistent with Descartes, we may likewise state “I speak, therefore I am.” But if we say “I speak, therefore I am,” what happens if I do not speak? One does not need to read very much about the nature of the post-modern or contemporary world to realize how someone’s importance and value is measured in terms of who can say what, who can speak, who can

better administer the “power of naming.” Isn’t it an act of courage to refuse to look at language as something naïve? Isn’t it also an act of courage to analyze the historical dimensions that differentially affect some groups experience with language?

Minor Literature As Language Re-Appropriation: Mauthner, Canetti, and Kafka

To further address the larger language issue of the francophone Caribbean region, we now turn to other important examples of *contre-parole* and language re-appropriation in the works of Mauthner, Canetti, as well Kafka with his famous “Minor Literature”. Born into a Jewish family in a multilingual setting (German, Czech, and Yiddish) that raised questions regarding the existence of a singular mother tongue, Mauthner developed a work of language criticism under the label *L’Effroi* that consisted in turning his brutal childhood linguistic experience into theory. Jacques Le Rider, author of several works on Mauthner, Canetti, and Kafka, captures the productive use of Mauthner’s linguistic dilemmas: “La critique du langage chez Mauthner, aura donc consisté à traduire en théorie l’expérience vécue dans l’enfance de la ‘privation de langue maternelle’”(Le Rider, Kindle Locations 1176). As a youth, Mauthner was prohibited from using Czech and Yiddish, his father and society at large expecting him to use German. Thus, although Czech and Yiddish were spoken in his surroundings, he experienced a linguistic exile after having been restricted from using them. As Le Rider maintains, Mauthner “a le sentiment d’avoir été privé de tout enracinement linguistique” (Kindle Location 1170) and “il restera toute sa vie persuadé d’avoir manqué d’une « vraie » langue maternelle en raison de sa condition de Juif dans une société biculturelle” (Kindle Locations 1176-1177). Mauthner’s father worked very adamantly to indoctrinate his son in accepting the German language, but Mauthner’s competency in the language did not resolve his linguistic crisis. Le Rider recognizes that German was for

Mauthner in many senses a paternal language, “Il n’aurait eu qu’une langue paternelle, l’allemand châtié qu’imposait son père, l’allemand enseigné à l’école et au lycée” exclaims Le Rider (Kindle Locations 1179-1180). In this linguistic crisis, Mauthner was compelled to make a choice in favor of the German language, emblematic of the intimidating paternal figure who imposes a language upon an individual. This ‘paternal’ figure can also be seen as representative of an element in the chain of the ideological state apparatuses (e.g. school, family, etc) – with Mauthner’s father serving as an authoritative voice applying and guaranteeing the legitimated discourse or language ideology in that community that was being taken shape in school that at the same time serves to shape this it in turn. Yet, as a speaking agent, Mauthner would re-appropriate this language and later used to develop his language criticism.

Kafka (1883-1924) wrote in German, but he exhibits a certain level of ambiguity and misgiving with regard to this language that he could not consider his mother tongue. Kafka was born in a linguistic conflict where the German language sat in opposition to the Czech language. As he wrote later in his correspondence with Milena Jesenská, “Je n’ai jamais vécu au milieu du peuple allemande; l’allemand est ma langue maternelle, il m’est donc naturel, mais le tchèque est plus près de mon Coeur” (Kafka, 1920). In such a conflict, the choice of language has profound implications for a subject’s nationality and the benefits or capital that are afforded through it. Curiously, although his family adopted the Czech language and nationality, Kafka adopted the German language and nationality given the social capital afforded through them. Yet this choice did not resolve the language dilemma in the life of Kafka.

In another letter to Max Brod, Kafka asserts that Jewish people live in a series of linguistic dilemmas or “impossibilities” that Kafka terms “des impossibilités de langage.” They are conducive of what he describes as “l’impossibilité de ne pas écrire, l’impossibilité d’écrire en allemand, l’impossibilité d’écrire autrement.” To these impossibilities, Kafka adds “l’impossibilité d’écrire.” This impossibility of writing is illustrated in the following assertion by Kafka: “Pour la poésie, me faisait défaut la parole vivante d’un dialecte que j’aurais possédé en propre (cited in Le Rider, Kindle Locations 1342-1343)”. In spite of the language dilemma that Kafka faced, “Franz Kafka est véritablement bilingue,” writes Jacques Le Rider (2015, Kindle Locations 1238). Instead of being alienated by the German language, Kafka developed a style of writing in that language that was specific to him. As Le Rider says about Kafka, “c’est le sentiment du manque d’une langue maternelle qui lui a permis d’inscrire son écriture dans un espace étranger à celui de toutes les autres langues vernaculaires” (Kindle Location 1345). While the linguistic situation in which Kafka found himself could have pushed him into silence and despair, Kafka instead subdued the tyranny of the German language and re-appropriated this language to develop a voice that could no longer be silenced.

Born in Bulgaria, Elias Canetti was similarly faced a linguistic situation made up of multiple languages: “on pouvait ... entendre parler sept ou huit langues différentes dans la journée, (cited in Le Rider, Kindle Locations 1374-1375). As a child, Canetti used Bulgarian with peers, but heard his parents speaking German among themselves, a language they considered prestigious. When Canetti’s parents moved to Manchester, he became exposed to English and French. At the age of eight, under the insistence of his mother, he underwent brutal accelerated instruction in German. According to Le Rider, Elias Canetti comes to

consider the German language as ‘langue maternelle acquise sur le tard au prix de véritables souffrances (Canetti, cited in Le Rider; Kindle Locations 1405-1406). In time Canetti acquired the German language more naturally and it became for him the language that linked him to his mother: “l’allemand sera pour Canetti la langue de la *Mutterbindung*, du lien à la mère” (Kindle Locations 1409-1410). Yet, Canetti also had to learn Hebrew under the insistence of his grandfather. According to Le Rider, the amalgam “Jewish-Spanish” would be the closest to what can be considered Canetti’s mother tongue.

The trajectory of these three authors, Mauthner, Kafka, and Canetti, who faced major language dilemmas in their lives and yet became famous writers, places in evidence the way speaking subjects may navigate and transcend their linguistic dilemmas while engaged themselves in the work of language re-appropriation. As Le Rider suggests, with a childhood influenced by Czech, German, and Yiddish, Mauthner spent his life with the consciousness of having lacked a mother tongue, but he was able to re-appropriate the German language to further his development as a speaking subject and writer. In spite of the mosaic of languages that constituted his childhood, Canetti was been able to re-appropriate the German language. He not only used it for his writing production, he also subdue its tyranny by making this language his, making it his ‘mother tongue,’ indeed having it serve as a link to his mother: “pour Elias Canetti, la vraie langue maternelle est la langue de sa mère, l’allemand appris dans la souffrance à huit ans, la langue dont l’enfant polyglotte avait ressenti le manque,” writes Le Rider (Kindle Locations 1427-1428). Kafka was influenced by the German, the Czech, and the Yiddish, and although he developed some ambivalence pertaining to the German language that he could not really consider as his mother tongue, he was able to re-appropriate this language to express his voice. With this work of language re-appropriation,

Kafka developed a reflection on language and literature that is in line with Paul Celan's work of *contre-parole*. Given his linguistic situation, Kafka finds inspiration to develop a framework that takes into consideration the literary works produced by those who use a language other than the mainstream language of the community in which they live.

Before Kafka, literature in a language other than the mainstream language of the community in which the author lived could be considered at the margins of mainstream literary production. But Kafka constructed a counter-discourse, a *contre-parole*, in his "minor literature." The "impossibility of writing" became an "impossibility of not writing," and one might add, the impossibility of not having a voice, the impossibility of not being a speaking subject, the impossibility of not being a self-conscious being. This series of impossibilities turned into possibilities through re-appropriation.

Minor Literature is characterized in part by its political tones, that is "the connection of the individual to a political immediacy" (Deleuze and Guattari, 18). It is also marked by a communal presence in the acts of writing or in writing production, which Deleuze and Guattari term "the collective assemblage of enunciation" (18), following the work of Kafka. Kafka re-appropriates the German language in his own terms. As Deleuze and Guattari indicate, instead of the work of scholars such as Gustav Meyrink and Max Brod from the Prague School, who tend "to artificially enrich this German, to swell it up through all the resources of symbolism, of oneirism, of esoteric sense, of a hidden signifier" (Deleuze and Guattari, 19), Kafka endeavors to turn his weakness into a strength. He endeavors to dig into the German language for "its very poverty" and to "make it vibrate with a new intensity. Oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usage of it" (Deleuze and Guattari, 19).

Kafka finds in the German language a power that may have been hidden to its native speakers. His work allows him “to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality, to find points of “non-culture” or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones [...]” (Deleuze and Guattari, 27). This is the work of minor literature, this work of language through another language, this navigation of oneself as a speaking subject through the mainstream language, and so this work of minor literature parallels our notion of language re-appropriation and *contre-parole*. The impossibility of not writing confronts the linguistic tyranny that faces the speaking subject and allows him to break free from it by producing a literature that challenges the major literature. Valuing the works of this minor literature can be seen as an opportunity to enrich the mainstream language and the literary corpus produced in it and on it. In this case one must talk about a linguistic continuum, an internal pluri-lingualism, pluri-vocality that challenges the alleged assumption of monolithic mainstream languages.

In discussing minor literature with regard to the work of Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari ask a question central to our primary concern: “How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve?” (19). *Contre-parole* engenders a framework on minor literature characterized by “a high coefficient of deterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari, 16) as in the case of the German language that is deterritorialized for being spoken and used by a minority speech community in Prague, i.e., the Prague Jewish population. The majority of this population did adopt the Czech, but Kafka’s re-appropriation of the German language allows him to develop and make his work accessible to a wider audience. Nonetheless, his crisis with regard to mother tongue makes Kafka develop a writing style in

the German language that is considered by some scholars as a lack of manner, a lack of style: “Le manque de maniérisme est poussé presque jusqu’aux limites de l’absence de style, et l’absence d’amour des mots en tant que tels jusqu’aux limites de la froideur,” says Hannah Arendt about the work of Kafka (cited in Le Rider, Kindle Locations 1339-1342). Hannah Arendt adds “Kafka n’affectionne aucun mot en particulier, aucune construction syntaxique n’a sa prédilection. Le résultat est une nouvelle sorte de perfection qui semble très éloignée de tous les styles antérieurs” (cited in Le Rider, Kindle Locations 1339-1342).

The works of Mauthner, Canetti, Kafka, and Celan allow us to ‘deterritorialize’ the language issue from the francophone Caribbean, and then place it in other larger contexts that can further inform our understanding of what is at stake. A Haitian child in Haiti failing in school due to lack of competency in French, the language of power and oppression, and prevented access to his home language, Creole, shares in a fundamental linguistic dilemma with Mauthner, Canetti, Kafka, and Celan. The difference is that these authors have engaged in a work of language re-appropriation and subdued their linguistic tyranny instead of letting themselves become alienated by it. The Haitian child is deprived both the mother tongue and the language of power, and therefore is alienated by both of them. As indicated earlier, Kafka’s use of the German language is an exemplar of how a language that is not one’s mother tongue is re-appropriated to further his development. However, given that Kafka did not write in his mother tongue, one might argue that he remained alienated by this language that tyrannizes him for life and that he was not being able to re-appropriate: “Selon Kafka, le yiddish est une langue de l’exil et de l’aliénation [...] C’est cette langue maternelle coupablement oubliée, ce refoulé socioculturel qui lui revient au contact du théâtre juif,” says Le Rider (Kindle Location 1320-1329).

Revamping the agency of the francophone Caribbean speaking subject implies a paradigm shift that considers several languages – the home language, the language that informs the history of the region (i.e. French), and environmental languages (i.e. English and Spanish) – as part of the exigencies of the contemporary world. What a framework like that may look like is what is suggested in the next two chapters.

To conclude this chapter, let us only recall that, based on Jackson's interpretation, the work of Celan represents a key element in our reflection on language tyranny, language alienation, and language re-appropriation. Paul Celan faced the tyranny of the German language as the language of destruction that brings death to the whole spectrum of his existence, the language in which he and his parents and his people were defined as deficient. Instead of remaining alienated by this language, Celan deconstructs it in a movement of language creation, and then re-appropriates to express his sorrows. Given the history of the francophone Caribbean region, and given the role of the French language in defining the individual's living in this region, as indeed illustrated in the writings of l'Abbée Grégoire in 1794, could we not find an appropriate parallel for this context in the work of Celan with the German language? Couldn't we analyze the work of most authors of the francophone Caribbean region in terms of "contre-parole" and language re-appropriation? Couldn't we consider the work of Canetti, Mauthner, and Kafka as exemplars of language re-appropriation for the region? If so, couldn't this help us envision perspectives of a plurilingual francophone Caribbean region that would be based on an understanding of language re-appropriation? These questions are taken up in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5

Polyphonic Surrealism and Language Re-Appropriation: The Case of Césaire

In discussing the work of Paul Celan in the previous chapter, I have shown the way a speaking subject faces the alienating force of language, and how he overcomes this linguistic tyranny through the emergence of a discourse of *contre-parole* as an act of language re-appropriation. The present chapter introduces a similar case, but this time focusing on how a francophone Caribbean writer, Césaire through his work in *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, re-appropriates the French language channeling it to develop a discourse that challenges colonial discourse. In doing so the writer also challenges the construction of the Caribbean as a space that harbors subaltern subjectivities. I will first look at the problematic of time and space in this novel, and then at the literary devices Césaire uses to construct a discourse of *contre-parole*, thus engaging in an act of language re-appropriation.

Time and Space in Césaire's Notebook of a Return to the Native Land: A work of Language Re-Appropriation

The title of the text *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* is indicative of a notion of space. The problematization of this notion of space is used by the author as a tool in his attempt at re-appropriating the very discourse by which he faces conditions amenable to his search of space. Multivoicedness and surrealism are two means by which Césaire does so. For example, regarding the “Return” specified in the title, the text indicates a destination without indicating a point of departure. We know the “Return” is in reference to his “Native Land,” but the reader is left to determine what the point of departure might be. Knowing that the author was living in France, the logical reasoning is that the point of departure is France.

But the text does not conceive of France as being a mere geographical space. France is also, in light of the text, a symbol, one that accounts for the very fact of his being in search of a place, and facing the need for a “Return” to somewhere that he can but call the “Native Land,” in spite of it being an extension of that symbol that France represents. If Césaire’s journey logically includes Martinique and France, that “Return to the Native Land” would logically imply a French immigrant who left Martinique for France, thus returning to his “Native Land.” But the splendor of the discourse also leads to another interpretation – that of a man who left his spiritual land, Africa, and who is in search of ways of regaining this spiritual territory. As Aliko Songolo, the author of *Aimé Césaire: une poétique de la découverte* writes with regard to *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, it is “le drame d’un peuple, l’épopée d’une conscience; le trajet initiatique d’un sujet – d’abord unique, collectif par la suite – vers une libération désirée mais difficile. ...l’itinéraire de la prise de conscience de l’homme noir, exilé ou colonisé...trouve ici son expression la plus personnelle et la plus universelle à la fois” (35). The man whose ancestors left Africa centuries ago, and that has never been able to ‘return,’ in the sense of returning to Martinique, finds himself first on a Caribbean land that belongs neither to him nor to a France claiming primacy over it, second, in France, a country with which he maintains an ambiguous relationship as his perpetual “master,” and finally in the United States. As a surrealist thinker, metaphorically speaking, Césaire overcame all modes of transportation to travel to these places.

Césaire was not the type of writer who would embark upon an ethnographic dimension of place like, say, Bougainville’s *Voyage Autour du Monde*. Césaire’s project is radically different: it is the itinerary of a subject in search of a place that, in nature, precedes the condition by which he is a Caribbean subject who left for France and is returning to the

Caribbean. This condition is nothing else than the colonial condition that makes him a Caribbean subject as a result of his ancestors having been brought from Africa to be enslaved. This sets the tone of the text. The text represents a podium where history, places, races, geography, Western Civilization, and the woe of Africa and the Caribbean region are intermingled to produce a discourse that is a veritable act of courage through language re-appropriation.

The trauma of the colonial subject that is described in the text is unbearable and has the attribute of silencing the subject in the most profound form of alienation. Many colonized subjects do not even want to talk and think about this “unthinkable”, while Césaire turns it, the indescribable, the unspeakable, the inexpressible into a discourse of “contre-parole,” as Paul Celan did in his face-off with the German language following the killing of his parents by the Nazi regime. The language through which the indescribable, the unspeakable, and the inexpressible was asserted and practiced is re-appropriated to speak, express, and describe the trauma. Once the iron crossbar of alienation has been surmounted, language comes to be used as a tool for healing and growth.

The title of the text, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, is indicative of the space between dream and reality. The verse “At the end of wee hours” is used repeatedly to introduce multiple strophes. The author is placed between night and day, between dream and reality, between absence and presence, between two voices that confront each other, i.e., that of darkness and that of light, that of the end of a night and that of a morning announcing the beginning of day, even if that day does not seem to offer much hope since it will soon be collapsed into the night as well. One cannot help but see in this infernal cycle Frantz Fanon’s

reflection on the situation of the colonized subject who is trapped in an entanglement of the ‘modern world’ and that he calls “les damnés.”

Notebook of a Return to the Native Land is a very fragmented text with different portions or verses referring to different objects, places, history, images. It employs significant numbers of literary devices talking through multiple voices, and therefore multiple selves. The text is evocative of the soul and mind of the poet as a colonized subject subdivided into multiple selves, multi-territories, and multi-histories, all of which allow him (Césaire) to cross different borders, be they geographical, mental, historical, etc. Surrealism and polyphony constitute the literary methodologies that allow the author to do so.

With his multiple histories and multiple selves, the poet identifies himself with the history of the US, inhabited by multiple ethnic groups and emblematic of colonial “success”. His imagination makes it possible for him to switch instantly from Bordeaux, Nantes, and Liverpool, to New York and San Francisco, and then to Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. A psychoanalytical account of the text indicates how the text embodies Césaire’s deformed/subverted wishes that simulate the forms of the unconscious in dreams.

His travel then takes him to the Jura, which seems to represent an important moment in Césaire’s life and work as a culminating point where everything collapses in a descent into the valley of death, a loss of hope, and the end of his regeneration as a colonized subject, and that of blacks in general. A psychoanalytical account of the text indicates a pathway, one ranging from libido – the pleasure of being that is expressed phantasmagorically – to the death of man in Jura, as we will see later, which is followed by the rupture of the reality principle of colonial subjugation of the self.

Above all, this is a work of language, a work of language re-appropriation. As suggested, this work of language and language re-appropriation is expressed through multiple literary devices. For example, the word ‘calcaneus’ in the sentence my “calcaneus on the spines of skyscrapers” (47) is in line with the author’s insight into the consequences of the history of slavery in the US, where the free labor of enslaved Africans has contributed to the solid economic foundation of the country. The skyscrapers symbolize this economically successful colonial legacy, and Césaire’s hyperbolic reference to stepping on top of them represents a stepping atop of colonial history, instead of continually being subjugated and haunted by this history. The western world, intricately interwoven with a history of slavery, colonialism, and racial discourses, is now both under Césaire’s feet and under his fingers and thought process as writer.

The names of the cities and countries that Césaire uses are not devoid of meaning. According to these authors, they constitute what Snyder (1970) and Songolo (1985) call the poetic map of Negritude, a map that includes Nantes, Bordeaux, Liverpool, New York, Virginia, Haiti, and Martinique.

Recall that, as Eric Saugera (1995, 2002) notes, France organized at least 4220 slave-trading expeditions from 1643 to 1850. The four major ports were Nantes, Bordeaux, Le Havre, La Rochelle. Nantes accounted for 41% (about 1714) expeditions representing the transportation of nearly 600,000 Africans to the American colonies. Bordeaux undertook 500 expeditions, with a total of about 150,000 Africans transported into the colonies. Likewise, according to Saugera, between 1698 and 1807, England organized 11,000 expeditions that transported nearly 3 million Africans to the colonies. Liverpool accounted for 5700 expeditions, followed by the ports of Bristol and London with 5300 shipments. Some

sources, such as Port cities Bristol estimate the number of Africans transported to the colonies to up to 20 million²³, though other sources, such as slavevoyages.org, estimate the number to be 12 million, which is closer to the 11 million figure reported by Frankel Neil²⁴

Césaire's Map of Negritude mentions New York, Virginia, Haiti, and Martinique as major sites for the thousands of expeditions that accounted for over 11 million Africans enslaved in the Americas. Césaire blends euphemism with irony to indicate the way the names of cities alleviate their historical burden. These names are used to signify a particular socio-geographical grouping, but Césaire actually intends to recall what these cities represent historically in terms of their roles as bastions of slavery, a sharp metaphorical contrast to their literal sense as modern cities.

