

A Tribute to Yves Dejean and Albert Valdman

Arthur K. Spears

Introduction

This book honors two eminent scholars in the field of Haitian Creole studies: Yves Dejean and Albert Valdman (in alphabetical order). Dejean is the leading scholar of Haitian Creole who is also a native speaker of the language, having been born and raised in Haiti. Valdman is the senior scholar in the field and has trained at Indiana University not only Dejean, but also a host of other scholars now working in Haitian Creole studies and other fields dealing with French varieties, French-lexifier creole languages, second language acquisition, and applied linguistics. Both have published prolifically on the origin and development of Haitian Creole, its grammatical structure and use, and its use in education, all key concerns of this book. Their contributions have made our field what it is today, providing the foundation and edifice that we seek to embellish with this book.

Yves Dejean

Yves Dejean was born to a middle-class family in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 1927, where he grew up speaking Creole and French. He entered the priesthood through an order in New England, where he studied theology before returning to Haiti. There he worked in the Parish of Port-Salut for nine years as a priest. While there, his attention was drawn to Creole, with a view toward using it as effectively as possible in administering to the needs of his Creole-speaking parishioners.

During his stay in Port Salut, he developed also an interest in linguistics, as a result of his desire to understand the workings of Creole in order to use it more effectively in his work. After spending nine years in Port Salut, three of them with his brother Paul, Dejean decided to work with Paul on translating parts of the Gospels from Greek into Haitian Creole, specifically the local variety spoken in and around Port Salut. By 1967, the brothers successfully finished another translation of the Gospels into a variety of Creole more suitable for use throughout country.

The translation project made even stronger Dejean's desire to pursue studies in language and linguistics. While doing the translations, Dejean took courses in Modern Hebrew at the

Jewish Community Center of Ottawa, leading to his decision to earn a Masters in Biblical Hebrew (1964) at Johns Hopkins University. In 1969, he was forced into exile by the Duvalier regime and moved to Paris. From 1970 to 1973, he took courses toward his Ph.D. in French Linguistics at Indiana University. His dissertation topic, Haitian Creole orthography, was directly linked to his career-long concern with educational problems in Haiti stemming from the use of French in instruction in a country that is overwhelmingly Creole-speaking.

After completing course work at Indiana, he finished his dissertation while holding several teaching positions in the New York City area. From 1973-1975, he taught at the New York City P.S. (Public School) 282, District 13. From 1974 on, he taught in bilingual education programs at the Brooklyn Center of Long Island University (1974-1980); New York University; and Teachers College, Columbia University (1980-1981). He was appointed as a professor of education in 1981 at the Graduate School of Bank Street College of Education. From 1986-1993, he taught language and education courses at the State University of Haiti in Port-au-Prince. More recently, he has been affiliated with the Secrétairerie d'État pour l'Alphabétisation (State Secretariat for Literacy) and FOKAL (Fondasyon Konesans ak Libète), where he has been a consultant and was provided with a grant for the preparation and publication of his most recent major work (Dejean 2006).

Although I present below a compilation of most of his formally published work, it is important to single out those books of his that have had the greatest impact on the field of Haitian Creole studies: *Dilemme en Haïti: français en péril ou péril français?* (1975), *Comment écrire le créole d'Haïti* (1980), *Aprann li* (1983), *Alfabetizasyon ak konsyans kritik* (1995a), *Alfabetizasyon san manti, manti san alfabetizasyon* (1995b), *Alphabétisation: mythes et réalité* (1997), and *Yon lekòl tèt anba nan yon peyi tèt anba* (2006). His lengthy article in *Chemins Critiques* (Dejean 2001), some of whose themes are taken up again in Dejean's chapter in this book, is a tour de force meditation on language and literacy, the politics of education, Creole in Haitian society, and Creole grammar.

Dejean's many publications do not begin to reflect his continued and out-spoken advocacy on behalf of Haiti's dispossessed, most of whom, in addition to being condemned to poverty, are also forced to suffer the indignities stemming from illiteracy. His literacy teaching textbooks, along with Valdman's, have provided pedagogical tools for Haitian society's turn to literacy through increasing instruction in Creole; his advocacy has been instrumental in government efforts to institute and expand Creole-medium instruction.

