

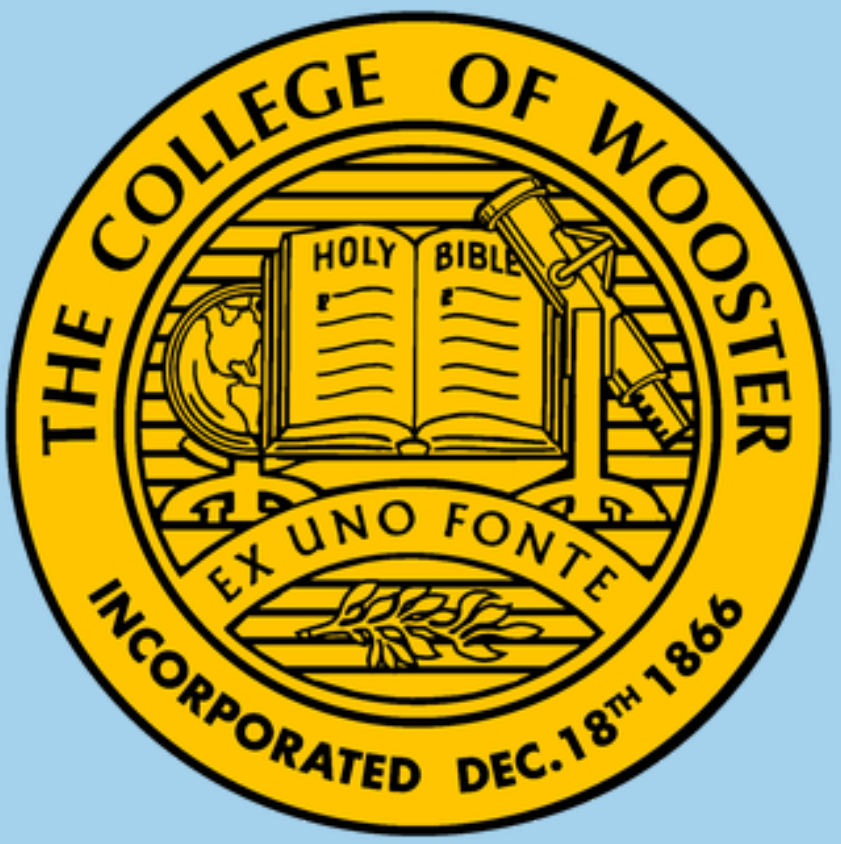
“À la fois plurielle et singulière” : Franco-Antillean and Créole Identity Negotiation in the Context of French Assimilation



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Abstract

This interdisciplinary study examines identity construction in Franco-Antillean populations (specifically Martinicans and Guadeloupeans) in the context of assimilation to a White French Republican norm. Methods included listening to online podcasts by Franco-Antillean creators (published between 2023 and 2025) and inductively coding their transcripts for themes related to categories of cultural identity. The podcasts' rich dialogue reveals that Franco-Antillean self-description is most impacted by a combination of lived experiences, a person's origins, Créole linguistic significance, regional diversity, and positional identity. These results show that Franco-Antillean identity is conditional not only on the place which you inhabit and the way you perceive yourself, but also on how others perceive you based on the French standard of universalisme. The goals of this study are to holistically highlight how Franco-Antillean individuals embrace or negotiate different aspects of their identities, and to show how intersections of race, region, and language contribute to anthropological understanding of identity.