These cities are places reminiscent of the voyage that the author initiates and his status of voyager-dreamer and thinker in search of himself and his history. Césaire faces both the nostalgia of *retour* and the nostalgia of leaving his homeland. As suggested earlier, the nostalgia of departure is first the nostalgia of leaving Africa. But although this departure and the conditions that accompany this departure are painful, he finds refuge in making history accountable for this departure. He is in the western world, not due to his own will, but because of the greediness of others. This is not the case of Martinique where he was born, and raised before leaving for France. The author has to burst into expressing remorse for having left this land. Songolo attributes this remorse to “sa fuite de son monde insulaire” (44). It is an escape that is but “un retour en arrière” (Songolo 44). This problematic of leaving his homeland is captured by Césaire in the following verses:

To go away

²³ See <http://www.discoveringbristol.org.uk>

²⁴ See <http://www.slaverysite.com/Body/facts%20and%20figures.htm>

As there are hyena-men and panther-men, I would be jew-man
A Kaffir-man
A Hindu-man-from-Calcutta
A Harlem-man-who-doesn't-vote (42)

Leaving the homeland is not a progression but a regression for Césaire. As Songolo suggests and as anyone could observe, it is an escape that makes the poet share in the pain of oppressed groups like Hindus and Jews, and blacks facing racism in Harlem in the US. The escape to France places him to the position of the 'other', reminiscent of his ancestors that have been 'otherized', that is, relegated to lower humanity as part of racial hierarchies discourses. This escape from his homeland also brings Césaire to the realization that one cannot really escape: "but *can* one kill Remorse, perfect as the stupefied face of an English lady discovering a Hottentot skull in her soup-tureen?" (43). There is a remorse that keeps dragging an individual into the abyss of emotional disturbances for a whole life. There can also be a remorse that gnaws someone's heart and mind/brain to the bone. Nonetheless, in the case of Césaire, instead of being alienated by this remorse, he sets to transform it into something productive, and language, re-appropriated, offers the channel to do so. This something positive is the necessity to find himself among those he thinks can accept him:

To go away...I would arrive sleek and young in this land of mine and I would say to this land whose loam is part of my flesh: "I have wandered for a long time and I am coming back to the deserted hideousness of your sores. ...Embrace me without fear ...And if all I can do is speak, it is for you I shall speak. And again I would say: My mouth shall be the mouth of those calamities that have no mouth, my voice the freedom of those who break down in the solitary confinement of despair (Césaire, 45).

Following this regeneration and rejuvenation, Césaire adds "And behold here I am" ("Et voici que je suis venu"). Césaire's exile was social, geographical, ethnic, and linguistic.

The language through which he was exiled is re-appropriated to overcome the other forms of exile: social, geographical, and ethnic.

If the fact of finding himself where he can be accepted could mark the end of a voyage, this voyage is but one part of a longer, more comprehensive itinerary. After overcoming the remorse of leaving, the homeland regained becomes the central locus from which he can launch other voyages. From this central locus he sets his imaginary itinerary. We recall the hyperbolic discourse through which he puts under himself symbols of western economic success and colonial repression. As part of his existential struggle to encounter himself as colonized subject and link the dots on the “poetic map of Negritude,” Césaire makes a brilliant turn that takes him on a journey toward a place where he thinks his destiny as colonized subject has been sealed: the Jura. By connecting Jura to Nantes, Bordeaux, Liverpool, New York, Virginia, Haiti, and Martinique, Césaire reduces the history of the western world to a history of oppression and repression.

Césaire struggles a good deal with the alienation that he faces with these geographical spaces. He frames himself as someone who is not only outside but also inside with regard to these places. This attempt at making the ‘other’ not so much an ‘other’ is an act of courage accomplished through language. We may identify it as an act of langue re-appropriation considering that it is first through language that subjects became ‘other,’ that is, through the “power of naming,” as exemplified in the case of Columbus who declares “I call this land Hispaniola in the name of...” – naming an object is often an expropriation from an other and a (re)appropriation of it to oneself.

*Literary Devices and Language Re-appropriation in Césaire’s Notebook of a Return
to the Native Land*

Césaire uses multiple rhetorical devices as he attempts to re-appropriate the language necessary to express his surrealist vision, which indeed ends up catching up a real history. It is through language that Césaire will face up to the alienation of place and the history of oppression and repression that these places bring to mind. The use of the possessive pronouns ‘myself’ in “I say to myself” and ‘mine’ in “what is also mine” (47), in reference to Jura, indicate how Césaire blends himself into the history that symbolizes these places as well as Jura. The use of the word ‘also’ in “what is also mine” indicates an irony. ‘Also’ refers to the previous places he cited, that is, Nantes, Bordeaux, Liverpool, New York, Virginia, Haiti, Martinique, of which he says “mine” and to which he adds Jura – and he claims all these places as his. It is an ironic rhetorical device whereby the author intends to evoke an image of himself as the bearer of the cause of all colonized subjects, as a kind of Christ on the cross. This rhetorical device is also indicative of European barbarism given that, and as indicated, the places to which the word ‘also’ refers are representative of places where slavery has flourished. The imaginative similarity between those places and Jura (saying that Jura is also his) is also reminiscent of European barbarism, as evidenced in the mistreatment and the death of the enslaved subject who stood against slavery, i.e. Toussaint Louverture.

Césaire jails himself in the Jura of the four departments of the region of Franche-Comté in the east of France, named after the mountain called Jura that dominates the area. This juxtaposes Césaire with the life and legacy of Toussaint Louverture, the Haitian martyr who paved the way for the revolution leading to the end of slavery in Haiti, and contributing to the collapse of slavery in the western world. France arrested Toussaint in 1801 and imprisoned him in Fort-de-Joux in Jura until his cruel death in 1803.

Césaire describes the jail cell in the Jura as if he himself were imprisoned:

A little cell in the Jura, a little cell, the snow lines it with white bars
The snow is a jailer mounting guard before a prison

The use of the phrase “a little cell” twice is a meaningful use of language. This little cell is where the man who rose against human barbarism is jailed. This is not just literally a little cell. It is the locus for the unfolding of the history of racial hierarchies that stamp and stain the ‘modern world’, or, let’s say the contemporary world. In repeating “a little cell,” Césaire shows how this jail cell is evocative of the horrors of French barbarism. The tortures that were exercised on Toussaint in this jail cell in Jura symbolize the repression, violence, greed, and bloodshed that accompany a history of colonization. Césaire captures the legacy of the jail in the following verses:

Monstrous putrefaction of revolts
stymied,
marshes of putrid blood
trumpets absurdly muted

Césaire describes the “little cell” using the imagery of snow personified: “the snow lines it with white bars / the snow is a jailer mounting guard before a prison.” There is a conscious yet ironic use, of ironic “playfulness” with language that appears subtly in Césaire’s use of the concept ‘white’ in relation to ‘snow.’ Snow becomes a subject, an agent that causes the action of whitening the bars of the jail cell. It thus personifies and recalls the racial divide integral to the enslavement of Africans, and that led to Toussaint’s being in the jail cell in Fort-de-Joux in Jura.

The invocation of ‘whiteness’ in “a lone man imprisoned in whiteness” (line 17) is a metaphor indicating a black man captured and surrounded by whites. This use of “white” references the fallacy of racial color-based divides by which human beings are ordered in a hierarchy. The ironic tone of the poem leads the reader to perceive a comparison between the

whiteness of snow and the whiteness that is attributed to being a white person in comparison to a black person. The reader can readily perceive and discern the physical sense of whiteness that the object of 'snow' can bring to mind. Yet, the poem obliges the reader to face the use of the concept of 'whiteness' in reference to a human person. The irony of history is that human beings have been placed in the different strata of a pyramid of values whereby some groups of human beings can be seen as inferiors and others as superiors. The text invites the reader to ponder the significance of using color to code human beings, and to consider how the perception of color can be deceptive. Such hierarchical and deceptive ascriptions of color to human beings contributed to Toussaint being in jail and tortured till death.

In a magnificent use of this language, Césaire describes how: "the snow is a jailer mounting guard before a prison." The snow is 'white' and the jail guard is 'white.' Racism is personified in its highest standard: racism has jailed the man who dared think that a black man could be free, that blacks could have any existence and status other than that of a slave. A mountain of snow may have been piled up in front of the jail at the foot of the mountain of Jura, but it is not snow that prevented Toussaint from leaving the jail to regain his freedom and continue the struggle against slavery. It is racism that is expressed as a fallacy of color, which is attributed to the guard, who is not only a prison guard but also a guardian of the system of slavery as exemplar of European barbarism.

"A little cell, the snow lines it with white bars." Each of these snow-whitened bars can be said to represent an agent of the racial ideology by which the system of slavery is maintained. The very language that was used to consider blacks as deficient, and maintain an ideology that legitimates the inhuman treatment of 'black' human beings, is re-appropriated by the 'black' Césaire to describe the indescribable. It is a language of "contre-parole" that

restores the dignity of the human race beyond color-coded racial discourses that make individuals embody characteristics that skin color could presumably, and erroneously account for.

Césaire tries to rhyme a language that asks how certain disparate elements can rhyme. These elements are integral to the question as to how we can talk of civilization, and yet reduce a human being to a skin color. The post-modern world, or the contemporary world, has to face its own deficit if it cannot account for the contradictions of Europe and civilization, on the one hand, and racism, prejudices, and discrimination on the other hand. The ways in which these syntactical entities can rhyme with each other can be but a matter of finding the words that inform the world and the dialectical relationship between the two, the possibility of finding “La Langue” (Chamoiseau) along with its own agency as Lacan would have it. Of course, in addition to racism, prejudices, and historically-rooted discrimination that can rhyme with European legacies, one could add genocide, as in the case of Arawaks and Tainos in the Caribbean region and the Indians in the US, and the case of the Jews. To this can be added greed, as in the case of France, which does not feel ashamed to have starved the Haitian by sponging tens of millions francs²⁵ from the Haitian economy so it could recognize the right of this group to have freedom against slavery. The list could be abundantly longer, but is kept short to remain within the discussion that concerns us here.

The poem also includes the following ironic and metaphoric language referring to color, sounds, and death: “...white screams of white death” and “a lonely man defying the white screams of white death” (47). Metaphorically, Césaire assigns to color the virtue of

²⁵ The Original amount of 150 millions was later reduced to 90 millions but with with special privileged custom duties. Haiti had to take loan from France, Germany and the US to pay the debt off.

making ‘sound,’ the act of ‘screaming,’ and he assigns to death a color: “death is white.” Here the concept of color is being used polysemically. The original French version says “*cris blancs*” for “white screams.” The French word “*blancs*” can be translated also in English as ‘blank,’ in the sense of emptiness, the absence of ‘things,’ nothingness. “White scream” could be interpreted in this sense of emptiness. But this emptiness can also contain a sense of fullness: a scream full of hatred while devoid of any humanity and care, a voice that is careless about human suffering, empty of carelessness, and devoid of any regard to humanity, a scream that is so full of the most extreme case of prejudice that it is empty and devoid of compassion. It is an uncompassionate voice full of racially-motivated hatred asking for the death of the man who asks for freedom.

Likewise, the concept of ‘white’ is used to indicate the terrors exercised by the so-called distinguishable racial group known as ‘whites’ as per western thought’s racial classification. If “white screams” can be interpreted as the cold-blooded voice of hatred, of racist voices asking for the death of the freedom fighter, the expression “white death” indicates, not just the act of killing Toussaint, but also the attempt to kill, through the death of Toussaint, the dream of freedom and the dream of humane living conditions that the enslaved subjects sought in the Caribbean region. “White scream, write death” can be conceived as an allegory of victims and perpetrator, dominated and dominant; oppressed and oppressor, the cries for freedom of the former amidst attempts by the latter to force these voices into silence.

The verse “a man alone in the sterile sea of white sand” (47) shows how the presence and death of Toussaint Louverture in the Jura dungeon represents the death of all black liberation movements, which was a fascination and goal of the colonizers. The re-appropriated

language allows Césaire to make the death of Toussaint transcendent by making him a heroic redeemer who died for his people.

Like Paul Celan in the case of the decimation of the Jews, Césaire does not re-appropriate the French language to just lament the death of the man; as he writes: “the splendor of this blood will it not burst open” (49). With this line, Césaire stops all lamentations and descriptions of geographical spaces in order to call for revolt in the name of Reason, a rationality celebrated within the contemporary Enlightenment period: “Reason, I crown you evening wind. / Your name voice of order?” Césaire writes (49). He expresses a “contre-parole” ironically by opposing the enlightened “Reason” supposedly held by the colonizers against the madness understood by the colonized subject, who now remembers it, sees it, cries out, and requires revenge. Using an ironic device Césaire substitutes madness for wisdom or reason:

The madness that remembers
the madness that howls
the madness that sees
the madness that is unleashed
and you know the rest
...
That 2 and 2 are 5
that the forest miaows
That the tree plucks the maroons from the fire that the sky strokes its beard (51).

The events related to the imprisonment and the death of Toussaint occurred between 1801 and 1803, or more specifically, the alleged month when Toussaint passed away, April 1803. This was at the maturity of the Enlightenment or Age of Reason, and it is approximately a decade after the claims of the French Revolution for “Liberté, fraternité, égalité”. As Songol writes “le poète semble ainsi ramasser la pierre que les ‘spécialistes’ européens lui ont jetée et la leur renvoie en pleine figure” (52). This is the act of “contre

parole,” “un geste,” “un pas” as Paul Celan would have it. As Songolo recalls, the rational confrontation of viewpoints is doomed to failure at the outset given that the colonizers do not recognize colonized subjects as having the capability of reasoning: “A mon irrationnel, on opposait le rationnel. A mon rationnel, le véritable rationnel” Fanon wrote (1952 17). According to Songolo “la folie que célèbre le poète est l’antidote du rationnel opprimant” and this is why, maintains Songolo, that Césaire uses the same terms of the prejudices that he opposes. Songolo interprets the verse “the madness that remembers” as the madness that never forgot the time when Africans were being hunted down. He thinks that the verse “the madness that howls” refers to the cries of pain of enslaved Africans and also the cries of revolt against the colonial and neocolonial orders. He interprets the verse “the madness that sees” to mean moments at which colonized subjects develop an awareness of their conditions. This is why Césaire describes the death of Toussaint as an extraordinary event. In fact, verses such as “death stars softly above his head. / Death breathes, crazed, in the ripened cane field of his arms. / Death gallops in the prison like a white horse. / Death gleams in the dark like the eyes of a cat” indicate Césaire’s consideration of the death of Toussaint as a moment of initiation for the man who should die for the redemption of oppressed enslaved subjects.

In a series of verses, Césaire captures a decreasing pattern of events that culminate in the negation of the circle of life of Toussaint, whose whole being collapses into silence (line 33).

Death traces a shining circle above this man
death stars softly above his head
death breathes, crazed, in the ripened cane field of his arms
death gallops in the prison like a white horse
death gleams in the dark like the eyes of a cat
death hiccups like water under the Keys
death is a struck bird
death wanes

death flickers
death is a very shy patyura
death expires in a white pool of silence.

These lines indicate the moment of initiation of one who would die for a cause greater than himself – that of the struggle of the oppressed and enslaved for freedom. These verses feature the numerous events surrounding the struggle of the martyr as he navigates the thin frontier between life and death. It is important to recall that, when the French arrested Toussaint to send him to the dungeon of Fort-de-Joux, he made a statement that serves as a marker even to the present in the history of the struggle against slavery: “They have only felled the trunk of the tree (of the freedom of the blacks); branches will sprout, for the roots are numerous and deep” (Beard and James 1863 232). So, since Toussaint has already prophesized the freedom of enslaved subjects while the ship of his death was leaving Haiti, Césaire represents him as the one who has to face death as a martyr for the cause of freedom. It is not a simple man who is going to die, so his death cannot be like the death of an ordinary man: “death breathes, death gallops, death gleams, death hiccups, death flickers”(49). But the splendid, somber, and magnificent moment has arrived – like “a very shy patyura” (49) death closes the eyes of the hero, as if it is telling him that it is time to let it be. Césaire asks, “The splendor of this blood will it not burst open?” (49). “Death breathes,” “death gallops,” “death gleams,” “death hiccups,” “death flickers” (49). This happens in April 1803 and on November 18, 1803 the Haitians crushed the French army in the last battle of the war for independence, known as the Battle of Vertière. But Césaire remains unsatisfied considering the conditions in which colonized subjects are still living. He finds refuge in language, a language re-appropriated to rejuvenate and resurrect the author:

At the end of the wee hours this land without a stele, these paths without memory, these winds without a tablet.

So what?
We would tell. Would sing. Would howl.
Full voice, ample voice, you would be our wealth, our spear pointed.
Words?
As yes, words. (49)

The poet who finds himself between the dawn and the night has recourse to language as the only possible wealth. But this is not just any language, it is a language of “contre-parole,” a language re-appropriated, given that it is the language that turns the reason of the Enlightenment upside down, and that makes madness account for the virtue that can “remember” “howl,” and “see” the inhuman conditions of the colonized subjects invisible to the reason of the colonizers. Songolo, calling attention to the role of language in Césaire’s work, notes a relationship between the struggle of enslaved Africans and Césaire’s use of the forest that speaks: “That the forest miaows,”(51). According to Songolo, the forest that mews represents a mode of communication used by enslaved Africans to deter the attention of their torturers as the slaves strive to escape from French brutalities. The discourse of the ‘forest that mews’ that counters the discourse of the Reason of the Enlightenment is a contre-parole of a group that tries to find understanding and humanity in the forest when these values are not found among their fellow human beings who claim in possession of reason.

Césaire uses a surrealist mode of writing to mimic multiple voices in his attempt at re-appropriating a language that makes it possible for him to capture the 500 years of agony of the colonized subject. Through surrealist representations like walking on skyscrapers he expresses the voice of the colonized subject in search of himself. This subject is able to voice his own understanding of the history by which he has become the pariah between the Center World, represented by the West, and the periphery, represented by the Rest (see Orelus 2007 for a discussion implicating the concepts the West and the Rest). This is a voice that

overcomes and negates the infernal muted history into which the colonized subject is forced.

One may recognize that the condition of colonized subjects in the ‘modern world,’ or let’s say, the contemporary world, are marked by a peculiarity of place and being. The population of the Caribbean region, as one example of a population that has evolved directly from colonial subjugation, occupies a geographical place that is still challenging in terms of development, work opportunities, and even advanced educational opportunities. This population often faces the need to seek refuge (e.g. educational refuge, work opportunities refuge, lifestyle refuge, and in some cases, political refuge) in the more industrialized parts of Western spaces. When they lack proper legal documents, they are sometimes handcuffed and returned home or put in jail. It is the very same population (or, if we want to be more precise, the ancestors of the contemporary one) that was captured or forced to come to the Western World. This population is now coming on their own, or rather is forced to come over due to the life conditions in their places, and that is being rebuked by the Western countries. This is a situation that colonized subjects living on the American continent have not been able to articulate sufficiently. This dynamic of place and being is voiced by Césaire in the articulation of a language of surrealism that expresses the real that has been silenced.

One of the problems faced by the author of *Return to the native Land* involves place and being, that is, the existential crisis of a colonized subject taken in an entanglement of place that includes the Caribbean region, France, the US, and Africa. Besides the voice of the one taken in the entanglement of place and being, the *Notebook to a Return of the native Land* expresses the voice of the one who does not just accept the place that is assigned to him by history; rather, this is someone who, with critical consciousness, recognizes his place in history. Césaire mimics the voice of the Caribbean subject who understands that he is part of

a community, and that the salvation of this community depends on no one but him: “I have wandered for a long time and I am coming back to the deserted hideousness of your sores ... My mouth shall be the mouth of those calamities that have no mouth, my voice the freedom of those who break down in the solitary confinement of despair” (Césaire, 45).

Other types of voices can be discerned in the text. As we have seen, Césaire mentions the voice of death that surrounded Toussaint in Fort-de-Joux when he writes “a lonely man defying the white screams of white death” (47). Problematizing this verse earlier, we have paralleled the voice of death as illustrated in the verse “white screams of white deaths” as the voice of hatred, the voice calling for the silencing of the existence of the man, Toussaint, who attempted to negate the negation of man.