Among Dejean's proudest accomplishments are the courses he taught entirely in Creole to over three thousand students at the State University of Haiti between 1986 and 1993. His classes were the only ones taught exclusively in Creole, and they filled up quickly with the many Creole-speaking students excited by the opportunity to learn in their native language. No other faculty member used Creole solely as the medium of instruction. These students and their subsequent contributions to Haitian society will be a substantial part of his legacy and a magnificent example of how linguists and creolists can make a difference in the lives of those who speak the languages we study.

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The following compilation includes Dejean's major formally published writings.

<i>Books</i>	
1962	(with Paul Dejean) <i>Evangel dimanche ac fêtt</i> . Port-Salut, Haiti: Imprimerie St-Paul, Issy-Les Moulineaux (Seine), France.
1967	(with Paul Dejean) <i>4 Ti Liv Evanjil yo</i> . Port-au-Prince: Editions Henri Deschamps.
1974	<i>Ti liv òtograf kréyòl</i> . Montréal: Agence de presse libre du Québec.
1975	<i>Dilemme en Haïti: français en péril ou péril français?</i> New York: Les Editions connaissance d'Haiti.
1976	<i>Orthographe créole et passage au français</i> . Brooklyn, N.Y.: Privately printed.
1977	<i>Èske Bouki ak Malis konn gramè?</i> New York: Collection Toussaint L'Ouverture.
1979	<i>Nouveau voyage en diglossie</i> . Brooklyn, N.Y.: Regional Bilingual Training Research Center.
1980	<i>Comment écrire le créole d'Haïti</i> . Outremont, Québec: Collectif Paroles.
1980	<i>Matématik konsèy pou koré konésans matématik</i> . (Edition Créole). Albany, N.Y.: New York State Department of Education, Bureau of Bilingual Education.
1981	(with M. Auguste and W. Decilien) <i>Contes du folklore haïtien en créole: Sòmadelèn; Ti fi ki respékté vié grann</i> . Cambridge, Mass.: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center for Bilingual, Bicultural Education.
	(with M. Auguste and G. Lochard) <i>Contes du folklore haïtien en créole: Bòs Tayé; Fèbyin; Kondision jamè faché; Oua-dilis-Fòtiné; Malis sélé bouki; Plat manjé bouki</i> . Cambridge, Mass.: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center for Bilingual, Bicultural Education.
1981	(with M. Auguste and A. Pascal) <i>Contes du folklore haïtien en créole: Mari-Roz; Ti baton gran papa</i> . Cambridge, Mass.: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center for Bilingual, Bicultural Education.
1983	<i>Apran li</i> . Chevy Chase, Md.: Center for Humans Services.
1985	(with Bayardelle Eddy) <i>Ann reflechi sou lang nou pale a</i> . New York: Published privately.
1986	<i>Ann aprann òtograf kreyòl la</i> . New York: KAPAB.
1992	(et al.) <i>Pen nan boutèy diven nan panyen banbou</i> . FOKAL.
1995	<i>Alfabetizasyon ak konsyans kritik</i> . Port-au-Prince: Enprimri Edisyon dèz Antiy, S.A.
	<i>Alfabetizasyon san manti, manti san alfabetizasyon</i> . Port-au-Prince: Enprimri Edisyon dèz Antiy, S.A.
1997	<i>Alphabétisation: mythes et réalité</i> . Port-au-Prince: Lemète Zéphyr.
2006	<i>Yon lekòl tèt anba nan yon peyi tèt anba</i> . Port-au-Prince: FOKAL.

