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Notice of Agency in the Emergence of Creole Languages

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**Agency in the Emergence of Creole Languages:** The role of women, renegades, and people of African and indigenous descent in the emergence of the colonial era creoles. Ed. by NICHOLAS FARACLAS. (Creole Language Library.) Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pp. xiii, 246. ISBN 9789027252685. \$158 (Hb).

Reviewed by NATALIE OPERSTEIN, *California State University, Fullerton*

This collection of papers, originating mostly from the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras (UPR-RP), gives center stage to the role of women, Africans, indigenous peoples, and marginalized Europeans in the shaping of creole languages, cultures, and identities. The chapters consider the contribution of each of these groups individually, with the volume as a whole converging on the need to thoroughly integrate their input to produce a more balanced view of creole genesis. The volume also urges the research community a notch closer to the view that creolization may not be as unusual a type of language change as previously believed.

In ‘Marginalized peoples, racialized slavery and the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles’, **Nicholas Faraclas** and **Marta Viada Bellido de Luna** challenge the existing conceptual frameworks regarding the formation of creolized languages and cultures. They argue for the need for a “contextualized, multi-causal, and historicized creolistics” (39) and advocate a shift of focus to the role of women, indigenous and African descended peoples, and renegade communities in the creolization processes. In ‘African agency in the emergence of the Atlantic Creoles’, **Pier Angeli LeCompte Zambrana** and his eight collaborators argue against certain ingrained assumptions in historical

creolistics, including the assumed monolingualism and monoculturalism in West Africa and the Caribbean during the colonial period, and the preference on the part of many creolists for universalist and superstratal over substratal explanations. In ‘Women and colonial era creolization’, **Nicholas Faraclas** highlights the importance of women and their linguistic practices for creole formation, and argues for the need to ‘re-center’ women in the study of creoles.

In ‘Indigenous peoples and the emergence of the Caribbean Creoles’, **Nicholas Faraclas** and **Marta Viada Bellido de Luna** discuss the indigenous influences on Caribbean creoles and cultures based on genetic, historical, demographic, economic, and sociolinguistic data. In ‘Linguistic evidence for the influence of indigenous Caribbean grammars on the grammars of the Atlantic Creoles’, the same authors compare a set of features characteristic of Atlantic creoles against the grammars of North Arawakan languages, assumed to be closely related to the pre-conquest indigenous languages of the Antilles. Among the features examined are copular and serial verb constructions, the structure of TAM systems, and the use of the third person plural pronoun as a nominal plural marker.

In ‘*Sociétés de cohabitation* and the similarities between the English lexifier Creoles of the Atlantic and the Pacific’, **Nicholas Faraclas**, **Micah Corum**, **Rhoda Arrindell**, and **Jean Ourdy Pierre** explain worldwide similarities between English-based creoles as resulting in part from diffusion from the Atlantic to the Pacific via cohabitation between speakers of Atlantic creoles and indigenous Pacific peoples in the late 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. ‘Influences of Houma ancestral languages on Houma French’, written by the **United Houma Nation** with the collaboration from **Nicholas Faraclas** and eight other URP-PR

linguists, examines the possible influence of Houma (Muskogean) on the phonology and morphosyntax of Houma French. In 'Marginalized peoples and Creole Genesis', **Cándida González López**, with eight collaborators, offers a critique of the Founder Principle, especially as regards its application to the formation of creole languages.

This stimulating volume will be of interest to a range of readers interested in creole languages and their histories.