There is a sort of dialogicality that is established in the text. As found in Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia in his essay *Discourse in the Novel*, we know that voices tend to call for other voices, implying that all voices always preceded or succeed other voices. Voices are never singular but always part of a chain of voices. In his polyphonic surrealism, Césaire captures this dimension by bringing another type of voice that responds to the voice of death alluded to earlier: “the splendor of this blood will it not burst open?” (49). This other voice that Césaire adds here is the voice of man, negated through the death of the fighter for liberty and human decency, that aims to negate this negation. As suggested earlier, it is the voice of revolt, as expressed through the events that confirmed what Toussaint prophesized as he initiated his journey of martyrdom in leaving Haiti for Jura. As part of the act of heteroglossia in which Césaire is engaged, he mentions the voice of madness, as in the verse “the madness that howls” (49). Here he opposes the madness of barbarism against colonized subjects in the name of the alleged reason of the enlightenment embraced by the colonizers. He mentions the

slyness of the voice of death and even the voice of the forest, as in the verse

In conclusion, Césaire re-appropriates the French language to submit it to a radically different finality. Problematizing the issue of time and space, Césaire constructs from the voice of the oppressed and the oppressor a language that had not been heard. The issue of time and space is an act of memory that is available only through language, but a language re-appropriated, given that the tyranny of this language could have been so violent that it could force the speaking subject into despair. This is a language declaring ‘no’ to despair, ‘no’ to being a *damné*. Yet also a language of declaring ‘yes,’ that ‘yes’ I speak, ‘yes’ I understand, because I can think. Thus, the different literary devices that Césaire uses in the text are indicative of the work of language re-appropriation, and how literature can help say aloud what the tyrannized speaking subject can but dare say silently.

Chapter 6

Social Realism, Language Re-Appropriation and Discourse Re-Appropriation in Jacques Roumain's *Masters Of The Dew*

While Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* (*Masters of the Dew*), a work published in 1947 and translated since into seventeen languages, is undoubtedly one of the most well known francophone Caribbean novels, there is nonetheless a dimension to the novel that has yet to be explored. In this novel, the author engages linguistically in a dual re-appropriation: a re-appropriation of language and a re-appropriation of discourses. Using the method of social realism to capture the realities of the Haitian community of Fonwouj, Roumain sublimates both the French language and religious and classical discourses to construct a language of counter-parole. Roumain recognizes these discourses are channeled through a French language that many in the francophone Caribbean region use to harbor a deficit representation of communities like Fonwouj.

As Stephen Arnold (1979) remarks, realism in *Masters of the Dew* is expressed through active social apparatuses and agents that constitute the real social configuration of the societal milieu: these include workers, political actors, people who suffer, people who commit crimes, a mother lamenting the death of a son, a woman making a mother-in-law feel the movement of a fetus who will never have the chance to see his/her father. All these constitute parts of the social configuration of the *unité de lieu* where the plot is being unfolded. Ismail Kadaré, quoted by Arnold in "Socialist Realism : Great Art of the Revolution" published in *Literature and Ideology* in 1974, speaks to the power of social realist depictions: "le réalisme socialiste peut traiter tous les sujets, depuis la révolution prolétarienne jusqu'aux légendes antiques. Il est capable de réexaminer et de réexpliquer le

monde, sur le plan artistique, depuis le siège de Troie jusqu'à l'encerclement impérialiste révisionniste ” (cited in Arnold 2). In his critical literary analysis of Roumain's *Master of the Dews*, Arnold places this novel among the works of Jules Vallès, Léon Cladel, Ismaël Kadaré, and Alfred Uçi. As Arnold recognizes, the social realism it employs is “une littérature orientée plutôt vers la clarté que vers l'obscurité ...[qui] s'écartere d'un cosmopolitisme sans racines et embrasse les particularités nationales ... Elle est totalement engagée”(3). Roumain is less interested in constructing a literary discourse that would make his work appear as a traditional work of chef-d'oeuvre in French. How he can capture the social reality of the community is his primary interest even if this requires writing in a different way in the French language, that is, subduing the French language to a radically different finality.

Let us first turn our attention to the plot, the characters of Fonwouj, and the plight they are facing in Roumain's literary social realism prior to looking in more detail at the dual re-appropriation of language and discourses in the novel.

Plot Features of Masters of the Dew

Roumain first presents the reader with Manuel, a healthy young man who left his homeland for Cuba in search of work. His living conditions in a sugar cane plantation in Cuba disturbed him and he became critical about these work conditions. Manuel is haunted by a desire to avoid reproducing the social conditions that were conducive to his departure from his homeland in the first place. He returned to his country after spending 15 years in Cuba. Roumain's return to native land differs from that of Aimé Césaire in *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*. In Roumain's case, the return is accompanied by a precise mission to address the real conditions of life for the community. Although Césaire was also interested

in changing the life conditions of Martiniquais, his own return was not as grounded in the real life conditions of a particular, localized site as in the case of Roumain's characters.

Although in his return Manuel does experience the moment of reuniting with his mother, who had thought she might never see her son again, the social conditions in which Manuel's parents find themselves have marred the full possibility for enjoying the reunion. As befits the social realist framework, Manuel quickly starts identifying the reasons that are accountable for despair, both with regard to his parents and their community. He realizes that there is not enough food to feed the community and that the life of the community is generally textured with misery in diverse forms. In contrast with his parents Delira and Bienaimé, who rely on divine intervention to resolve issues rather than rooting out causes, Manuel realizes that there are several intricately woven factors for their misery, but a drought that negatively impacts the crops appears to be the leading underlying cause of the misery in the community. Manuel identifies two additional reasons: the inhabitants of the community have not considered alternatives to rain, irrigation, for example; furthermore, the deaths of two of important community members have divided the community. Manuel thus returns from Cuba in the midst of a series of plights that had been tyrannizing the community for some time. Roumain frames the issue of drought as secondary to two factors: the local community's habit of looking elsewhere for solutions to their problems, and its tendency to let itself get drawn into a culture of hatred and rancor that hampers possibilities to work together to resolve not only the drought, but other difficulties beyond. For example, one source of rancor begins when the character Doriska tried to take over a piece of land that is said to belong to Sauveur's close relatives. To defend the interest of his family property, Sauveur confronts Doriska, and the confrontation ultimately ends with both of them dead, as

Doriska is killed and Sauveur later dies in jail. Roumain in this way swiftly puts an end to overt physical conflict with the deaths of these adversaries, but a bitter division remains in the community afterward.

After inquiring about the conflict in the community, Manuel learns from Bien-Aimé, his father, that Doriska's killer, Sauveur, is actually Manuel's paternal uncle, and thus both Sauveur and Doriska belong to their extended family. Manuel is faced with taking a side between two alternatives: escaping into despair occasioned by scarcity, drought, and illiteracy on one hand, and addressing an acute family feud on the other. But he does something completely different. As a realist thinker, Manuel chooses to tackle underlying problems that he sees as accountable for the general misery of the community. He decides to seek out and identify a source of water, and to mobilize the community to build a canal.

Manuel faces fierce challenges in his endeavor. He must confront not only the pessimism of his parents, but also the resentment of Doriska's loved ones. More importantly, he must confront the tendency in the community to rely on supernatural powers for solutions to their problems instead of looking internally for agents of change. Manuel successfully engages the community in a conversation. Ostensibly aligned with Sauveur, his father, he goes to meet the "other side" of the conflict, those lined up with Doriska's close family members. In spite of their reserved response, he informs them he has been able to locate a water source, and of the need for the whole community to work together to dig a canal to bring water to their fields. He notes that they cannot keep relying solely on the expected rainy season to irrigate and to grow crops. He also reminds them that rainfall has not come despite the Vodou ceremonies they have organized, their Hail Mary prayers, and the allegiance to all

the Saints. Irrigated, the land would be both the most important means of subsistence and the most important source of revenue of the community of Fonwouj.

Although Manuel does win the hearts of quite a few members of the community to his cause, others still do not buy into his reasoning. At this point he encounters two obstacles, both represented by the character Jervilien: Manuel not only faces resentment from staunchly loyal members of Doriska's close family, he also met with the jealousy his success provokes in societal members driven by mediocre self-interest. Arguably Roumain created the character of Jervilien to represent the evil in every society.

Manuel's fate could not be gleaned from the successful meeting he had with the community in which both sides of the conflict participated. Confirming the fears and warnings from his mother Délira, Manuel succumbs to fatal injuries from the knife of Jervilien on his way home the night of the meeting. As he dies in his mother's arms, Manuel orders her not to disseminate the cause of his death to avoid further schism in the community. Manuel dies, but his ability to locate a water source and mobilize the community to dig the canal bears fruit, and the community continues the work in his absence. The realism of Manuel had connected with the realities of the life of the community, and had engendered real results.

Significance of the Novel as a Work in Social Realism

Roumain's novel depicts the difficulty in attempts to change the living conditions of a community, especially one facing internal conflict stemming from their poor life conditions. We should also add that the novel invites the reader to reflect upon how the cult of greed that some individuals and groups find as their comfort zone makes it a challenge to secure a peaceful and prosperous world serving the interest of humankind's material needs.

The literary production in *Masters of the Dew* is a literature devoid of enigma, or, the only enigma would be that of a critic who fails to transcend the words of the novel to navigate the world of reality that it aims at exposing. The world depicted in the novel is a prototypical world engendered by subjugation, one facing a modern form of a culture of exploitation, and a community that emerges from colonial encounters. Water is used as a metaphor for need, that is, what is necessary for the community to survive and prosper. The drought is used as an element that constrains the development of the subject, and between the two, a voice emerges, even to be silenced later as is the case for anyone attempting to shake the status quo.

Re-appropriation of Language

As Arnold mentions, the esthetic criteria of the literature of social realism is clarity, and in this *Masters of the Dew* is a shining exemplar in that the work: “rest[e] à tous points de vue le meilleur exemple du réalisme socialiste dans la littérature africaine et la littérature de la diaspora” (Arnold 11). Through the creation and portrayal of the character of Manuel, Roumain endeavors to tailor a language that can sufficiently express the clarity of the real conditions of society. According to Léon-François Hoffman, “Roumain a su jouer sur toute une gamme de registres linguistiques, les harmoniser pour créer une écriture profondément originale, qui apporte en même temps un enrichissement considérable au patrimoine littéraire de la Francophonie” (9). As Hoffman remarks, the novel is representative of the mosaic of languages that constitute the Creole language, along with the voices of the situated speakers. Roumain’s use of the French language and religious and classical discourses comes in an effort to submit them *to an entirely different objective*, that is, to construct a discourse that represents the life of the community of Fonwouj. What is remarkable is that the French

language and these religious and classical discourses can serve this purpose even when elements of the community are light years away from the employed language and discourses, which, one might consider as situated within the pyramidal hierarchy of world linguistic and human relations. To achieve the clarity of the real, from a Bakhtinian perspective, repeating what others say is not a problem in itself. What matters is whether discourse can be properly situated, that is, filled with the voice and the intentions of the speaker, in this sense, Bakhtin writes:

Such is the fleeting language of a day, of an epoch, a social group, a genre, a school and so forth. It is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language. ...

What is important to us here is the intentional dimensions, that is, the denotative and expressive dimension of the "shared" language's stratification. It is in fact not the neutral linguistic components of language being stratified and differentiated, but rather a situation in which the intentional possibilities of language are being expropriated: these possibilities are realized in specific directions, filled with specific content, they are made concrete, particular, and are permeated with concrete value judgments; they knit together with specific objects and with the belief systems of certain genres of expression and points of view peculiar to particular professions. (Bakhtin, *Discourse* ...p. 272 and 279)

Manuel introduces a series of Spanish concepts, but he uses them in the situated context of the community of Fonwouj. As Hoffman mentions, in Manuel's conversation with his comrade in Fonwouj, Manuel uses Spanish words and ideas such as *huelga*, *qué pasa*, *Viejo*, *alto*, *vamos*, *Haitiano maldito*, *negro de mierda*. Here, Roumain introduces the discourse of Spanish speakers to another context, that of the speech community in which he finds himself. Manuel the speaker transcends, not only geographical delimitations, but also linguistic boundaries by interjecting Spanish words and concepts into the Creole language. While Léon-François Hoffman considers these linguistic constructions as a "deformation"

(see Hoffman 1976 16), they are best analyzed as part of the development of the Creole language and in terms of language re-appropriation, as discussed in the present volume.

In chapter 1, I indicated that encounters such as Manuel's have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the emergence and development of the Creole language – and indeed any other language in different contexts and encounters. In the case of Haiti, as in other settings amenable to language emergence and development, speaking subjects always endeavor to re-appropriate existing linguistic structures by submitting them to their own linguistic codification. Manuel is not just someone who is saying a few words of Spanish to his friend in Fonwouj. He is also a representative figure of the insider and outsider, someone who can approach his community with an emic and etic perspective, a hybrid subject who is nourishing a hybrid language and a hybrid culture. When those new linguistic and cultural resources come into contact with existing structures, the former submits the latter to their own command, and create something anew.

In contrast to dominant languages and cultures that want to claim a utopia of purity and originality, the Creole language and culture has openly welcomed various influences. These are not just rejected, but they are not just accepted passively either. This is why a Spanish word such as *adoquinar* (to pave, to asphalt) becomes in Haitian Creole *adokine* (to pave), and *adokinaj*, a noun meaning the action of paving, and *adoken* (the pieces of brick used to pave a road). Yet, the word *adoken* has come to be used as a widely used word to refer to a coin in circulation in Haiti for the last decade (worth a quarter of a Gourde, the Haitian unit of currency). This association is due to the correspondence in shape between the actual mortar brick used to pave roads and the coin.

It is this dimension of re-appropriation, both in terms of language and discourse, that is at stake in *Masters of the Dew*: “Femme-la dit, mouché, pinga ou touché mouin, pinga-eh”²⁶, (18) is the refrain of a song that a lead singer sings to encourage workers of the *cumbite*. The text is composed of words such as *Femme, la, dit, touché* all of which are intelligible to any French-speaking individual. But, and as Hoffman remarks, Roumain is well aware that a typical French-speaking person might not understand this text without the translation that Roumain provides in a footnote: “*La femme dit: Monsieur, prenez garde – à ne pas me toucher, prenez garde.*” On one hand, this is an example of how Roumain uses the French language to express the discourse of the peasants, and on the other, it is illustrative of how the Creole speakers, as represented by Roumain, re-appropriate the French language to further their cause, in this case, the cause of using their cooperative group to work the land. The same remark can be made for the following part of the lyric: *A tè, m ap mandé ki mounne – qui en de dans caille là – Compè répond: - C’est mouin avec cousine mouin – Assez-é. (19). Mouin en dedans déjà - en l’ai-oh! – Nan point taureau pase – Passé taureau – En l’ai, oh.*²⁷ To make the song intelligible to a French-speaking audience, Roumain makes an effort to translate the lyric as follows: “A Terre – Je demande – Qui est dans la case – Le compère répond: - C’est moi avec ma cousine – Assez, eh. Je suis déjà là dedans - en l’air, oh – il n’y a pas plus taureau - Que le taureau – En l’air, oh!” (19). While the Creole lyrics shows words that may have phonetic, and even syntactic, similarities with the French language, there is no guarantee that the lyric can be intelligible to a French speaking audience. Roumain

26 In current Haitian Creole spelling, this sentence is written as follows: “Fanm nan di mouche a, pinga ou touche mwen, pinga-e.”

27 In current Haitian Creole spelling, this text is written as follows: Atè, m ap mande ki moun ki anndan kay la. Konpè reponn” - “se mwen ak kouzin mwen – ase.” Mwen anndan deja, - anlè o! - nanpwen toro pase toro – anlè o!

understands this quite well when he decides to translate the lyric to French. But even with the translation, a French speaker who is completely foreign to the context of the development of Creole may experience severe difficulty in understanding the text. Roumain is concerned with expressing the social realities of the population he is writing about, and he knows he has to do this through illustrating the Creole discourse in which the people are engaged as they subdued all of the existing social conditions that oppressed them, with language being just one of them.

Hoffman notes that, even when Roumain uses an academic register, the Creole language constitutes the background on which he expresses social realities. As Anselme and Laurélien, two of the characters in the novel, work to prepare Manuel's coffin, Laurélien informs Anselme that the mourners of Manuel's death already strike a song. Roumain reports part of the lyric as follow: "Pa' quel excès de bonté vous vous êtes cha'gé di poids dé nos crimes, vous avez soufflé ine mô crielle pou' nous sauvé dé la mô" (192/195). And, as Delira prepares the logistics for the funeral, Roumain reports this line sung by Manuel's mourners: "C'est maintenant Seigneu', qué vous laissez aller en paix vot' serviteu', selon vot' parole" (193)."

Hoffman signals that a French speaking person with a limited view of the development of the Haitian language might consider such phrases as "accent étranger." Such a view fails to recognize that these phrases re-appropriate the French language to express a Creole discourse, specifically, the cultural schemata that is at work when the community mourns their loved ones. In Hoffman's view "ces adaptations intéressantes du français académique... contribuent à l'haïtianisation du texte" (11). This "Haitianization" of the French language can be found throughout the novel.

Upon Manuel's return to Fonwouj, Roumain describes the daily life routines of a family, as represented in the novel by Bien-Aimé, Délira and Manuel:

Mais la voix excitée du Simidor réveilla. – Bienaimé, ho Bienaimé, il y a des nouvelles, dit-il. – Le vieux bâilla, se frotta les yeux, secoua les cendres de sa pipe. - “Encore des tripotages que tu viens me raconter. Si tes jambes marchaient aussi vite que ta langue, tu ferais la route d'icitte à Port-au-Prince en un clin d'oeil” (114, 115).

A French person without knowledge of the local social milieu might argue that this text is written in perfect French syntax. In fact, the word “Simidor” is culturally loaded. Roumain writes it with a capital letter *S*, indicating it is a proper noun of a person. But the definite determiner ‘*de le*’ is abbreviated as ‘*du*,’ and that determines “Simidor” as “la voix excitée du Simidor,” something that might pose a serious challenge for a French speaking person who doesn't know the milieu. “Simidor” is the name used to refer to those who usually initiate songs in *combite* or any other social events in the rural area of Haiti. In this case the word could be considered as an equivalent to ‘lead singer’ to some extent, in which case it would be a common noun for a person. Roumain writes the word with a capital letter *S* to indicate that the community gives the name of “Simidor” to this particular person probably in reference to his intense activity as lead singer in social events such as konbit, or funeral. In fact, a musical group interpreting Haitian rural songs even calls itself “Choeur Simdor”²⁸.

Another word in this paragraph that deserves consideration is “tripotages,” as in the sentence “Encore des tripotages que tu viens me raconter.” The famous French dictionary Le Grand Robert offers the following meaning with regard to the word “tripotage”: “*Mélange de choses disparates, action de mélanger diverses choses, arrangement, combinaison louche, Fricotage, intrigue, magouille, manigance, trafic, tripatouillage, action de manier, de toucher (qqch.) avec insistance.*” None of them have anything to do with the way Roumain

28 One of the song by this group can be seen on youtube.com at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ALP7w3nrjY>.

uses the word in this text of his novel. One needs to share in Roumain's efforts at capturing the reality of the community, or the cultural context in which a Haitian speaker might use this word, *even when speaking French*, to understand that Roumain uses the word "tripotage" here to express the social realities of the community who uses this word to refer to the action of gossiping. The person that the community names "Simidor" is not just someone who breaks into song at social events in town, it is also someone who sticks his nose in people's personal business frequently as a way to compile materials for his songs. These songs serve to warm up workers when there is a *konbit*, and caress the artistic taste of those who participate in social events. Roumain similarly re-appropriates the French language to express the Creole social realities of Fonwouj throughout the novel.

Roumain's work is applicable beyond Fonwouj. Roumain undertakes a series of esthetic moves that place his work among other classics of world literature, as well as in terms of what scholars such as Walter Mignolo (2002) and Carl E. Pletsch (1981) refer to as the "geopolitics of knowledge." In fact, if we agree with P. Jorel François that "*Gouverneurs de la Rosée* a quelque chose qui rappelle le tragique classique. Il y prend place..." (53), stating that "il est en quelque sorte le rejeu d'un Oedipe-Roi" (53), may be seen as a statement that falls within what scholars such as De Sousa Santos and Boaventura refer to as "abyssal thinking." In outlining his view of "abyssal thinking" in his article *Beyond abyssal thinking: From global lines to ecologies of knowledge*, De Sousa Santos argues:

Modern Western thinking is an abyssal thinking. It consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of "this side of the line" and the realm of "the other side of the line". The division is such that "the other side of the line" vanishes as reality becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent. Nonexistent means not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being. Whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of

what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other. What most fundamentally characterizes abyssal thinking is thus the impossibility of the co-presence of the two sides of the line. To the extent that it prevails, this side of the line only prevails by exhausting the field of relevant reality. Beyond it, there is only nonexistence, invisibility, non-dialectical absence. (2007 1).