Articles, Book Chapters, and Reviews

1962	Réflexion sur l'orthographe du créole. <i>Bulletin de l'O.N.E.C.</i> No. 1, novembre.
1971	Review of D'Ans, André-Marcel. <i>Le Créole français d'Haïti: Études des unités d'articulation, d'expansion et de communication.</i> <i>French Reviews</i> 44 (February): 587-588.
1975	Franse se danje. <i>Sèl</i> 23-24: 32-39.
1976	Ki gro po ki alé byin ak you maléré ki pa gin rad? <i>Lakansièl</i> 4 (spécial): 15-16.
1980	Ann kase koub òtograf la. <i>Sèl</i> 48-49: 4-5.
	Fonetik pa menm ak fonolojik. <i>Sèl</i> 48-49: 36-37.
	Iv Dejan ap reponn keksyon Sèl sou nouvo òtograf kreyòl la. <i>Sèl</i> 48-49: 25-33.
	Ki wòl kreyòl la nan tout pwoblèm Ayiti? <i>Sèl</i> 48-49: 6-13.
1981	Le créole d'Haïti: débats et perspective. <i>Collectif Paroles</i> 13: 30-32.
	Aprann li kreyòl. In <i>Alphabétiser en créole</i> . Montréal: Sant N-a Rive, pp. 121-46.
	Rôle et place du créole dans les problèmes haïtiens. In <i>Alphabétiser en créole</i> . Montréal: Saint N-a Rive, pp. 81-95.
1983	Diglossia Revisited: French and Creole in Haiti. <i>Word</i> 34 (3): 189-273.
	Haiti, l'enfant terrible de la diglossie. <i>Revue de l'Université Laurentienne</i> 16(1): 3-12.
1988	Diglossia in Haiti. In <i>Geolinguistic Perspectives</i> , edited by J. Levitt, L. Ashley, and K. Rogers. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America.
1993	(Notre créole à nous. <i>Chemins Critiques</i> 3(1-2) December: 263-283.
	An Overview of the Language Situation in Haiti. <i>International Journal of the Sociology of Language</i> 102: 73-83.
1999	L'archipel nous revient créolistes et données. <i>Etudes Créoles</i> 22 (2): 85-114.
	The Native Language as a Medium of Instruction: An Issue Revisited. In <i>Race and Ideology</i> , edited by Arthur K. Spears, 93-103. Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press.
2003	Créole, école, rationalité. <i>Chemins Critiques</i> . 18 (November), < http://www.tanbou.com/2002/fall/CreoleEcoleRationalite.htm >.

Albert Valdman

Albert Valdman is the doyen of the study of French varieties and French-lexifier creole languages, having played a central role in shaping creole studies as it is today. His numerous publications on creole languages—devoted to questions of origin, development, structure, and

education—is informed by his expertise in varieties of French and second language acquisition. He joined the faculty at the University of Indiana (IU) in 1960 and capped his career there as the Rudy Professor of French and Italian, retiring in 2004. In 2000, he received France’s highest academic award, that of the *Commandeur dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques*, in honor of his efforts on behalf of French language and culture.

He was born in France in 1931. During World War II, as a young teenager, to avoid deportation to Auschwitz, Valdman and his family fled their suburban Paris home to hide in Quercy, a village in southwestern France. There, out of school for two years, he worked as a shepherd and was exposed to the local variety of the Occitan language (also called *Langued’oc* or *Provençal*). This led to his interest in language and learning English from the only book he had, *L’anglais en sixième*. This rural experience is one that he has subsequently found very useful in fieldwork. Valdman was eventually exfiltrated to Spain and then sent to the United States (Philadelphia), where he entered high school. After graduating valedictorian of his class, he was offered full scholarships to the University of Pennsylvania.

At first he pursued a major in chemistry but soon switched to Romance languages, encouraged by Pierre Delattre, the eminent French phonetician. On Delattre’s recommendation also, he applied for graduate studies at Cornell University, then the leader in American structuralist linguistics. At Cornell, he studied with Robert A. Hall, Jr., the famous pidgin/creole scholar; but, Hall never taught a course on the subject while Valdman was at Cornell. It was Hilde Wieners, later to become Valdman’s wife, who prompted him to work on Haitian Creole. His primary interest in Haitian, and other creoles, was to respond to the need for teaching materials and reference works. This early endeavor led to the creation of such materials for three French-lexifier creoles: Haitian, St. Lucian, and Louisiana Creole.

Valdman’s Ph.D. in French Linguistics was earned at Cornell University in 1960; his dissertation was “A Descriptive Phonology of Standard French.” From 1957-59, he was a linguist at the Foreign Service Institute. From there he went to Pennsylvania State University for a year, and then on to IU, where he remained until retirement. Most recently, he has launched a major research project on social and regional variation in Haitian Creole, funded by the National Science Foundation. Although Haitian Creole is the most studied of creole languages, before this study there had been no significant research on Creole within sociolinguistic, variationist framework (see Valdman in this volume). He also recently received a Mellon Foundation Fellowship for lexicographic research on Louisiana French.