Likewise, Mignolo expands on Carl E. Plutsch's notion of "geopolitics of knowledge" to signify the tendency to reduce any type of worthwhile and legitimated knowledge production as the exclusive privilege of the western world. "The world became unthinkable beyond European (and, later, North Atlantic) epistemology. The colonial difference marked the limits of thinking and theorizing, unless modern epistemology (philosophy, social sciences, natural sciences) was exported/imported to those places where thinking was impossible (because it was folklore, magic, wisdom, and the like)" (Mignolo, 2002 91). Instead, Mignolo surmises "An other logic (or border thinking from the perspective of subalternity) goes with a geopolitics of knowledge that regionalizes the fundamental European legacy, locating thinking in the colonial difference and creating the conditions for diversality as a universal project" (2002 91). This "other logic" is warranted given the need to consider any work of production of knowledge produce originated from any part of the world.

Works such as Roumain's *Masters of the Dew* tend to be considered as "Third world" literature (Arnold 1979 8) or as a peasant novel (Celucien Joseph 324). It is a work that exposes the way human beings deal with fatality. Roumain does so through a particular setting with a particular set of language practices and social realities that reverberate the history of colonialism considering that the Creole language is itself a produce of colonial encounters. In addition to the work's practical relevance for the country he is writing about, the work can also illustrate what a context may look like after 300 years of colonization and

over 200 years of coloniality, understood as reverberating colonial practices in the life of colonized subjects and in social relations between descendants of former colonialists and former colonized or enslaved subjects (see Quijano, 2000, Mignolo, 2003 among others for an expanded definition of this concept). Seeing the work of Roumain as a “rejeu d’un Oedipe-Roi” (Jorel François 53), and considering it as Third World literature or a “peasant novel” may fall within an epistemological conception of a “geopolitics of knowledge” and “abyssal thinking” that harbor “the impossibility of the co-presence of the two sides of the line” (De Sousa Santos, 2007 1): the West and the Rest as Pierre Orelus (2007) would have it. *Masters of the Dew* is not just about Fonwouj, and not just about Manuel, Delira, Bienaimé, Sauveur, Doriska, etc. This community, along with the characters that Roumain presents in this novel, is representative of human beings in the midst of an existential crisis, a crisis that is informed by history. There is nothing essential about Fonwouj or any of Roumain’s characters in this plot, that is to say nothing that could make them stand in sharp contrast with a community of human beings. With the same history, Fonwouj could as well be located anywhere in any of our five continents. In this case, statements such as “c’est le propre du nègre de ne pas accepter le Malheur” (Joseph 57) needs to be rearticulated to include the human species, who always struggles against meaningless and oppressive conditions of life.

The critics are divided among those who think *Masters of the Dew* is primarily a work of social realism, an exemplar of a Marxist novel, a reenactment of biblical stories, a work of mysticism, or a novel that portrays the way human beings deal with suffering. We do not discount these viewpoints, but it is important to recognize that the novel is also an archetypal effort of re-appropriation of language and of discourses.

As stated earlier, the work of re-appropriation in *Masters of the Dew* concerns both language and discourse. We have shown this work of re-appropriation at the level of language. We now turn our attention to how this work of re-appropriation operates at the level of discourse.

Re-appropriation of Religious Discourses

Scholars (e.g. Célucien Joseph) tend to impose on Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* a religious rejuvenation in the community. Manuel is even portrayed as a "peasant-redeemer and Christ-like figure" (Célucien Joseph, 331), "l'Emmanuel Biblique" (Marie-lise Gazarlan-Gauthier, cited in Stephen Arnold, 7). What seems to be left out in all of these considerations is that the aesthetic value Roumain's *Masters of the Dew* must also be appreciated as a work that re-appropriates a series of discourses. We could cite religious discourses, discourse of classism, and European-based discourses of Marxism. But we limit our discussion to the re-appropriation of religious discourses and the discourses of classism as Roumain endeavors to depict the social reality of the community of Fonwouj.

Any careful reader familiar with the discourse of Christianity could confirm that *Masters of the Dew* makes ample references to religion, whether implicitly or explicitly. But unlike some critics, who see in these references an allegiance to Christianity, we see instead such discourses as part of a series of literary devices that Roumain uses to expose the social reality of the community. Religious, or indeed any other type of discourse Roumain refers to, are but stepping stones that allow him to carry out his task of representing the social reality of the community through discursive re-appropriation.

Joseph (2013) establishes several parallels between Manuel and Jesus that can instead be considered as part of this work of re-appropriation. Manuel's singular drive to find water leads him to state to his co-villager Laurelien that "there was only one road and a straight

one” (Trans. Hughes and Cook, 59). Joseph (2013) parallels this statement with one by Jesus to his disciple reported in John 14. 6 and 10.7 describing Jesus’ own unique positioning: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” and “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.” While, as Joseph points out, Roumain’s discourse may syntactically resemble that of biblical discourse, the two statements have important differences that should not be overlooked. Where Jesus was declaring his teaching and faith as the singular road to heavenly reward, in *Masters of the Dew* Manuel claims his direction as the only means beyond the very real and mundane crises affecting the material existence of the community of Fonwouj. Whether consciously or not, the novel *Masters of the Dew* reflects the author’s understanding that “the criticism of heaven is transformed into the criticism of earth, the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics” (Marx, 54).

There is no palpable allegiance to biblical discourse when Manuel tells Laurélien “there is? only one road.” The road that Manuel refers to has to do with his knowledge of the social milieu. This statement comes out of a series of interactions Manuel has with his co-villager Laurélien. Observing that “the water has dried up in the very entrails of the mountain” (Roumain, Trans. Hughes and Cook, 58), Manuel expresses his anger at his friend Laurélien because Laurélien (and other villagers) have engaged in deforestation. The embarrassed Laurélien has to admit that they have indeed cut down many trees. Roumain shows us that Laurélien tries to divert Manuel’s attention from the problem by inviting him to participate in a cockfight, but Manuel “had only one thing on his mind” (59), namely, how to solve the problems associated with drought, which he says in a serious tone of voice is an issue of utmost importance. It is at this moment that Manuel informs Laurélien that, after mulling over the problem, he has realized that the only way to address the problem is by finding ways

to irrigate the land and stop relying on the whims of the rainy season. Manuel's is an earthly mission that consists of raising the community's awareness that they have no divine redeemer to rely on, and that the only salvation lies in knowing that they are part of the problem, which is a *sine qua non* to find possible solutions.

In fact, one wonders if the Langston and Hughes' (1988) translation on which Joseph (2003) drew to establish a relationship between Jesus and Manuel's statements even captures Roumain's idea. Recall that the original French version of the statement "there was only one road and a straight one" is "il n'y avait qu'un chemin et tout drète: faut chercher l'eau" (Roumain, 1944: 60). But note that this is only part of the sentence. We can best assess Manuel's statement by referring to the full sentence "Plus j'examinais la chose dans ma tête, plus je voyais qu'il n'y avait qu'un chemin et tout drète: faut chercher l'eau." An alternate English translation to that of Langston and Hughes' (1988) could be "The more I thought about it, the more I realized that there is only one good way to deal with the problem of the community: we need to locate a water source." Indeed, Maud Heurtelou (2000) provides the following Creole translation: "Afè dlo a se kle pou rezoud pwoblèm Fonwouj" (34), which could be translated into English as "the issue of water is key to solving the problems we have in Fonwouj."

Manuel's statement reflects his awareness of the problems facing his milieu. The focus on "water" as the only way to solve the problem of the community invokes a rich semantics of interpretation. The ramifications of 'water' in general are many: If they can find water to irrigate the crops, people will have food, and there will be enough food to bring to the market in exchange for financial resources that can be used to send kids to school. In turn, sending kids to school is a way to diminish illiteracy, poverty, and powerlessness. More importantly,

water plays a central role in the search for unity in the community. If the community is able to find unity around a common cause, it is very likely they might be able to continue looking for ways to address other problems they face.

Thus Joseph's parallel between Manuel's statement and that of Jesus is unconvincing. If Roumain uses a biblical syntax, it is best analyzed in terms of a re-appropriation of a religious discourse to better expose the social reality of the characters he sets to depict in his novel. Indeed, referencing a Christian discourse could be a more direct way to reach and interact with this group. Based on its over 2000 years of history, the discourse of Christianity tends to reproduce itself tacitly, and even enjoys a level of legitimacy that often goes unchallenged in diverse social settings.

More generally, *Masters of the Dew* makes frequent references to concepts and sentences that evoke religion, including Vodou and Christianity. But the texture of the novel does not allow us to confirm any direct allegiance to religion. In an attempt to depict the life of the community of Fonwouj, Roumain engages in some literary creativity that allows him to re-appropriate diverse discourses and submit them to the law of his writing. Parallels with religious discourse could extend, beyond the biblical discourse already mentioned, to references to Vodou and Christianity throughout the text. But this is done for the same entirely different objective, that of depicting the social reality of the community of Fonwouj. For example, Emmanuel talks like someone with an aura, a voice that is not heard frequently, a voice that does not let itself be limited by the critical appearance of poverty in the community. This makes him resemble someone who is more than human. Yet Roumain presents us with a character that is as human as other villagers, who is realistic, both in terms of understanding the problems they are facing and in their human capacity to overcome them.

This does not need be a Jesus from Nazareth, and it does not need to be someone walking on water. Even when Roumain makes reference to Vodou in the novel, it is a way to better depict the life of the community. He mentions the Vodou ceremonies organized by Delira and Bienaimé, Manuel's parents, and sometimes Manuel's adherence to some rituals. But Roumain downplays the role of Vodou in the misery of the community throughout the novel. The social reality of the community and their role in it is what is at stake in Roumain's writing. When Manuel dies, it is not a Vodou curse that kills him, neither any sort of spirit, but rather a physical object wielded by Jervilien. The Vodou spirits that Delira and Bienaimé invoked did not intervene when Manuel found himself on the border of life and death in the hands of Delira, whose tears were mixed with the blood of his son.

Roumain's re-appropriation of discourse is also applied to the discourse on classicism. Roumain may have allowed Manuel to die tragically, but this death is not an end in itself, nor does it quite parallel classic Greek tragedies, which usually depict heroes who are powerless in the face of certain forces that intervene in their lives, such as oracles and supernatural forces directed by the gods. The heroes often face circumstances they cannot overcome. The fact that their implacable fatality is beyond their stamina as human beings to resist constitutes the background against which the plays of Greek tragedy are typically assessed.

An analysis of Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* does not rely on such direct intervention of supernatural forces in the life of the community of Fonwouj. Roumain not only makes the agents of the community accountable for their suffering, he also puts them at the center of any possibility for this community to find a way out of their plight. The novel does not end with the death of Manuel. And, as he succumbs to the wounds of Jervilien's knife, Manuel does not let himself become deterred by his suffering and the tears from his mother's eyes. Instead, he takes leave of the community with the delivery of a unifying message that would be instrumental in bringing water to the farms:

If you send word to Hilarion, then that old Sauveur-Dorisca story will start all over

again – hate and revenge will live on among the peasants. The water will be lost. You’ve offered sacrifices to the loas. The blood of chickens and young goats you’ve offered to make the rain fall. That hasn’t done any good – because what counts is the sacrifice of a man. The blood of a man. Go see Larivoire. Tell him the will of my blood that’s been shed – reconciliation – reconciliation – so that life can start all over again, so that day can break on the dew (Roumain, Trans. Langston and Hughes, 158).

By the end of the novel, we as readers realize that the death of Manuel was only part of a process that should lead to unity in the community. Thus, any reference to either religious discourse or Greek tragedies can be best analyzed in terms of a re-appropriation of such discourses to a radically different finality. Contrary to the death of the biblical Man-God Emmanuel-Jesus, portrayed as a way to offer salvation and access to heaven to believers, the death of the very mortal Manuel is represented as a way to unite the whole community of Fonwouj so that it can overcome its misery and work toward more decent living conditions. The work of re-appropriation is elegantly articulated by Jorel François who maintains “si Gouverneurs de la rosée semble être une reprise de la tragédie grecque, il est aussi un dépassement” (2007, 57). The following paragraph from the work of Jorel François is also worth quoting here:

Le roman veut dépasser le tragique grec par cette volonté manifeste du héros de contrer la fatalité, de la défier, d’en avoir le dessus et de l’avoir effectivement. “C’est le propre [...] di nègre de ne pas accepter le Malheur.” Manuel lève le poing. Organize l’unité et la rébellion contre l’inacceptable. Il refuse de lâcher prise, de baisser les bras et se laisser faire. Il brave le destin, se rebiffe contre la mentalité fataliste du milieu. Quitte à y laisser sa vie. “Ce qui compte [...] c’est la rébellion, et la connaissance que l’homme est le Boulanger de la vie.” Les sueurs du nègre et son courage peuvent triompher des obstacles. La main tendue peut servir de passerelle pour surmonter ce que l’on croyait jusque-là insurmountable. Ce qui compte, ce n’est pas le sang des poulets, des cabris, mais le sacrifice de l’homme, le sang verse du nègre. Son engagement. Sa rébellion. Pour la réconciliation. Pour la vie. Parce qu’il faut sauver l’eau. La terre. Les hommes. Tous les hommes. (57).

Conclusion

While Roumain wrote *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* in French and made reference to multiple academic registers and religion-related discourses, the novel remains fundamentally a novel textured with Creole discourses. To fail to notice the fundamental presence of Creole discourses in the novel would miss an important aspect of the novel – that *Masters of the Dew* is a work of dual-re-appropriation. The novel, on one hand, is a re-appropriation of language in which Roumain uses the French language to further the cause of Creole speakers and to express the desiderata of a Creole community. On the other hand, it employs a re-appropriation of religious and classical discourses that allow Roumain to express the social reality of the community he sets to depict – this also is accomplished through language re-appropriation. The novel is in French, but it is also an exemplar of an author who carries the sufferings of the community in his writing. As Hoffman suggests “celui qui signe Jacques Roumain, c’est un romancier qui fait honneur à la littérature de langue française, mais ne serait-ce pas aussi un habitant en guenilles, qui souffre avec les siens et qui rumine leur rancœur” (1976 22).

CHAPTER 7

Language re-appropriation, identity and *alterité* (otherness) in the contemporary francophone novel: the case of Chamoiseau's *Texaco*

In his “Chamoiseau’s Articulation of Creole Identity,” Adlai Murdoch asserts, “The history of communal intersubjectivity that forms the core of the narrative [...] produce these creolized patterns of Caribbean identity that are both French and West Indian” (318). Murdoch also thinks that “It is here too, especially, that the variations of speech and language that act as signifiers of race, culture and class are recorded and rewritten into oppositional ordinances of difference and disorder” (318). This chapter extends Murdoch’s contentions regarding language and Caribbean identity by inscribing them into the frame of language re-appropriation that this work has elaborated. Chamoiseau re-appropriates the French language to express the Creole identity of Caribbean subjects as being textured with pluralism. This chapter endeavors to outline the way Chamoiseau accomplishes this, and the significance of his work for our understanding of the tensions surrounding language in the francophone Caribbean region.

A close reading of the work of Chamoiseau might suggest that one of the main differences between the Caribbean subject and the European /French subject (to whom the latter is often compared) is the very recognition of a pluralist identity. The former does accept or at least intends to develop an understanding of such pluralism, to some extent, whereas it is doubtful that it is the case for the latter. The Caribbean subjects possesses an identity that is not reducible to European/French, and in this case, challenges the European French’s view according to which Caribbean subjects are deficient, as a renown French thinker such as l’Abbé Grégoire would imply. Recall that l’Abbé Grégoire considered the language of the

francophone Caribbean region (along with the local languages of France) as “maladies de pauvres,” and declared their speaking subjects as ‘contaminated’ by these ‘maladies.’ Such subjects were described as “sous-hommes” that France tried to turn into ‘hommes,’ ironically, by stamping them with hot iron, their mark as properties of the ‘real men.’ This is to some extent representative of the mind set that informs the European/French ways of thinking about francophone Caribbean speaking subjects right around the matured enlightenment period: The report of l’Abbé Grégoire was produced in 1794 and we owe to the period of 1650-1780 the famous period of ‘light’ that germinated in part the Revolution of 1789 and that precedes the period of Romanticism. The work of Chamoiseau can be conceived as a counter-discourse against this language of deficit outlined in l’Abbé Grégoire’s statement and his contemporary representatives and adherents. Far from being a ‘maladie de pauvres,’ the language and identity of francophone Caribbean-speaking subjects are best analyzed in terms of their pluralism – a pluralism manifested both in terms of identity and the Creole language. Chamoiseau engages in a re-appropriation of the French language to depict the identity of the francophone Caribbean subject. The primary mode of expression of these subjects is analyzed under the dominant theme of pluralism, one that goes counter to the notion of a utopian monolithic identity that so often harbors the supremacy of one group’s ways of thinking, being, and speaking over another group deemed as deficient.

While *Texaco* may be admired as a beautifully written French novel that received the Prix Goncourt, its significance here lies in its function as a work through which Chamoiseau re-appropriates the French language to express a Creole discourse. In doing so, *Texaco* arguably allows Chamoiseau to build an edifice of Creole that is available to, and widely read by, the French speaking community. One might argue that the city of Texaco itself is

deliberately constructed as a Creole city. This edifice of Creole is represented at a broad level in *Texaco* in phrases such as “la ville créole parle en secret un langage neuf,” “la ville créole restitue à l’urbaniste qui voudrait l’oublier les souches d’une identité neuve” (243), “dans la ville créole la violence frappe plus qu’ailleurs” (166). Parallel to these more conceptual depictions, Chamoiseau engages, as stated, in more micro-linguistic constructions. As was the case for Jacques Roumain’s *Masters of the Dew*, Chamoiseau uses the French language to express the Creole discourse of his Creole characters. As Marie-José N’Zengou-Tayo indicates, Chamoiseau accomplishes this linguistically using lexical devices such as suffixation, agglutination, and truncation in addition to syntactical constructions, both involved in a process of language re-appropriation.

At the very beginning of the novel, the reader encounters words such as “instructionné,” as in the sentence “J’aurais pu raconter en cinémascope cette histoire d’amour entre le laïque instructionné et la dame Etoilus qui de l’alphabet ignorait mêmes les blancs entre les vingt-six lettres, mais le détour serait risqué” (24).

Le Grand Robert de la Langue Française does not have an entry for the word “instructionné.” This dictionary includes words such as “instructeur, instruction, instructif, instructivement, instruire, instruit, s’instruire,” but not “instructionné.” The electronic version of this dictionary says “instructionner: ce mot n’est pas présent dans le dictionnaire.” While etymologically the word is from Latin (instructor, instructum, instruere) and came to Creole through French, a Creole speaker would use the word “instructionné”²⁹ to refer to an educated person, but a French-speaking person would not use the term in this sense.

²⁹ The Creole spelling of the word would be ‘enstriksiyone, at least in Haiti.’

In the same paragraph, Chamoiseau writes “‘Son père, ...détruisit sa carrière dans une tranchée française de la guerre quatorze où pièce d’entre nous ne l’avait envoyé” (24). The word that attracts our attention in this sentence is “pièce.” While this word is found in the French dictionary, the way it is defined in the dictionary diverges completely from the way Chamoiseau uses it in this sentence, and the way it is generally used in Creole. Some of the meanings that the French dictionary chronicles in reference to the word “pièce” include “partie séparée d’un tout ou division, objet brisé, morceau, portion, meuble, élément d’une collection, pièce de terre, pièce d’eau, pièce de vin, pièce de monnaie, pièce d’artillerie, pièce de théâtre.” But the word “pièce³⁰” that Chamoiseau uses in “...pièce d’entre nous ne l’avait envoyé” (24) negates the group of words “d’entre nous.” The word is used in this sense in Creole to negate what it determines, or what follows it. We find it in sentences such as *pyès moun pa vini* (no one shows up), *pyès ladan yo pa bon* (none of them is good), *pyès moun p ap dakò avèk pawòl sa a*³¹ (no one will agree with this talk).

We find sentences including the word “pièce” throughout the novel: “ses lèvres ne pesaient pièce parole...” (50), Chamoiseau writes in regard to “the man who was to die in the dungeon in the full light of laundry-day” (Trans. Rejouis and Vinokurov; 1997, 39). We also find it in “Il n’imagina pièce un seul instant que ce phénomène se poursuivrait au-delà de sa mort...” (83), “ce n’est pièce pas pour cette seule raison” (97), and “Il ne voulait pièce pas rejoindre” ceux qui bavaient dans de nouveaux hospices...” (137), which Chamoiseau writes in reference to Esternome. For its usage in “Là-haut, les békés n’avaient pièce griffe en terre” (138), Chamoiseau writes in reference to the division of labor in the colonies. It appears in

³⁰ The Creole spelling of the word “pièce” is *pyès*, at least in Haiti. The word *pyès* is also used in many other contexts in Creole: *pyès machine* (auto parts), *pyès fanm* (a type of woman), *pyès gason* (a gigantic man), *pyès kay* (a room in a house), etc.

“Sans pièce odeur que celle des cannes à eau” (140), which Chamoiseau writes in the Notebook of Marie Sophie Laborieux, and it is found in “Pièce nèg n’ambitionnait de suer au lieu des anciennes chaines,” written in reference to the post-slavery narrative of Marie Sophie. This discourse shows how Chamoiseau exemplifies how the Creole-speaking speech community engages in linguistic creative acts using the Creole language, allowing them to use existing linguistic resources to shape their newly created and constantly evolving language.

Writing about Sonore, a character who travels back and forth between l’En-ville and Texaco to maintain basic subsistence, Chamoiseau states “Le jour, elle gagnait l’En-ville vers des djobs de ménage dans des hotels compatissants” (26). The Creole word ‘djob’ is a re-appropriation of the English word ‘job.’ French speakers may use the word ‘jobs,’ but it is also a re-appropriation of the English word ‘job.’ One might argue that both French and Creole take the word from the same source. The New Oxford American Dictionary English compiled by Apple Inc. states that the word ‘job’ made it to English around the mid 16th century from unknown source. So the word “djob” in “des djobs de ménage dans des hotels compatissants” (Chamoiseau 26) serves as a typical Creole word that Chamoiseau uses while expanding its French literary discourse of the Creole city of *Texaco*. In fact, as elaborated later in this chapter, it is not too far a stretch of the imagination to argue that Chamoiseau’s depiction of Sonore’s trajectory between l’En-ville and Texaco may represent the trajectory between everything French and everything Creole, that is, the constant *va-et-vient* between French and Creole worlds. Thus “elle gagnait l’En-ville vers des djobs de ménage dans des hotels compatissants” (26) could be interpreted as constructing a Creole individual produced or engendered by the encounter between French and African worlds and navigating a Creole

and French world to survive. To his credit, Chamoiseau depicts in French a context that is primarily a Creole context, and he tries as much as possible to capture this binary of French language and Creole discourse through the speech of his characters.

A discourse analysis of the linguistic corpus of the novel serves to illustrate the distribution of the language choice by the author. Factors such as its chosen addressees and /or the addressors of messages, for example, can serve this purpose. As part of this distribution of language choice, the author tends to use Creole-like structures when reporting an idea or an event that relates to the language practices of the Creole speech community even if what he is saying is in French. “Et de sa main il avait apposé une la-croix” (59), Chamoiseau writes in reporting the act or text produced by the Béké who is freeing Esternome, his enslaved subject. Concepts such as “la-croix” are part of the linguistic constructions of the Creole language whereby the speaker agglutinates two or more parts of speech to create a new concept or word. In “la-croix” Chamoiseau agglutinates a determiner “la” and a noun “croix” to create the noun “la-croix,” which he indeed used as a noun by using the French determiner “une” to determine the word “la-croix.” The French language would not use both the indefinite determiner “une” and the definite determiner “la” to produce the nominal group “une la-croix.” Such linguistic structure does exist in Creole as in the word “lari” (street) that is etymologically constituted of the French determiner “la” and the French noun “rue.” In the case of “la-croix,” once re-appropriated, the Creole spelling of this word would be “lakwa” and if the context requires the speaker to adjoin a Creole determiner to this noun, the nominal group would become *lakwa a*. The “a” at the end exemplifies one of the five determiners that are used in Creole (a, an, la, lan, nan) depending on the ending sound of the preceding word. In the case of *lakwa a*, the determiner “a” is used

because the word *lakwa* ends with an oral vowel as opposed to words such as *kabann* (bed), *tann* (to wait) that end with nasal consonant and that require the determiner *nan*, or words such as *sen an* (the saint), *pen an* (the bread), *ban an* (the bench) where the nasal vowels *en* and *an* required the use of the determiner *an*.

Likewise, we see re-appropriation at work in the polysemic characteristic of the text, for example, in Chamoiseau's linguistic choice to use words such as *bitation* and *habitation*, the former being a Creole re-appropriated form of the latter French word. Arguably, the author seems to be more inclined to using the word "bitation" in contexts where he is reporting something that is articulated by a Creole speaker or closely related to what such speaker would say. In reference to Esternome, one of Chamoiseau's characters who got tired of plantation life following the death of his father, whose corpse has been burned, the author writes: "il décida de fuir cette bitation de merde" (61). Later, he uses the word "bitation" in the sentence "Il m'est toujours difficile d'imaginer la Force esclave sur une bitation" (63) in Esternome's description of the "Mentô" of the plantation in the "Sermon de Marie-Sophie Laborieux." Illustrating the subverted plantation life, Chamoiseau writes "il y avait aussi des nègres en marronage au milieu même des bitations" (63). We find the word "bitation" also in the sentences "Les campêches commençaient à manger les sillons quand deux-trois bandes d'on ne sait quelle qualité de nègres avaient fondu sur la bitation" (119) and "il fit trois pas devant, trois pas sur les côtés, puis regagna la bitation sous le coup d'une rage sourde" (120), when Marie Sophie Laborieux discusses the experience of her father Esternome on the plantation. Yet, in making specific references to a plantation in Guadeloupe, Chamoiseau writes "...et puis propriétaire ruiné d'une bitation-goyage" dans un trou de Guadeloupe" (68). In reference to the period of plantation itself, Chamoiseau writes "...il marchait des

prières que l'abbé du dimanche lui avait enseignées au temps des bitations" (171). Talking about the békés et leurs plantations, Chamoiseau writes "Les békés avaient vu couler leurs bitations" (155).

These usages of the word "bitation" differ from the use of the word "habitation" that we find in sentences such as "Des koulis se pendaient aux branches des acacias dans les habitations qu'ils incendiaient" (43), which Chamoiseau writes in reference to the burning of the plantations. We find it also in sentences such as "Comme ça, ils contrariaient l'injuste prospérité de ces habitations dans cette chaux de douleurs" (45) referring to the healers on the plantations, "Que peut-on contre la force des hommes de force? Les bêtes continuaient à mourir, les enfants à ne pas naître, les habitations à trembloter" (46) referring to the life of agony on the plantations. The subtleties of the use of "bitation" and "habitation" call to mind the language choices of the author, but they are also reminiscent of the language tensions in francophone Caribbean region, particularly in Haiti where intellectuals engage very often in such code-switching.

In other places in the novel, Chamoiseau deliberately uses words or concepts that are typical of the Creole language. Several times in the novel we find words such as "mitan," a very common Creole word that came from old French. Although it is found in the French dictionary *Le Grand Robert*, it is not a commonly used word in contemporary French. Chamoiseau uses it in sentences such as "il y avait aussi des nègres en marronage au mitan même des bitations" (63) in reference to the subverted plantation life. We find this word in other sentences in the novel, such as "Echappé au mitan du Malheur [...] le Mentô préservait nos restes d'humanité (64), said by Marie Sophie about her father Esternome; in "je croyais le découvrir au mitan du désastre," (168), found in the Sermon de Marie Sophie. Other

concepts that constitute the background mosaic of Creole for the novel *Texaco* include “Koudmen,” as in the sentence “un koudmen à telle heure, une faveur s’il te plait” (150), which Chamoiseau uses to refer to the cooperative life in the colony; “bagailles,” as in “Sous les effets de lune, plein de bagailles se levaient tout partout” (174), from the Sermon of Marie Sophie; the term “manman Dlo,” as in the sentence “Tu as vu manman Dlo” (175), in reference to fairy tales about water in the Caribbean region. Another Creole concept we find in the text that includes the term “manman” is “sans manman,” as in the sentence “Là, le carnaval dégénéra en émeute sans manman” (114), which refers to the violence that sometimes erupts during carnival.

Beyond using Creole terms like these, Chamoiseau sometimes integrates entire Creole sentences in the middle of French text: “Prédié ba papa’w ich mwen” (48) is what the mother, identified by Chamoiseau as “Grand-Manman Blanchisseuse,” said in asking her son to pray for his father. Chamoiseau reports an interaction between “Grand-Manman Blanchisseuse” and “the man who was to die in the dungeon in the full light of laundry-day” (Trans. Rejouis and Vinokurov; 1997, 39), in which the former articulates the Creole phrase “kouman ou pa travay” (51) [so how is that you don’t work (Trans. Rejouis and Vinokurov; 1997, 39)] to which the later replies “Man ka bat an djoumbak la” (51) [I haven’t left work (Trans. Rejouis and Vinokurov; 1997, 39)]. Interactions as these are representative of the intra group discourse of the Creole speech community that “Grand-Manman Blanchisseuse” and “the man who was to die in the dungeon in the full light of laundry-day” represent.

Other hybrid sentences we find in the novel include “Livrés à la mendicité, ceux-là erraient en peine, dormaient au fond des bois dessous des ajoupas, mangeaient des zabitans sans même un tac de sel” (80). In this sentence, the word ‘zabitans’ is a Creole word

reconstructed from the French plural determiner ‘les’ and the plural noun ‘habitants,’ and the expression “tac de sel” is also a Creole expression indicating a bit of salt. We find also the sentences “Enfin, avec presque une eau blanche dans la voix, elle lui donna, Ich mwen souplé pa pouézonné pon moune” (69), where the mother asks the son not to poison others; “qui ne tête pas manman devait têter papa” (135), a proverb; “Ki leta nou Jodi?” by Ninon, who interrogates their life conditions; and “Yo pa ba nou’y fou’t! Sé nou ki pran’y” (142), appearing in the Notebook of Marie Sophie Laborieux as part of her talk on liberty.

The use of sentences as these in the text attract the attention of critiques such as those of Marie-José N’Zengou-Tayo (1996) and Pascale Desouza (1995) who classify the use of Creole in *Texaco* in terms of “citation, integration, et créolisation” (161). N’Zengou-Tayo thinks that “quand l’auteur rapporte les paroles de personnages créolophones, la phrase creole est mise en italiques et suivie de sa traduction française” (161). N’Zengou-Tayo and Desouza argue that these citations allow the author to convey “un effet d’écho qui contribue, [...] à renforcer son message” (161). In this sense, N’Zengou-Tayo remarks that Chamoiseau does not translate into French certain Creole sentences such as the proverb “sa ki pa bon pou zwa, pa pe bon pou kanna” (Chamoiseau, 108), words reported from a fairy tale “mi ta’w, mi ta mwen, mi ta’w mi mi ta mwen” (Chamoiseau, 126), and Creole sentences used as an insult “Alé koké manman zòt” (Chamoiseau, 127). According to N’Zengou-Tayo, when Chamoiseau offers the translation “Madame Ibo, qu’est-ce que c’était dites donc eh bien bon dieu...” (Chamoiseau, 111; cited in N’Zengou-Tayo, 161) to the Creole sentence “Man Ibo Man ho Ibo sa ta la te ye” (Chamoiseau, 111; cited in N’Zengou-Tayo, 161), which N’Zengou-Tayo thinks could be literally translated as “Hé Mère Ibo, Mère Ibo: qu’est-ce que

c'était?" (161), this linguistic choice illustrates "une volonté de souligner l'écart entre les deux langues" (161) existing between French and Creole.

In addition to these examples of the linguistic re-appropriation of the Creole speakers on the one hand and the re-appropriation, by the author, of the French language to express the Creole discourse, Chamoiseau embarks in his own linguistic constructions that are in fact a mimesis of the linguistic creative acts of the Creole speech community, acts born of a particular colonial legacy. We find, for example, the word play involved in the use of the terms *l'estravaille*, *l'esclavage*, *l'estravaille*, *lestravaille*: "ils disaient avec leurs mots: "l'esclavage. Pour nous c'était entendre: l'estravaille. Quand ils le surent et dirent à leur tour lestravaille pour nous parler en proximité, nous avons déjà raccourci l'affaire sur l'idée de travail (58). We find the same concepts *l'esclavage* and *lestravaille* in the sentence "L'esclavage, ou lestravay était aboli, ho Mari-so" (115) where Chamoiseau shows how the existence of enslaved subjects were reduced completely to the labor that they had to produce.

Chamoiseau's *Texaco* fits squarely within the dynamics of Creole linguistic creative acts engaged since the very inception of this language on the colonial plantations. While the categories of "citation, integration, et créolisation" (161) of Desouza (1995) and N'Zengou-Tayo (1995, and the suffixation, agglutination, and truncation of N'Zengou-Tayo (164) contribute to the development of the Creole language exemplified in *Texaco*, the language is not limited to these linguistic constructions. In addition, as we have seen in chapter 2, the development of Creole has been informed by language appropriation and language re-appropriation.

The formation of Creole also involves aphaeresis, as in the case of the use of the word 'caba' (finish) based on the Spanish word 'acabar.' It uses apocope, in the case of the

Creole word *janm* (never) from the French word *jamais*; Also employed is epenthesis, as in the case of the Creole word ‘*zafè*’ that is based on the French word ‘*affaire*,’ and methathesis, as in the case of the Creole word *talè* (later) based on the French concept *tout à l’heure*. Further, it uses prosthesis, as in the case of the Creole word *rayi*³² based on the French word *hair* (see Marie-Therese Archer, 1988 377-382 for further development of these notions).

As a human phenomenon, the development of the Creole language cannot reduce to these few itemized linguistic techniques. These aspects of language development are part of a larger framework of linguistic creative acts occurring with language change and language creation. The work of Chamoiseau illustrates but part of this framework.

Some interpretations of the language in *Texaco* by N’Zengou-Tayo deserve attention for highlighting certain unique linguistic representations that perhaps illustrate the broader Creole framework in which Chamoiseau may have engaged. Referring to some Creole-like structures that are present in *Texaco*, N’Zengou-Tayo makes some interpretations that are not in line with what we consider as typical Creole creative linguistic acts of re-appropriating existing linguistic structures. N’Zengou-Tayo pinpoints the use of the concept “baggage” in “*Bagage bizarre, l’habitation était pour lui devenue une sorte de havre* (Chamoiseau 61) and “*ces deux mots portaient le même baggage* (Chamoiseau 85) and argues that such usage represents a linguistic artifice that Chamoiseau uses to “*brouiller les pistes*” (N’Zengou-Tayo 163). In reference to the presence of suffixation (i.e. *instructionné*, *haillonné*), agglutination (*nègresclaves*), and truncation (*bitation*), N’Zengou-Tayo argues it is difficult to know if they are authentic Creole structures, or if they are forged by Chamoiseau based on his exploitation of the derivational potential of the French language (164). Likewise, N’Zengou-Tayo’s

³² Marie-Therese Archer writes this word as *r-ayi* to account for the rule of prosthesis (see Marie-Therese Archer, 1988 380-382)

concept of “l’effet-de-créole,” as indicated in the statement “Chamoiseau en joue et obtient ainsi ce que j’appelle “l’effet-de-créole”” (165) is commendable, but perhaps, it is so in the sense of considering “l’effet-de-créole” as part of the larger framework of creative linguistic acts contributing to language change and language creation. Arguably, it is this framework that undergirds the novel, as opposed to what N’Zengou-Tayo terms a “chamoisification” (169). Contrary to Josyane Savigneau (1992), for whom the work of Chamoiseau in *Texaco* is part of the diversity of *French* culture, the novel is partly how Creole speaking subjects engage in creative acts employing existing linguistic resources to carry the discourse of the Creole speech community. Indeed, Chamoiseau offers substantial emblematic insights throughout the novel displaying his effort at reconstructing a Creole discourse that captures Creole ways of being, and constitute themselves a total refusal of any monolithic and hierarchical encroachment in human ways of being. One can see here a parallel with the concept of contre-parole coined by Paul Celan and John Jackson discussed in chapter four.

It is with this in mind that one might argue that the literary endeavor in which Chamoiseau engages in *Texaco* is but the depiction of a Creole city, a Creole life, a Creole struggle, the voice of a Creole speech community. “Dans la ville creole, la violence frappe plus qu’ailleurs” (166), he writes discussing the target socio-economic impact upon the city of its colonial past. He adds, “Le quartier Texaco naît de la violence. Alors pourquoi s’étonner de ses cicatrices et de sa face de guerre? L’urbaniste creole, par-dessus l’insalubre, doit devenir voyant” (167).

Beyond the colonial history that informs the social practices of the emblematic Creole city of Texaco, Chamoiseau offers insights that categorically go counter to what Josyane Savigneau (1992) sees as part of the diversity of French culture. Chamoiseau’s work contrasts French

culture's search for uniqueness with the pluralism of the Creole city, whose uniqueness can be found but in its diversity, i.e., in the very refusal to claim any type of uniqueness that fails to consider the mosaic of values that shape the city. In her sermon, Marie Sophie says, "nous cultivâmes ce que les békés appellent plantes seconds, et nous-mêmes: plantes manger" (145). What the author considers as "plantes manger" is not independent from other "plantes" that sustain them, such as "les plantes-médecine, et celles qui fascinent la chance et désarment les zombis" (145). Chamoiseau depicts what he calls "le jardin creole" (167) as the place où "le tout bien emmêlé n'épuise jamais la terre" (145). Yet, it is likely in the following assertion that Chamoiseau offers one of his most insightful contrasts between the Creole town and the French town:

In the center, an occidental urban logic, all lined up, ordered, strong like the French language. On the other side, Creole's open profusion according to Texaco's logic. Mingling these two tongues, dreaming of all tongues, the Creole city speaks a new language in secret and no longer fears Babel. Here the well-learned, domineering, geometrical grid of an urban grammar; over there the crown of a mosaic culture to be unveiled, caught in the hieroglyphics of cement, crate wood, asbestos. The Creole city returns to the urban planner, who would like to ignore it, the roots of new identity: multilingual, multiracial, multihistorical, open, sensible to the world's diversity. (Chamoiseau; Trans. (Rejouis and Vinokurov, 220).

This text, part of the sermon of Marie Sophie Laborieux, illustrates quite well how linguistic pluralism is fundamental to the identity and formation of this Creole speech community engaging in creative acts of language re-appropriation. It is an openness, the "dreaming of all tongues" and the challenging of the "fear [of] Babel" that allows the Creole speech community to engage in language re-appropriation to create its Primary Language Data (PLD) and develop a cohesive community as part of its survival strategy. Language re-appropriation thus involves a whole set of dynamics that are at work in creating Creole society, exemplified in the city of Texaco.

While this chapter takes up particularly the work of Chamoiseau in the novel *Texaco*, it is important to recognize that it is in the novel *Solibo Magnificent*, the novel published in 1988 by Gallimard, that Chamoiseau details his insights regarding the pluralism basic to the identity of the Creole speech community. This is what Murdoch captures fairly in “Chamoiseau’s Articulation of Creole Identity” arguing that “The history of communal intersubjectivity that forms the core of the narrative [...] produces these creolized patterns of Caribbean identity” (318) and that “it is here too, especially, that the variations of speech and language that act as signifiers of race, culture and class are recorded and rewritten into oppositional ordinances of difference and disorder” (318).

To describe their literary characters, Chamoiseau, along with Roumain, engage in a work of language that allows them to “destabilize the narrative norms and to place select particulars of a creolized cultural tradition in the forefront of the critical imagination” (Murdoch 316). The ethics, and the aesthetics, of representation require that these authors represent the reality of these characters in ways that simulate discursive patterns of these actors, a challenging endeavor since their works are in French. So one might understand the necessity of mixing French and Creole discourses to construct these literary works. But this should remain what it is, namely, a choice by the novelists to construct a language that they think best re-presents their characters. But can we rely on these aesthetic choices, these attempts at representing the duality of the francophone Caribbean subject? Can we rely on these efforts to help the subject tailor its place as an empowered individual who can shape the destiny of his homeland and have a voice to address his regional concerns and concerns as a world citizen? Should the case of Solibo remain an (im)possibility? Should the songs of Simidor, in Roumain’s *Masters of the Dew* remain at the level of *oraliture* and the impossibility of

transcending the here-and-now of his lyrics? Should all the voices that Marie Sophie Laborieux, in *Texaco*, presents be heard in French with a few Creole concepts? In order to be successful, should Caribbean novels keep relying on a French audience? How can the Caribbean region claim a voice that is not mirrored through the French language while at the same time recognizing the plurality of voices that inform this Caribbean voice, French being just one of them? We will address these questions in the remaining parts of this work.