Among the many prestigious fellowships and awards he has received are the following: a Guggenheim Fellowship for research on variation in Standard French at the Centre d’Etudes des Relations Interethniques de Nice (CERIN), University of Nice (1968); a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship for research on the standardization of Haitian Creole, Haiti (1985); a Doctorate honoris causa, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland (1991); *Chevalier* (1986), *Officier* (1993), and *Commandeur* (1998) in the *Ordre des Palmes Académiques* (France); the Florence Steiner Prize, awarded by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) for distinguished service for foreign language education (post-secondary) (1998); the Teaching Excellence Recognition Award, from the Trustees of IU (2000); and being named to the *Ordre des Francophones d’Amérique*, by the Government of Québec (2008).

Professor Valdman’s career is notable for his accomplishments as a scholar and mentor, his

research outside pidgin/creole studies, and his leadership roles at IU and in professional organizations. His publications include numerous books and over 200 articles and reviews. As a professor and mentor, he has trained over forty linguists, several of whom have gone on to distinguish themselves in Haitian Creole scholarship—Yves Dejean, Yves Joseph, and Flore Zéphir, to mention a few. He was the first chair of IU’s Linguistics Department, serving from 1963-1968, and founded the Creole Institute and the Committee for Research and Development in Language Instruction, which he chaired during its thirty-year existence. At the University of the West Indies (Jamaica), the University of Nice, Harvard University, and the University of Oregon, he has held visiting appointments. Even some creolists are unaware of his extensive contributions to second language acquisition research and applied linguistics. Valdman is the founding editor of *Studies of Second Language Acquisition* and served two three-year terms as President of the International Association of Applied Linguists. Additionally, he has served as President and Vice President of the American Association of Teachers of French.

The breadth and depth of his contributions to the study of Haitian Creole and related academic specialties, his leadership roles in various academic organizations, and the many awards he has received make it abundantly clear that he is a giant in our field, richly deserving the modest tribute offered herein.

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Even Valdman’s major publications are too numerous to list in this tribute. The following provides a brief summary of only his major books that are of special interest for Haitian Creole studies:

1970	<i>Basic course in Haitian Creole</i> . USDE Title VI Research Contract. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Research Center for the Language Sciences; The Hague: Mouton.
1978	<i>Le créole: structure, statut et origine</i> . Paris: Klincksieck.
1980	<i>Creole et enseignement primaire en Haïti. Actes du séminaire organisé à Port-au-Prince en 1979</i> . Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University.
1981	<i>Diksyonnè kreyòl-fransè anglè</i> . With S. Yoder et al. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Creole Institute.
1983	(with Robert Chaudenson and Marie-Christine Hazaël-Massieux, co-editors) <i>Bibliographie des études créoles langues et littératures</i> , Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University, Creole Institute/Paris: Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique.
1988	<i>Ann pale kreyòl: An introductory course in Haitian Creole</i> . Bloomington, Ind.: Creole Institute.
1996	(with R. Jean-Baptiste & C. Pooser, co-editors) <i>A Learner’s Dictionary of Haitian Creole</i> . Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Creole Institute.
2007	(with Iskra Iskrova, co-editor) <i>Haitian-Creole English Bilingual Dictionary</i> . Bloomington; Indiana University Creole Institute.

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<i>Edited Books</i>	
1977	<i>Pidgin and Creole linguistics</i> . Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.
1980	<i>Créole et enseignement primaire en Haïti</i> . Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.
	(with A. Highfield, co-editor) <i>Theoretical orientations in Creole studies</i> . New York: Academic Press.
1981	(with A. Highfield, co-editor) <i>Historicity and variation in Creole studies</i> . Ann Arbor, Mich: Karoma Press.
1984	(with C. R. Foster, co-editor) <i>Haiti—today and tomorrow: An inter-disciplinary study</i> . Lanham, Md.: University Press of America.

References

The following references were among the sources used in the preparation of these tributes:

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Hopkins, Tometro. 2004. Interview with Yves Dejean, January 17.

Klinger, Tom. 2000. "Focus on Creolist: Albert Valdman." *The Carrier Pidgin* 28, nos. 1-3: 1-3.

Zéphir, Flore. 2000. "Focus on Creolist: Albert Valdman." *The Carrier Pidgin* 28, nos. 13:31.