Chapter 8

The rationales for Language re-appropriation: the Creole language as a salvation.

While the work of Roumain, Césaire and Chamoiseau illustrate ~~the~~ how Caribbean francophone writers have engaged in contre-parole and language re-appropriation, they nevertheless call to mind a larger, yet unstated language issue in the region: Does it adequately consider what should be written, for whom, in which language? Does this writing inadvertently foster the formation of a linguistic elite? Indeed, it was a linguistic elite, with its sophisticated level of French competency, that was attracted to these authors. For example, in the case of Chamoiseau, France responded with “a Prix of Goncourt,” and Césaire received the praise of André Breton from France. Another Caribbean writer, the Haitian Etzer Villaire, was considered by France as an overseas French poet. The work of Chamoiseau, Jean Barnabé and Raphael Confiant in *In Praise of Creoleness (Eloge de la créolité) (1989)* can be considered a work of language re-appropriation insofar as the French language is not summarily deified but rather addresses the voice of the francophone Caribbean speech community. While this work illuminates re-appropriation, yet it is not without critique itself with respect to this fundamental aspect of analysis in the present volume. Problematizing this work is key to looking at how the Creole language can contribute to revamping the agency of the Creole speaking population and to both ‘deliver’ and ‘protect’ them from loss.

The first section, “Toward Interior Vision and Self Acceptance,” in *In Praise of Creoleness* involves a reflection on some of the leading figures of francophone Caribbean literature. The text makes reference to Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, René Dépestre, Frantz Fanon, and Frankétienne. The authors of *Éloge de la Créolité* explicitly inscribe their

work in the line of Césaire, whom they consider as their model: “epigones of Césaire, we displayed a committed writing, committed to the anticolonialist struggle” (82), or even more directly, “we are forever Césaire’s sons” (80). What draws our attention is the question of how *Éloge à la Créolité* can justify Césaire’s dual role as father and model given that Césaire did not actually write in Creole. One possible answer lies in how these authors see Césaire as one who used the French language to restore “mother Africa, matrix Africa, the black civilization” (79). They acknowledge Césaire’s condemnation of the system of colonial domination and its perpetuation, and how his concept of Negritude “gave Creole society its African dimension, and put an end to the amputation which generated some of the superficiality of the so called doudouist writing” (79). By acknowledging how Césaire exposed the oppression that the Caribbean African diaspora has faced, the authors show how this work subscribes to an effort to use the French language to carry the voice of the Caribbean Creole speech community. The authors of the *Eloge* find it necessary to “free Aimé Césaire of the accusation ... of hostility to the Creole language” (79), claiming that Creole goes beyond “a scriptural practice forged on the anvils of the French language” (79). It is this understanding of Creole as beyond “scriptural practice,” that is, as a mode of being, that the authors of *In Praise of Creoleness* find inspirational for the construction of their framework.

Their project includes a reflection on writing that explores many of the historical facets, themes, and sensibilities that inform the existence of the Caribbean subject, including chaos, catharsis, a sense of place, self-knowledge, and acceptance. The authors point to Glissant’s proposed framework inviting the Caribbean subject to “scrutinize the chaos of this new humanity that we are, *to understand* what the Caribbean is” (83). The *Eloge* also

references Fanon's invitation to the Caribbean subject to "explore ... reality from a cathartic perspective" (83) as well as René Depestre who on calls on the Caribbean subject to embrace and make the best of the space that they occupy as inhabitants of the American Continent. Their reflection takes them to Frankétienne, the Haitian writer whom they think represents "both the blacksmith and the alchemist of the central nervure of our authenticity." The authors see the novel *Dezafi* by Frankétienne (1975) and *Malemort* by Glissant (1975) as an exemplar and cornerstone of a movement of discovery that includes "self-knowledge," "interior vision" (85), and "self-acceptance" (86) as part of the steps toward authenticity.

The second part of the text centers more squarely on a definition of the notion of Creoleness. They recognize that attempting to define Creoleness implies an attempt at defining the essence of a Caribbean subject that indeed refuses any essence, i.e., any monolithic way of being. The text calls on Caribbean subjects to accept themselves as Creole subjects, those whose culture includes elements from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Orient. In this case, Creoleness goes beyond the Creole language itself, according to the authors, and is a phenomenon that exceeds and escapes from any rigid definition. Creoleness is "a question to be lived" (89). For the authors, due to its "complexity," Creoleness is characterized by its multiplicity and its diversity and is the negation of "false universality, of monolingualism, and of purity" (90).

Although the authors emphasize Creoleness more than the Creole language itself, they also recognize that the Creole language is the central axis of Creoleness, and that orality is "its privileged mode" (33). The authors denounce the crisis of neglected Creole oral traditions. They maintain that the orality expressed in the Creole language "contains a whole system of countervalues, a counterculture; it witnesses ordinary genius applied to resistance,

devoted to survival” (95). They argue that the tendency to neglect the Creole language in literary works³³ is part of the alienation that Caribbean subject faces. Likewise, given the lack of written history, the authors rely on literature to reanimate the colonial past that shapes the existence of the Caribbean subject. According to them, self-acceptance and a refusal to see oneself through the mirror of the ‘Other’ should be what drives the literature of the Caribbean region: “we must admit that ...we have no indications, no certainties, no aesthetic criteria. We have ...our Creoleness which is supposed at every moment to invent every move” (102). Statements such as “The Creole language is not a dying language” (105), “Creole is linked to our very existence,” “Creoleness is not monolingual. Nor is it multilingualism divided into isolated compartments” powerfully echo the sentiments of the Creole speech community to take its destiny in its hands. More, the Creole language as a “whole system of countervalues” fits well with our elaboration of *contre-parole* within a framework of language re-appropriation.

However, in spite of the beauty of the works of Barnabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant, they engage in a hybrid discourse that aims at a small francophone and French-literate Creole elite in the francophone Caribbean region. The mass presence of the Creole-only speaker still left out. The majority French audience remains either contemplating or laughing at the hybrid French/Creole language in the *Eloge*, which some will not hesitate to consider as a bastard and awkward construction. A text completely written in Creole might still be mocked, but at least one might see that it is a text produced in a different language, not half sentences in French and half in Creole. Texts like *Texaco* and *Masters of the Dew* leave the Caribbean

³³ We note in passing that the authors of *In Praise of Creoleness* do not make reference to writing productions that would allow the Creole speech community to develop academic and cognitively challenging competencies in their home language that would empower them to become the speaking subject that is necessary to revamp or shape Creole identity.

speech community in the condition of a flock of sheep without a shepherd, an audience without a speaker, people without a leader, a speech community without representatives (literary, scientific, etc). If these works happen to be viewed as minor literature – a literature that, “a minority constructs within a major language” as Deleuze and Guattari put it (16) – it would be the case only insofar as they are seen as being produced for the audience in France, or to some extent, for the franco-phone/francophile linguistic elite of the francophone Caribbean region. Even then, the definition of minor literature condemns the authors to choose between two distinct options with regard to whom they choose to write for. Caribbean speech communities are left wondering where are they located in the discussion on Major Literature and Minor Literature considering that this discussion is predominantly in French. The examples of Kafka and Celan for example who write in the dominant languages (i.e. German and French) are useful for our discussion on developing a plurilingual francophone Caribbean community, but they are not good models for this community that widely uses Creole on a daily basis. Being able to write well in the dominant language, or developing a Minor literature, is only part of a language-based agenda that pivots around Creole as its principal axis.

Thus, while *In Praise of Creoleness* admirably does accomplish a great deal in its ambitious aim to capture the discourse on the ‘nature’ of the Caribbean region, Creoleness, and the Creole language, it necessarily comes with its own possibility of disintegration, that is, it contains its own element of criticism, whether latent or explicit. Of course, it helps to be a “Positive Disintegration,” which became a necessary step in development and progress as Kazimierz Dąbrowski (1964, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1996), a Polish psychiatrist and psychologist would have it. Therefore, these elements of criticism need not to be destructive.

Indeed, *In Praise of Creoleness* can be considered as a stepping-stone for the construction of a well-informed framework of language in the region.

Diogène Laërce (3rd century B.C) wrote in *Vies, doctrines et sentences des philosophes illustres* “Je cherche un home (I am in search of a man).” Like Laërce, what seems to be the case is that the Caribbean speech community has a quest: it is in search of a voice that can convey its concerns. In the case of *Eloge*, we might echo the voice of N’zengou-Tayo (1996), when she asks with regard to Martinique and Chamoiseau’s *Texaco* “ce public peut-il vraiment ‘apprécier’ Texaco?” (170). The Creole community faces a double deficit: a deficit of audience and a deficit of representative voice. This deficit should have been at the core of the *In Praise of Creoleness*, a work that begs for another such work to be written, one with another framework that would allow it to reach its goal and its audience. Such a work would indeed be “praiseworthy” in a more complete sense. While the present work is limited in scope since it is attempting to address multiple issues related to language, I expect it to contribute to the call or the conversation initiated by *In Praise of Creoleness* while scrutinizing further the modes of conditions that are in place in working “Toward Interior Vision and Self Acceptance” and “Creoleness,” a Creoleness that is neglect the Creole language and that does contribute the voices of the Creolophone population.

As already stated in our discussion of Césaire, Roumain, Chamoiseau, as well as of Confiant and Barnabé; in spite of their well-deserve glory, their writing presents us with a double deficit: a deficit of audience and a deficit of representative voice. This double deficit would have been fundamentally detrimental to *In Praise of Creoleness* were it not for the fact that it is so implicit that it suggests its own alternative. We are left asking for it to be

completed with another framework, one more true to its goal and audience, be it as part of a positive disintegration of the framework that it proposes, per Kazimierz Dąbrowski (1964, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1996). My contention is that, while the works of these authors may be exemplars of an articulation of Creole discourse via a re-appropriated French language, they also bring to mind the crisis of audience and the crisis of representative production of literary and scientific works capable of enabling the Caribbean speech community to better leverage their hybridity. Ironically, the linguistic hybridity (syntactically, semantically, phonetically) of the literature we have surveyed does not always allow this community to make best use of their hybrid existence, one shaped by their recent history. When enabled to flourish, the hybridity of this population can actually lead to their growth, individually, communally, socially, and politically.

I have earlier stated that Chamoiseau and Roumain engaged in an aestheticism that allowed them to “destabilize the narrative norms and to place select particulars of a creolized cultural tradition in the forefront of the critical imagination” (Murdoch 316). The ethics, along with the aesthetics, of representation require that these authors represent the reality of their characters in ways that simulate the discursive patterns of these characters. This is a challenging endeavor since their works are in French. One might understand the necessity of mixing French and Creole discourse to construct these literary works. But this should remain what it is, namely, a choice by the novelists to construct a discursive style that they think best re-presents their characters. The questions I posed earlier in this regard are worth asking again: can we rely on these aesthetic choices, these attempts at representing the duality of the francophone Caribbean subject? Can we rely on these efforts to help the subject tailor its place as an empowered individual who can shape the destiny of his homeland and have a

voice to address his regional concerns as a world citizen? Should the case of *Solibo* remain an (im)possibility? Should the songs of Simidor, in Roumain's *Masters of the Dew*, remain at the level of oraliture and maintain the impossibility of transcending the here-and-now of his lyrics, that is, through the possibility and power of writing³⁴? Should all the voices that Marie Sophie Laborieux represents in *Texaco* be heard in French, with a few Creole concepts? In order to be successful, should Caribbean novels keep relying on a French audience? How can the Caribbean region claim a voice that is not mirrored through the French language while at the same time recognizing the plurality of voices that inform this Caribbean voice, French being just one of them? Addressing these questions requires an analysis that includes the speech community's language, literature, literacy, new-literacy, and challenge to carve out its place in the contemporary world. An effort that encourages the Caribbean subject to face their linguistic tyranny and their linguistic alienation is warranted, and must seriously leverage the resources that are afforded to this speech community via the Creole language, a widely spoken language in the historically France-dominated geographical regions of the Caribbean.

The characterization of "Salvation" in the title attempts to capture what the Creole language represents for the region. I intend this reflection to serve as a basis for language appropriation and re-appropriation culminating in emphasizing the importance of mastering other languages in the region, namely, French, Spanish, and English while Creole being the

³⁴ We should note that mentioning 'writing' here takes into consideration the view that developing competencies in a language and developing one's writing ability are intricately interwoven. My contention is that, writing in a language that one masters is in itself not always an easy task, even in the case of the native speaker. Worst still, when this task is to be accomplished in a language that one does not master. That being said, I should mention also that in general the Francophone Caribbean individual has verbal and listening competencies in Creole but they lack the writing and thus the reading competencies in that language due to the fact that it has not been used in school.

basis for this plurilingual speech community. The word “salvation” as used in the Christian Bible alludes not only to deliverance from sin, but also to “preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss” (The New Oxford American Dictionary). While the Creole language plays a major role in keeping the francophone Caribbean speech community from “from harm, ruin, or loss,” in the present, it makes sense to carefully assess its purely historical record – in this case, keeping this community from harm, ruin, and loss, would imply an understanding of how it has navigated through multiples harms, ruins, and losses until then due to the fact that the language of wider communication has been so neglected.

In discussing the work of the Israeli writer Aharon Appelfeld, Claudine Haroche laments a crisis of language in Appelfeld that we can also term an existential crisis. Appelfeld discussed his crisis when he went to Palestine in 1946 after surviving the holocaust: “il se retrouve ‘sans langage: il ne parle plus l’allemand, pas encore l’hébreu qu’il se voit contraint d’apprendre’” (Kindle Locations 1551-1557). As Claudine Haroche remarks, Appelfeld found himself in a linguistic situation that made him a speaking subject without a language. Appelfeld realizes the handicap of someone who has lost his mother tongue: “un homme qui perd sa langue maternelle est infirme pour la vie” Appelfeld says (cited in Claudine Haroche Kindle Location 1569). Although authors such as Kafka, Canetti, and Mauthner cited previously had been able to engage in language re-appropriation and develop robust works in non-maternal languages, having missed a mother tongue was experienced as a crisis that marked their lives. A brutal childhood linguistic experience was described as “la privation de langue maternelle” by Mauthner (cited in Le Rider, Kindle Locations 1176). Similarly, the dilemma of mother tongue followed Kafka throughout his oeuvre: “Je n’ai jamais vécu au milieu du peuple allemand; l’allemand est ma langue maternelle, il m’est donc naturel, mais

le tchèque est plus près de mon Coeur” (Kafka, 1920). And for Elias Canetti, “l’allemand sera pour Canetti la langue de la *Mutterbindung*, du lien à la mère,” writes to Le Rider (Kindle Locations 1409-1410).

The speech community of the francophone Caribbean subject can easily identify with the crises of Appelfeld, Canetti, Kafka, and Mauthner. The language ideology that makes the population downplay the value of their language in the interest of the French language in one sense makes them “sans langue”: while they can speak their Creole language they find it difficult to develop their voices through writing because the language is neglected in education and other high social settings. In terms of the French language, they are similarly “sans langue” given that they encounter this language only in books, in most cases. Language ideology makes their linguistic environment function as a divisive tyranny, instead of as a force that they could use for their own growth. In this case, Appelfeld’s statement “un homme qui perd sa langue maternelle est infirme pour la vie” applies fairly well to the case of the francophone Caribbean speech community. In the case of Haiti, for example, one can parallel this infirmity with chronic school failure. In the larger francophone Caribbean region, this infirmity is illustrated in the fact that francophone Caribbean writers complain about the lack, or even absence, of a real audience for their oeuvre, whereas the population complains about the lack of works produced in Creole. We may then consider how a focus on language appropriation and language re-appropriation may establish the conditions *sine qua non* to revamp the agency of the francophone Caribbean speech community. The ground zero of such an endeavor must be the Creole language which, in this case, can contribute to preserving and delivering the francophone Caribbean speech community from “harm, ruin, or

loss.” This is, indeed, a call that is clearly articulated by the authors of *In Praise of Creoleness*.

I have addressed in preceding chapters the possibility of a new paradigm to govern the relation that Caribbean subjects can maintain with language, and I have provided the rationale for this paradigm shift. In discussing the notion of re-appropriation and its implications for language studies in the francophone Caribbean region in Chapters two and four, I indicated that the particular strength of Miller’s theory of culture is in its reconceptualization of the condition of rupture between the individual and the external world, and its emphasis in the struggle for the subject to re-appropriate that which the subject has created. I have indicated that Miller’s notion of objectification allows, on one hand, for the emergence of linguistic communities in the post-slavery francophone Caribbean to be analyzed as a process of externalization and sublimation. In this process the speaking subject develops fragmentary linguistic forms, and then re-appropriates them as a constituted language. On the other hand, this notion of objectification offers an analytic tool for studying the challenges and perspectives associated with this work of re-appropriation. I have indicated that re-appropriation must account for language re-appropriation proper, i.e., the struggle of the speaking subject against linguistic alienation and linguistic tyranny stemming from, and propelled by, language ideology. The phase of re-appropriation, part of the process of "objectification," thus becomes a veritable battlefield for subject development. In this case, the development of francophone Caribbean subjects necessarily includes encountering the challenges and perspectives of language re-appropriation.

Later, in discussing creative linguistic acts, language appropriation and language re-appropriation, I examined the modes of operation of creative language acts and language re-

appropriation. I have discussed what language creation and re-appropriation imply in the case of francophone Caribbean speech communities, and the process involved in language creation, in other words, how a linguistic creative act takes place in this context. After problematizing the concepts of the creative linguistic act, language appropriation, and re-appropriation, I examined DeGraff's concept of I-Creole and E-Creole, the individual-group dialectical movement in language development, and agents in the early development of the Haitian language. Doing so allowed us to theorize, with the help of DeGraff's scholarship, the modes of operation involved in creative language acts, along with language appropriation and re-appropriation. A key part in this argument is that, drawing upon DeGraff's study of I-Creole and E-Creole, and on data on language development in the case of Haiti, for example, I have shown that we can refute the labels of "language deviance," "patois," and "jargon." I have indicated that we are prompted to see this language as part of language objectification, implying the struggle between subject and object, in this case, speaking subject and spoken-object, i.e. language. As a tangible case of creative language acts and how they are appropriated, I have referred to the work of DeGraff in identifying a limited number of concepts and usages currently in use in Haitian society that we can ascribe to creative language acts along with language appropriation. I have suggested that I considered these data mostly as language appropriation, and as part of a process involving creative language acts. In terms of language, appropriation can be conceived as part of a creative process of overcoming and preserving, where a spoken-object resists the speaking subject. The value of Creole for the community has been illustrated in the studies on the formation of linguistic communities and in literary works that have been analyzed. It has been carefully scrutinized

in the discussion on the ideological positioning that informs our understanding of language practices in the francophone Caribbean region.

We have thus far laid to rest questions whether the Creole language is a “real” language (versus a patois, jargon, etc), and by extrapolation doubts about its appropriate use in education, abstract theory, scientific inquiries, etc, – let Grégoire’s appellation “maladies de pauvres” rest in peace along with its author. However, we must now recognize the mechanisms by which Creole speakers engage in a process of devaluing their own values. I have discussed this situation in chapter three on francophonie, language ideology, and the rupture of language re-appropriation. I discussed how the negative ways in which many Creole speakers perceive themselves and their language is arguably part of the Haitian community’s colonial legacy, and I have retraced this influence upon the Caribbean of French language ideology developing in the 18th century. I described how, as the region was being forcibly peopled with subjects of African descent, this sociocultural context was conducive to language change and language creation. A good deal of the ideology claiming the superiority of French, therefore, was already present in the veins of those who would become the future leaders of Haiti, even before it claimed its independence in 1804.

Given the connection between language re-appropriation and language ideology, the task of *contre-parole* at hand – to valorize both the Creole language and language re-appropriation efforts in multiple regionally influential languages – necessitates understanding the mechanisms of language ideology as part of a path toward a new paradigm that faces the exigencies of the contemporary world. This would support resistance to the tyranny inherent in being alienated by both the Creole language and the French language. We may return to the works of Roumain, Chamoiseau, and Césaire in this endeavor.

Granted, Chamoiseau and Roumain challenge French language ideology in their emphasis on the necessity to make further space for the Creole language to limit the development of linguistic elites with sole authority and voice to find “le langage” to express “La Langue,” leaving others plunged into morbid silence. While Chamoiseau has brilliantly articulated the notion of “La Langue,” in this case the living, expressive words of the poet, he fails to consider that this is not independent from the social and related linguistic hierarchies in the region. Chamoiseau and Roumain did mix French and Creole discourses in representing their literary characters. Yet this aesthetic dual-language choice is insufficient for representing the duality, or the inherently pluralistic characteristic, of the francophone Caribbean subject. A more courageous choice is necessary, namely, that of facilitating Creole speakers who are so motivated to develop robust competencies in their home language, including in those “high culture” domains which language ideology would suggest to be impossible.

Part of the mechanism of language ideology involves the suppression and silencing of self-acceptance and expression. Caribbean subjects must accept themselves as they are, and so should offer a round of praise to the authors of *In Praise of Creoleness* for calling for “Self-Acceptance” (887). This acceptance entails accepting their home language. While the French language can accompany the francophone Caribbean subject in a quest to forge a better place in the world, it cannot be looked upon to render a full and true reflection of the Caribbean subject. Again, the case of *Solibo* should not remain an (im)possibility. The only impossibility that we must accept is the “impossibility of not writing,” as Kafka would say, or the impossibility of voices, as in the case of Bakhtin. Likewise, the songs of Simidor, in

Roumain's *Masters of the Dew* should not remain at the level of oraliture and the impossibility of transcending the here-and-now of his lyrics, through writing. Language is that power that allows us to go beyond the here-and-now, the power to be, to exist. If "to speak is to exist for other" (Fanon 1968), this is premised on the fact that one exists first and foremost for oneself as the basic condition "to exist for other" i.e. one has *to be* for oneself first *to be* for other – suggesting that one must be able *to speak* in order to 'others' to hear, to acknowledge one's presence and one's voice. All the voices that Marie Sophie Laborieux, in *Texaco*, represents should not continue to be heard in French with a few Creole concepts. In this case, in order to be successful, the Caribbean novels need to stop relying on a French audience. The Caribbean region should claim a voice that is not mirrored through the French language while at the same time recognizing the plurality of voices that inform this Caribbean voice, French being just one of them. This is part of the challenge of carving out one's place in the contemporary world. We should not in passing that this work does not propose a call to a "completeness of Creole", which would yield to a purist "authentic" vision of Creole, or of language and culture in general. Such proposition would in fact go counter to the very notion of Creole and Creoleness as discussed throughout this work. What is at stake is that Creole remains a language in its own right but it has not served the well-being of its speakers enough.

Revamping the agency of the speaking subject of the francophone Caribbean region implies a paradigm shift that considers the home language, the language that informs the history of the region, and the environmental languages as part of the exigencies of the contemporary world. The 'language problem' of the francophone Caribbean region is a fabricated or constructed problem; it needs to be un-fabricated, deconstructed, destabilized,

renamed, and rearticulated in ways that protect the region from further “harm, ruin, or loss.” The many losses – loss of lives of the Africans who perished in the voyages from Africa to America, the loss of many Haitians who die in the ocean as they escape from misery, the loss of the power of Martiniquais and Guadeloupians to decide their destiny without the Préfet representing the government of France, the lost of dignity that Haiti has faced for daring to collapse the slavery system – are more than enough loss to bear. Further losses, such as the continuing loss of one’s language, of one’s voice, of the very possibility to be, would only lead progressively on the road march toward becoming what Fanon described as “the wretched of earth.”

Thinking about these losses calls to mind Dany Laferrière’s account of the impact of losing our mother tongue in “Ce livre est déjà écrit en anglais, seuls les mots sont en français” published by *Île en île*³⁵ in 2000.

Ma grand-mère, j’imagine comme beaucoup d’autres grand-mères, m’a nourri d’histoires, de contes et de proverbes créoles. Il n’y a pas eu que cet aspect un peu folklorique. Toute la vie quotidienne se passait en créole. C’est la langue que je parle sans penser. Et c’est dans cette langue que j’ai découvert qu’il y avait un rapport entre les mots et les choses. Dans le créole, il y a des mots que j’aime entendre, des mots que j’aime dire, des mots qui me sont bons dans la bouche. Des mots de plaisir, liés surtout aux fruits, aux variétés de poissons, aux désirs secrets (des mots à ne pas prononcer devant les grandes personnes), aux jeux interdits. Et aussi des mots solaires qu’on peut dire à haute voix, partout, et qui sont sonores, chauds, sensuels, sans aucune référence à la sexualité. C’est tout un monde, aussi complexe que le monde des choses, que je découvrais au fur et à mesure. Le mot «mango» évoquait non seulement l’odeur, le goût, la chair, mais surtout le poids de la mangue. En plus, c’est un mot qui me faisait rire, je le trouvais drôle, je ne sais pas pourquoi.

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http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ile.en.ile/paroles/laferriere_celivre.html

This summarizes quite well the values lost when upon being deprived from our mother tongue in various contexts, for instance, in school settings. It is this loss that makes us subjects “sans langage” as Appelfeld (1946) phrased it.

The response to language ideology necessitates a paradigm shift that might be effectively characterized as a kind of salvation supporting the “preservation or deliverance” of this speech community “from harm, ruin, or loss.”

This paradigm shift would imply that the Creole language be used at all levels of education to allow the future generation to develop robust academic thoughts through this language and use it for any production, be it scientific, academic-related, or literary productions. Increasing access to high quality education in the region will further facilitate this process. What we would like to consider now are the mechanisms that might be conducive to language re-appropriation in terms of French, English, and Spanish and to do so we’ll draw on the Common European Framework for Reference Languages.

CHAPTER 9

The Rationales for Language Re-appropriation:

Toward a Common Caribbean Language Framework

“How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve?” ask Deleuze and Guattari (19). I suggested earlier that this question is loaded with significance for the francophone Caribbean region speech community. This question is relevant for many areas where Caribbean subjects are surrounded by the French, Spanish, and English languages. One does not have to be francophile, anglophile, or hispanophile to benefit from mastering these languages. In fact, I posit that future Caribbean intellectuals are likely to be competent users of French, Spanish, and English, while simultaneously possessing robust preparation in Creole to produce any level of works in this language, unapologetically. Below I outline the general contours for this projected plurilingual Caribbean speech community.

I remember a trip from Haiti to Kingston, Jamaica that calls to mind Deleuze and Guattari’s question above. One Monday morning I said goodbye to my parents in Creole in Port-au-Prince, and when I got to the airport, I had a long conversation (in French) with a French person I met at the airport. When I got to Miami, I spoke English to the immigration officers in the US. I took a connection from Miami to Kingston, and I was immersed in English, but this changed when I visited some popular places around this city that were not the domain of the academic standard English with which I am most familiar. There, it was a Creole, that is, an English-based Creole, that was spoken. If I understood some of what was being said, it was not just because I speak some English. I recognized it stemming from my

Creole competencies – I was drawing on the patterns that are often common among several Creole languages, and more particularly between the French-based Creole of Haiti and the English-based Creole of Jamaica. Since I was there just to attend a conference, and I had brought the French language homework of my American students with me, I used the breaks to work on these French assignments, and also to work on some French texts that were part of a project I was doing in Haiti.

While in Kingston I called my brother in the Dominican Republic and my sister and a friend of mine in Argentina. My Spanish capability, though limited, enabled me to make sense of the pre-recorded message “la persona que usted llamó no está aquí. Llama otra vez” over the phone line. I learned later that my brother was not there at that time due to a sojourn in Brazil. When I talked to him later, he bragged about his competencies in Creole, French, English, Spanish, and Brazilian / Portuguese. This is a man who ‘lives’ in Creole, Spanish, and Brazilian/Portuguese, who has written a book in French, and who deals with English as part of his business with American religious missionaries. While my journey was navigated in Creole, French, English, and Spanish to some extent; his days are routinely marked with the imprint of Creole, French, English, Spanish, and Brazilian.

Such plurilingualism may quite possibly be characteristic of the journeys of Caribbean subjects in the future as the region moves toward higher levels of mobility and access to widely distributed resources. The nation is located less than two hours by air from Florida. The French language has left its imprint in social practices and the history of Haiti as part of its colonial legacy. Spanish exposure comes from Haiti sharing the island of Ayiti³⁶ with the Dominican Republic, a predominantly Spanish-speaking nation, and regional

³⁶ Ayiti is the original name of the whole island,

exposure to Cuba and the rest of the Hispanophone Latin American countries. In such an environment, a mobile Haitian, not to mention Martiniquans and Guadeloupeans, could be in any of these settings. As Claudine Haroche writes “le passage d’une langue à l’autre suppose l’ouverture d’esprit, une certaine malléabilité, la capacité à faire face à la peur, à la surmonter (Claudine Haroche, *Kindle Locations 1771-1772*). We can imagine how an openness of mind, a malleability, and the capacity to face up to and overcome the fear of language stemming from mobility in a plurilingual setting can contribute to processes of language re-appropriation by which speaking subjects can prevail over the tyranny of language ideology and alienation.

The works of Mauthner, Canetti, Kafka, Celan, Césaire, Chamoiseau, and Roumain referred to in previous chapters, by providing models of re-appropriation, help us to imagine the possibilities for a future in which Creole languages and speakers have a solid place within a mobile, plurilingual society. They in fact allow us to conceptually ‘deterritorialize’ the language issue from the francophone Caribbean, and enable us to place it into other, larger contexts at a time where geographical boundaries are becoming more and more fluid. By effectively engaging in a work of language re-appropriation, and thus subduing their linguistic tyranny instead of letting themselves become alienated by it, they teach us that language is a human endeavor that can cross and overcome borders and obstacles, and about the agency of the speaking subject of the francophone Caribbean region. Yet this must be part of a larger endeavor.

The best use of the moment at hand is not to complain about whether Creole is a language or not, or whether Caribbean subjects should speak French or not. Instead, it calls for a paradigm shift that considers home languages, the languages that inform the history of a

region, and environmental languages as part of the exigencies of the contemporary, mobile, and increasingly linguistically heterogeneous world. What a framework like that may look like is what I turn my attention to in the pages that follow. We begin by drawing an example from the European experience with multiple languages.

The Common European Framework for Reference Languages

As its name indicates, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has been established by the Language Policy Division of The Council of Europe to provide a framework on the development of language competencies across Europe. The CEFR intends to facilitate communication across the European continent. The Council of Europe itself has been instituted “to achieve greater unity among its members” as stipulated in Recommendation R(82) 18 and R(98)6 of the Committee of Ministers. Language constitutes a primary tool by which the Council intends to establish this common bond in the Continent. They seek a common framework on language that can serve as a common basis for the spread of language competencies throughout the Continent. To do this The Council engages in “the adoption of common action in the cultural field.” If we adopt the view of Pierre Bourdieu, who considers language as capital, The Council is thus opting to help Europeans make the best out of their linguistic capital by learning other languages that can enhance the mobility of Europeans within Europe and abroad.

The framework recognizes that, far from being a handicap, language diversity in Europe is a resource to explore when it comes to interaction among Europeans. Owing to this acknowledgement of language diversity and its importance, The Council endeavors to increase language competencies in the region using the school system as a pathway to do so. The Council requires that each country in the continent have the necessary means to facilitate

the development of language competencies among their citizens as a way to make possible communication among their member states. As part of this program, The Council identifies xenophobia and ultra-nationalism as handicaps and “a major threat to European stability and to the healthy functioning of democracy” (CEFR 4). With his framework, The Council of Europe intends to act on this “threat” by encouraging intense development of language competencies. The European citizens envisioned by The Council are citizens who can cross-geographical borders and yet be able to interact with and share the values of neighboring speech communities. Democratic citizenship has become an area of concern for The Council of Europe, and to encourage this value it seeks “To promote methods of modern language teaching which will strengthen independence of thought, judgment and action, combined with social skills and responsibility” (CEFR 4). The mobility of the European citizens is highly regarded in this case.

Indeed, the European citizens projected by The Council are citizens who are not limited to the resources – technological, scientific, literary, employment, etc - in their original geographical space. In this case, The Council calls on governments of member-states to work together “To equip all Europeans for the challenges of intensified international mobility and closer co-operation not only in education, culture and science but also in trade and industry” (3). The Council considers language to be a primary tool to do so. It is the main capital by means of which European citizens can reach this level of mobility as well as “mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication” (CEFR 3). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages has been put in place by the Language Policy Unit of The Council of Europe as a way to address the concerns of The Council with regard to mobility,

intercultural exchange, and cohesion in the Continent, and to respond to the demands of European citizens who go beyond the here-and-now. Given that any of the languages spoken in Europe are also spoken in various other places in the world, the European citizen that The Council has in mind can also be seen as a citizen who can transcend, not only the geographical boundaries of their respective countries, but also that of the European Continent in general, and to be able to function in another geographical setting in the world. By being able to keep their mother tongue and acquire robust competencies in other languages, these citizens can effectively function in any other setting where these languages are used, and yet keep the comfort that is afforded through one's mother tongue.

A key aspect of the CEFR is plurilingualism. The CEFR distinguishes between plurilingualism and multilingualism. According to the CEFR, the term multilingualism suggests that the emphasis is on "the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society" (4). In this case multilingualism can be achieved by having several languages in the *curricula* of schools in a given educational system, or simply supporting student learning in some foreign languages. While these are important to develop language competencies, their notion of plurilingualism goes beyond this. According to the authors of the CEFR, in plurilingualism the speaking subject who develops competencies in several languages "does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (CEFR 4). The authors think that speakers of several languages may make use of their linguistic resources to interact with other speakers with similar competencies, and can also use these competencies to work through texts produced in

languages other than their mother tongue. They can even “recognize[e] words from a common international store in a new guise” (CEFR 4). They are also capable of using different techniques to develop understanding and interact in contexts where they have limited language competencies, for example by “exploiting paralinguistics (mime, gesture, facial expression, etc.) and radically simplifying their use of language” (CEFR 5).

With this in mind, language instruction becomes part of a new agenda. There is a complete paradigm shift in terms of goals and objectives set forth by language instruction professionals, that of developing a platform of languages that are present to the speaking subject whenever the need to use any of the languages the speaker can use arises. According to the authors of the CEFR, “the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place” (5). Thus, with this paradigm shift, the goal of language instruction “is no longer seen as simply to achieve ‘mastery’ of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the ideal speaker’ as the ultimate model” (CEFR 5). While offering multiple languages in a given school curricula, an emphasis on plurilingualism, or the development of plurilingual competence, requires that we admit “that language learning is a lifelong task” (CEFR 5). And that this “lifelong task” should be “promoted and facilitated throughout educational systems, from pre-school through adult education” (CEFR 5). With respect to this, plurilingualism becomes the antechamber of pluriculturalism. “Plurilingualism has itself to be seen in the context of pluriculturalism,” argue the authors of the CEFR (6).

Admittedly, the vision of a plurilingual Europe goes beyond the desiderata of the politicians of The Council of Europe. It extends to the larger demands of the contemporary world. As interaction among human beings increases and surpasses geographical borders, the

need noticeably increases as well to develop competencies in a language other than the one in which one had seized one's first perceptions and sensations. In this sense, developing competencies in another language, whether second or foreign language, needs to become an essential component in educational and political discourses on a global scale, and should concern micro-political decisions, i.e., at the level of local decision makers, as well as that of macro-political decisions, i.e. nation-wide, and even to global regions. As opposed to questioning whether languages should be part of school and university curricula, it is warranted that educators, and in particular language educators, language professionals, and decision makers, shift their interest instead on what are the approaches and methods that are more suitable to help language learners acquire the skills they need for their personal life, and to be competitive on the global job market.

The way The Council of Europe justifies the need for language competencies and the emphasis on plurilingual competence is helpful for our reflection on language in the Caribbean region. However, in the case of the francophone Caribbean region, these justifications need to be extended to include the Creole language as the mother tongue. This is not a concern for The Council of Europe given that most of the languages they refer to are languages of "high capital," such as French, English, and Spanish. Local languages such as Breton, Alsacien, Occitan in France, for example, are not quite part of the agenda. In the Caribbean region, discussions such as those initiated by The Council of Europe in the case of the European continent need to start with the Creole language in mind.

In chapters 1 through 3, I have shown how the Creole language has developed, and that it has become the primary means of expression for millions. While we have addressed the suitability of Creole as both the primary means of expression for wider communication

and as a basis for literary and scientific production, this does not condemn Creole speakers to stay within the geographic and the linguistic corpus parameters of this language. In fact, this language can serve as the fertile ground to develop competencies in other languages. It is at this junction that we can talk about language appropriation and re-appropriation. It is also through this movement of language appropriation and re-appropriation that the francophone Caribbean subject can fend off the brutal language tyranny that hampers his growth.

With that in mind, the vision of a plurilingual Caribbean region is grounded in a similar need for mobility as that in the case of Europe, but it is also part of a larger paradigm that the contemporary world calls for – the urgency of overcoming language tyranny, in the case of Caribbean, from an alienation through both the Creole language and the French language. To address this, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages emphasizes what the experts of this Language Policy Unit call an action-oriented approach, and it calls on member-states to use this approach to perform the task of helping Europe to become a plurilingual continent.

Based on the CEFR, the action-oriented approach consists of helping and encouraging students perform communicative tasks that require them to emphasize content over form in ways that simulate the ordinary use of language. The action-oriented approach sees the learner as a “social agent,” that is to say, “members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action (CEFR, p. 9).” The learner's task is essentially to construct knowledge by "doing things" with the language instead of just learning the language for its own sake independent of its everyday use. The action-oriented approach distinguishes between task and competence. Scholars who subscribe to this

approach define tasks as “the sets of pedagogical practices that we use in our classrooms for teaching and evaluating students (Goullier, 2007).³⁷” While discussing the issue of tasks as related to language teaching and learning in his public speech in the CRDP³⁸ of the Academy of Dijon in France, Goullier (2007), an expert on the CEFR and a firm supporter of action-oriented approach, stated:

The objective is to develop students’ competencies. It is not about teaching them to accomplish a series of tasks such as writing a letter or asking for directions to go somewhere, or describing a city [...] the objective is to use the tasks to develop students’ competencies (2007).³⁹

The action-oriented approach divides competency between a) general individual competencies, and b) communicative competencies. Individual competencies refer to “cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the full range of abilities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent (CEFR, 2001 p. 9).” These competencies also refer to experiential knowledge and academic knowledge, skills or knowing how to do things, “existential competence” or knowing in particular contexts, and knowing how to learn (CEFR, 2001).”

With regard to language skills, Goullier (2007) defines general individual competencies as the capacity and desire to reach out to others, and the capacity to take risks; these also intersect with the capacity and desire to value others. In Goullier's words, it is about

37. Exact words of Goullier: “L’habillage pédagogique, la mise en scène pédagogique que nous mettons en oeuvre dans nos classes pour l’enseignement et pour l’évaluation”

38. CRDP: Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique

39. Goullier’s exact words in French: L’objectif c’est de développer les compétences de nos élèves, ce n’est pas de leur apprendre à réaliser des tâches. L’objectif ce n’est pas de leur apprendre à réaliser une lettre ou demander leur chemin, ou à pouvoir décrire une ville [...]. L’objectif c’est, à travers ces tâches, de développer les compétences des élèves.

knowing how to adopt a positive attitude when, for example, encountering an unknown document in an unknown language.⁴⁰

Communicative competencies refer to linguistic competencies, pragmatic competencies, and sociolinguistic competence. According to the CEFR, linguistic competence infers “lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as a system, independently of the socio-linguistic value of its variations and the pragmatic functions of its realizations (2001, p. 13).” According to Goullier (2007), the mission of language teaching, per the CEFR, is to help students develop these competences – in grammar, lexicon, orthography, phonology, pragmatics, sociolinguistics – through task-based language instruction. Goullier thinks, “striving to develop competencies without tasks is a lack of pedagogical efficiency. The objective of the instructor is to develop students’ competencies, not adding up pedagogical tasks (2007)”⁴¹

As part of the action-oriented approach, the CEFR defines pragmatic competencies as “the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts) (2001, p. 13).” Goullier (2007) thinks that discursive competence, interactional competence, and functional competence constitute the integral parts of pragmatic competency. As for sociolinguistic competency, the CEFR defines it as “sociocultural conditions of language use: [...] rules of politeness, norms governing relations between generations, sexes, classes and

40. Goullier’s exact words in French: l’ouverture à l’autre, l’envie de l’autre, la prise de risque. Prise de risque qui n’est pas sans rapport avec ce souci de valoriser [...] c’est le fait de se comporter de façon positive devant un document qu’on ne connaît pas dans une langue qu’on ne connaît pas.

41. espérer développer les compétences sans avoir des tâches à effectuer c’est perdre de l’efficacité pédagogique [...] l’objectif du professeur c’est bien de développer les compétences pas de multiplier un certain nombre de tâches.

social groups, linguistic codification of certain fundamental rituals in the functioning of a community (2001, p. 13).”

France is one of the countries in Europe that has played a leading role in carving out this framework. More and more, language learning has become a major part of the education of students in France. Predating the promulgation in 2001 of the CEFR, France had developed its own program known as the *Sections Européennes ou de Langues Orientales (SELO)* (Sections on European or Oriental Languages), in English. This program was created in 1992 by Jacques Lang the French Minister of National Education to help schools in France meet the demands of language skills in the European Union, and to improve the competitiveness of French citizens in Europe and internationally. The *SELO* program is built on three pillars: reinforcement of foreign language teaching and learning, emphasis on content-based foreign language instruction (through content- knowledge), and development of cultural competencies.

As part of the *SELO* program, a method called Content and Language Integrated Learning (abbreviated: CLIL) or *Enseignement d'une Matière par l'Intégration d'une Langue Etrangère* (abbreviated: *EMILE*), in French, was created. This method is based on the *approche actionnelle* or action-oriented approach to language teaching and learning described above. According to the CLIL, students receive many hours of teaching in the language of their choice during their last two years in lower secondary school (8th and 9th grade). During their three years in *lycée* (high school) they take content knowledge courses in that language. Additionally, to develop their cultural competence in that language, students are encouraged to participate in cultural activities and educational exchanges with countries where the language is spoken. Upon successful completion of the language requirements

along with other requirements for graduation, students receive their high school diploma with special mention of achieving the “European Section.”

So, while the European Council has promulgated the CEFR, France has implemented the SELO. Some schools in France have adopted the CLIL / EMILE, with its action-oriented approach (*approche actionnelle*) to language teaching and learning. In 2005, France's goal was to increase the number of schools practicing SELO 20% by 2010. In fact, it achieved a 47% increase, indicating a huge success.

CLIL is an expression of the European continent's efforts to respond to the need for cohesion in spite of the many languages that are used on the continent. In Europe as elsewhere, as Pistorio (2010) states, “Language educators are challenged to provide more effective ways of learning [...]. The challenge has led to an expansion of teaching approaches that seek to provide effective learning experiences (2).” There are several features shared by CLIL, bilingual and multilingual education, task-based language teaching, and content-based language teaching. But as Coyle (2007) states “[the distinctiveness of CLIL lies in an integrated approach, where both language and content are conceptualized on a continuum without an implied preference for either (545).”

According to Hill (2009), “CLIL is an important new approach to language teaching, at last grounding lesson content in something educational, rather than the endless trivia of many course books for general English (p. 31).” The author suggests that content should have both “extrinsic” value, that is, “something educationally worthwhile and interesting” to students, and “intrinsic” value, or “activities where the students and their own real lives formed the content (Hill 2009 p. 32).” Similarly, Coyle suggests a need to distinguish between three categories: language of learning, language for learning, and language through learning.

According to Coyle, language of learning has to do with “the language needed for learners to access basic concepts and skills relating to the subject theme or topic,” language for learning “focuses on the kind of language which all learners need in order to operate in a foreign language using environment (553),” whereas language through learning takes into consideration the fact that “the CLIL classroom demands a level of talking, of interaction and dialogic activity which may be different to that of the traditional language or content classroom (554).” In this sense, Coyle reminds us “CLIL learners need language to assist their thinking and they need to develop their higher-order thinking skills to assist their language learning (2007, p. 554).”

Coyle indicates that 30 European countries have implemented some forms of CLIL with some variations among them. The author recognizes also that “there is no single blueprint that can be applied in the same way in different countries (2007, p. 546)” due to the sociocultural and educational contexts that often vary from one European country to another. With that in mind, it is important to look at the way CLIL has been implemented in different educational settings to develop a better idea of its modes of operation and its potentiality for efficient language instruction.

During a semester conducting research in France in 2009 on the way French teachers and students approach the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language through instruction in social science and math courses, I observed 10th, 11th and 12th grade classes in a high school near Paris. I focused on the history, geography and mathematics classes taught in English, and also classes that focused primarily on EFL instruction in the sections commonly grouped as the *European Sections*, as described above. These instructional

sequences showed how the teachers organized their instruction to combine learning history, geography, and math with use of English as a foreign language.

As seen first-hand, the teachers used an action-oriented approach, which helps students develop: 1) Linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competency and knowledge, 2) “cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the full range of abilities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent (The CEFR, 2001 p. 9).” The development of both individual competencies and communicative competencies passes through a series of tasks in which the teachers engage students. Such tasks differ from other tasks operated in a regular content course or traditional language classes in that the tasks are both about learning language and learning content areas. This pattern is common in each of the classes I observed. Teachers instruct and engage students in lessons that range from basic instruction to ones having complex elements. The latter might include combinations of elements, from literal to figurative forms of expression. They occur in a variety of communicative settings, between teachers and students, and among students themselves, from conversational to academic.

Note that students still have courses in their mother tongue. They often draw on their home language to develop cognitively demanding competencies in the content courses. I was able to interview a student who completed his secondary school through this program and who focused on English. Our communication was fairly mutually intelligible in English. It was also interesting to see that there are students who came from Germany who had taken history, geography, and math classes in English. It was challenging for them, but they did their best to develop understanding of the content courses. These students experienced no crisis with their mother tongue, i.e. the German language, but they were able to develop

competencies in the French language while in France as well as in English while learning history, geography, and math skills.

This is what a Common Caribbean Language Framework might look like: instruction first of all in the Creole language, and then the possibility for students to acquire competencies in the other languages. This suggests that at all levels of instruction; students should be able to use their home language, Creole. This will allow them to do what the authors of *In Praise of Creoleness* have painstakingly described and called for. Students will develop a stronger sense of the self, and they will use the Creole language to further their development, as opposed to being alienated by it due to the rupture that exists between that language they participate in creating, and themselves. Because of that, the Creole speakers will less likely feel embarrassed by using their language, regardless of the social setting. In this case, it is warranted that there are more intercultural communications and exchanges among the French-based Creole speech communities in the region. This would allow each of the countries to share resources, which would enrich the Creole language furthermore.

Once this basic principle of using Creole at all levels of instruction has been established, once students have a solid ground in their home language, they will be able to develop competencies in the languages in which decisions are being taken in the region, i.e. French, Spanish, and English. While English and Spanish would be taught with foreign language pedagogy, the teaching of French would need to be scrutinized further. In the case of Haiti, for example, French is being taught with the pedagogy of first language given that most books are in French. Once the space is open for Creole to be used as first language, the pedagogical status of French will need to be carefully considered. The paradigm shift being advocated in this work and that is line with *In Praise of Creoleness*, Paul Celan, John

Jackson, Kafka, Canetti, and Mauthner, will shift the question about whether French should be taught as first or second language to whether French should be taught as a second, foreign language, or another pedagogical status that we might term heritage language.

In the case of Haiti, it is odd to treat French as a “second language.” The term often implies that the language is spoken in the surrounding environment –in transportation, shopping centers, the street, farms, the media, and generally in public settings. In the US, for example, a Spanish-speaking child may consider English as a second language because this language is used in all such settings. This is far from the case for the French language in Haiti. The majority of the Haitian community does not use French in their daily and spontaneous interactions. So considering French as a second language may not stand up to rigorous analysis of what constitutes a second language.

One might say, therefore, that French is a kind of foreign language in Haiti. But here again, one might be careful not to quickly draw this conclusion. The French language is taught in the US as a foreign language because it actually is a “foreign” language to the English-speaking US population phonetically, syntactically, and semantically. And given the intricately interwoven relationship between language and culture, the existence of cultural clashes between Anglo-Americans and the French would not be surprising. The French language is not “as foreign” to the Haitian speech community. Regardless of the ambivalence that francophone Caribbean subjects maintain vis-à-vis the French language, this language is undoubtedly part of the history of the region. It informs the Creole language, it is in public administration, it is used in official documents, and most first and last names are in French. Given the historically rooted basis of the French language in French-based Creole speech community, and yet given that the language is quite distant from the day-to-day activities in

most social settings, and is not spoken in most households, the concept of “heritage” language seems to be a more appropriate appellation for the French language in the region.

Under the right learning conditions, Haitians can develop robust competencies in French by establishing the similarities and the differences between the two languages and building on that to engage students in both linguistic and cognitive progression. Any successful teaching of French in Haiti should be based on the following two basic premises: that the greatest part of the population does not speak French at home, and that Creole is not broken French, neither “a maladie de pauvres”, a patois, or a jargon. This would be the basis for a language taught as a heritage language. After all, language appropriation and language re-appropriation, in the case of Haiti in particular, would imply knowing Creole as one’s mother tongue, and developing varying competencies in French, Spanish, and English.

What this would look like is that, at the end of secondary school, students would have a firm basis in their home language, in Creole, and varying competencies in French, Spanish and English. In terms of mobility, if the opportunity arises, they should be able to conduct studies in any anglophone, francophone, and spanophone country, yet without suffering the loss, the existential crisis, the crisis of identity, and the infirmity that accompany the fact of losing one’s mother tongue or being deprived of it.

In this work I have sketched the basic principles and rationales for a plurilingual Caribbean speech community. Granted, putting in place a program like this, which would parallel what is happening in Europe, would require concerted effort to develop effectively. But a fundamental starting point must include the recognition that the francophone Caribbean subjects are not deficient beings, that their Creole language can be used at all levels of their

education, and that they can learn French, Spanish, and English to make themselves both more fulfilled and able to engage in a competitive, mobile, and multilingual world market.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Language (re)appropriation in the francophone Caribbean region:

Challenges and perspectives

In discussing the work of the Israeli writer Aharon Appelfeld, Claudine Haroche (2014) laments a crisis of language in Appelfeld that we can also term an existential crisis. Appelfeld discussed the predicament he faced upon going to Palestine in 1946 after surviving the holocaust: “il se retrouve ‘sans langage: il ne parle plus l’allemand, pas encore l’hébreu qu’il se voit contraint d’apprendre’” (Kindle Locations 1551-1557). As Haroche remarks, Appelfeld found himself to be in effect a speaking subject without a language. Appelfeld realized the handicap of someone who has lost his mother tongue: “un homme qui perd sa langue maternelle est infirme pour la vie” Appelfeld says (cited in Claudine Haroche Kindle Location 1569). Likewise, the Irish novelist James Joyce recognized how his Irish English was being dominated by the English of England, that is, how it was the language of the conquered in relation to the language of the conqueror. As Joyce put it in a comment about his English mentor: “The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine.” Joyce, considering how his perception of words such as “master” and “Christ” differed from that of his mentor, exclaims that “I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech” (254). Joyce adds “My soul frets in the shadow of his language” (254).

The cases of Appelfeld, who felt he had lost his mother tongue, and Joyce, who felt his soul was terrified “in the shadow of language,” are reminiscent of Franz Fanon, who held that “to speak is to exist,” and specifically, “to exist for others.” Given that one must exist for

oneself prior to existing for others, in an Hegelian sense, we might just say “to speak is to exist.” This formulation also finds reverberation in Descartes’ “*cogito ergo sum*,” considering that speaking is the channel by which thinking expresses, externalizes, or materializes itself. The act of speaking can be a primary means by which a person may self-actualize, such that in a sense we could say ‘I speak or I communicate via language therefore I am.’ A social being moves beyond inert existence by having a voice. The struggle for existence for humanity has always been a struggle for a voice. This reconceptualization of Descartes’ work puts us closer to the first part of Fanon’s formulation, that is, “to speak is to exist.”

Given the fundamental nature of such considerations, the dilemma a subject would face when feeling deprived of a mother tongue is not surprising. This crisis of language is at the core of our reflection on language issues in the francophone Caribbean region. In this respect, this work attempts to find ways to participate in this conversation. It emphasizes how language contributes to a subject’s development, be it a first or mother tongue (through which the speaker has seized his or her first sensations in life), or be it through other languages that have some level of life impact. We are also concerned with understanding the rupture that often accompanies this existential crisis.

I have asked why Caribbean subjects have experienced such difficulties appropriating and re-appropriating the linguistic resources available to them. Addressing this question has required that we engage in a re-conceptualization of language in general, and we have focused on the speech community that composes the francophone Caribbean region in particular. The formation of the Creole language in this community has been analyzed as the product of underlying linguistic re-appropriation, and this as part of a process involving several elements: an externalization of the self and its values, sublimation, and a re-

appropriation. At heart a process of linguistic re-appropriation, it has been further examined as occurring, and receiving its impetus within, a post-colonial framework marked by a French-dominant language ideology.

This work fundamentally focuses upon a primary challenge and a perspective or approach related to language. A primary challenge is the recognition that the language problem of the francophone Caribbean region is a primarily constructed problem, not something fixed in stone. What this community has faced is an ideologically saturated view of language purism and hierarchy that makes the Caribbean subject miss opportunities afforded by both Creole, the home language, and French, the language traditionally situated in a dominant position. According to this ideology, the subject is viewed as a deficient speaking subject, and Creole is viewed as a deviant patois, not worthy of being used as tool in the construction of knowledge. This work also has focused on the perspective of language re-appropriation as a counter-discourse, a discourse of *contre-parole à la Paul Celan*, that recognizes and overcomes the deficit discourse. Considering efforts to understand and meet the aforementioned challenge (such as the present work hopes to be), the challenge in a sense becomes an integral part of the perspective, and task of re-appropriation, rather than serving merely as a driving force that hampers re-appropriation.

Although the notions of object, subject, creation, and sublation derived from the work of Hegel are elements of our argument, it is the work of Daniel Miller that provides the key theoretical concepts that underpin our reflection on language, appropriation, and re-appropriation (or the lack thereof). Miller draws on the work of Hegel, Marx, Simmel, and Munn to frame his theory of culture. His use of Hegel is primarily concerned with the notion of “objectification” that Miller has recontextualized. Hegel uses the concept of

“objectification” to address the question of subject-object dualism, a preoccupation of Western thought from Descartes to Kant. He is particularly interested in the dialectical relationship that exists between subject and object. Miller does not see culture as existing beyond the realm of subjects, rather, that subject and object exist "...in a mutually constitutive relationship which itself exists only as a part of the process of its own realization" (27). The notion of “rupture” is what attracts Miller initially to the work of Marx. Miller acknowledges the role of rupture in the creation and development of subjects in the work of Marx, for whom theoretical accounts of the world should be about its transformation, as opposed to abstract philosophical grounds. As per Miller, the development of the subject constitutes a very basic differentiating element in the writings of Hegel and Marx. Recall that Miller rejects adopting Marx’s notion of “rupture,” and instead favors Hegel’s framing of externalization "...as the process of objective form arising both through fragmentation into the particular, and resolution through abstraction" (42).

The particular strength of Miller’s theory of culture is in its reconceptualization of the condition of rupture between the individual and the external world. It emphasizes the struggle for the subject to re-appropriate that which the subject has created. He further finds in the work of Simmel and Munn resources to substantiate his arguments by showing how the subject converges toward self-empowerment by re-appropriating available resources. Applied to the issue of language, Miller’s notion of objectification allows, on the one hand, for an analysis of the emergence of linguistic communities in the post-slavery francophone Caribbean as a process of externalization and sublimation. It is worth recalling that, in this process, the speaking subject develops fragmentary linguistic forms, and then re-appropriates

them as a constituted language. On the other hand, this notion offers an analytic tool for studying the challenges and perspectives associated with this work of re-appropriation.

In spite of some level of progress, we still face a contemporary world that resists fairly considering creative changes. A culture of social hierarchy continues to pervade the life practices of the human race and situate human creative acts in a hierarchy that ascribes higher consideration to the values created by some groups over others. In this sense one might say that the human race is still alienated by itself, its own creative capability, its renouncement of itself. For this reason I took pains to provide substantial examples to show that the Creole language of the Francophone Caribbean region is indeed a language in every sense. This is an integral part of the approach of language appropriation and re-appropriation. With respect to this, I have used the work of DeGraff to illustrate the ability of the Creole language to empower its speakers. In the discussion on creative linguistic acts, I have drawn upon DeGraff's study of I-Creole and E-Creole, and on data on language development in the case of Haiti, to refute the labels "language deviance," "patois," and "jargon." I have suggested that we may see this language as part of language objectification, implying the struggle between subject and object, in this case, a speaking subject and a spoken-object, i.e., language. To offer tangible cases of creative language acts and how they are appropriated, I have referred to the work of DeGraff in identifying a limited number of concepts and usages currently in use in Haitian society that we can ascribe to creative language acts along with language appropriation. In the course of considering these data in terms of language appropriation and creative language acts, we emphasize that language appropriation can be conceived as part of a creative process of overcoming and preserving, where a spoken-object resists the speaking subject.

In our discussion on francophonie, language ideology, and the rupture of language re-appropriation, I have detailed how the francophone Caribbean speaking subject is challenged to benefit from the resources afforded through the Creole language and the French language due to historically-rooted perceptions of language, and to perceptions of the self that are propelled by a deficit discourse. I have shown how Langue re-appropriation is contingent upon the modes of operation of language ideology and the set of mechanisms that contribute to the construction of this language ideology.

In reading this work, it is important for the reader to bear in mind that the reflection on language in the francophone Caribbean region in this work is not constrained or limited to the local language, i.e. Creole. It is intended to serve as an invitation to accept the Caribbean subject's ability to become an active agent of the contemporary world, as opposed to being merely a passive player who is subjugated by its laws. We see language as a primary tool in this process – but in this case we are compelled to consider language in its larger dimension as a tool capable of interacting with human development. This is because developing one's voice requires a language to do so. In today's world developing such a voice also involves expressing individual thoughts in response to the thoughts of others. One must recognize that these 'thoughts' shape the world. As Bourdieu amply describes, changing the world implies changing the perception of the world, which transpires through language given that the perception of the world is a way of naming the world. Whoever has the power of naming the world maintains also the power of changing, making, remaking the world.

This analysis of the need to negate the resistance that the world might impose upon the subject has been taken up through the work of several thinkers. For this the work of Paul Celan represents a key element in our reflection on language tyranny, language alienation,

and language re-appropriation. Along with Celan as an exemplar of someone who confronted and subdued language tyranny, I have also examined the work of Canetti, Mauthner, and Kafka, whom Jacques Le Rider discusses in his assessment of authors who faced a crisis of mother tongue, and who were able to develop significant works through their non-native languages. Though in different ways, I have discussed how several literary works have engaged in contre-parole. For example, I have shown how Césaire re-appropriated the French language to submit it to a radically different finality by problematizing the issue of time and space, and constructing from the voice of the oppressed and the oppressor a language that had not been heard. I have outlined how Jacques Roumain's *Masters Of The Dew* can be construed as a re-appropriation of language in which Roumain uses the French language to further the cause of Creole speakers and to express the desiderata of a Creole community. The novel is in French, but it is also an exemplar of an author who carries the sufferings of the community in his writing. In the case of Chamoiseau, I have delineated how language re-appropriation involves a set of dynamics that are at work in creating Creole society, as exemplified in the city of Texaco. Chamoiseau re-appropriates the French language to express the Creole identity of Caribbean subjects as one textured with pluralism. The same pattern is noticeable in his *In Praise of Creoleness*, where Chamoiseau, Confiant, and Barnabe engage in a work of language re-appropriation to carry the voice of the francophone Caribbean speech community.

To provide a sense of how such a voice can gain expression in the case of the francophone Caribbean speech community, I have sketched a proposal for a Common Caribbean Language Framework with inspiration from the Common European Framework of Reference Languages set forth by the Language Unit of The Council of Europe. This

framework is based on considering the Creole language as the primary language of instruction at all levels of education, and on opening up a space for French, English, and Spanish given their role as the influential languages in the region. To support the development of the Caribbean region, those in charge of making decisions can no longer ignore the role of language in individual progress and that of the community. This point becomes even more urgent and evident when we consider how language intersects with the field of education, which is one of the key measurable indicators of human development according to the Human Development Index (HDI) published by the United Nations Development Program (see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>). The challenges and perspectives of Language (re)appropriation in the francophone Caribbean region imply that the francophone Caribbean speech community, despite the persistent obstacle of ideologically saturated views of language, can turn language into a force for the development of the subject, as opposed to an instrument of alienation. This work calls for a collapsing of the discourse of deficit, and for replacing it with a discourse of possibility.

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