Theoretical Frameworks

Race Double-Consciousness - W. E. B. Du Bois

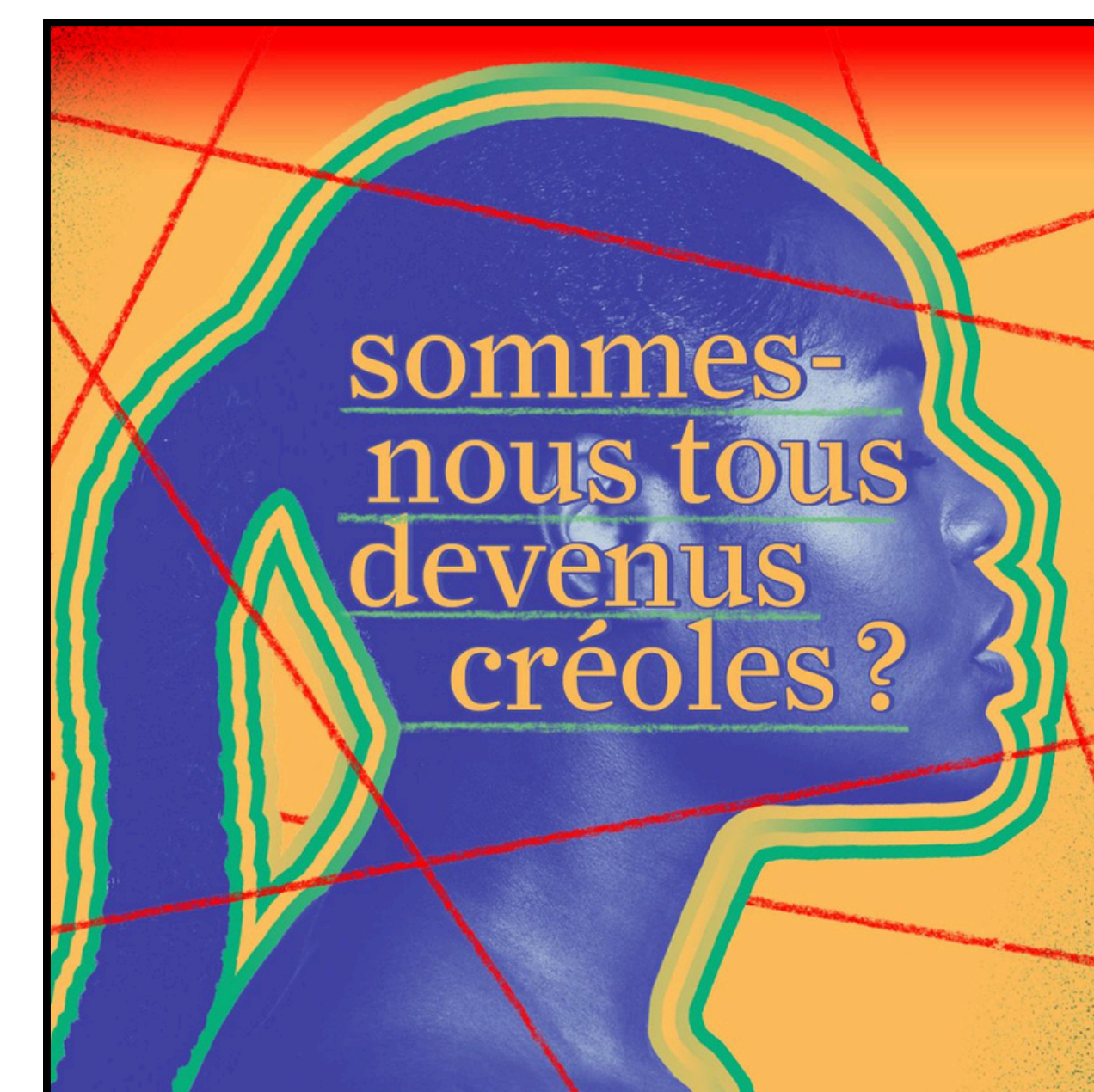
- The dual act of seeing and being seen through White lens/veil
- Relates to potential dual identities in Franco-Antillean populations

Decolonization Theory - Frantz Fanon

- Relationship between the colonizer and colonized
- Lived experiences/interactions with racist White French people

“Decolonizing” Anthropology - Akhil Gupta

- De-centering White and colonial perspectives in anthropology
- Highlighting voices that are overlooked



Analysis and Findings

- Differences between academic racial construction and lived experiences**
 - a. Author Raphaël Confiant is the only speaker to regularly use racialized labels and discuss race in terms of skin color
- “Origines”/“racines”/familial roots = more significant than skin color**
 - a. Parents' skin colors, religions, nationalities, backgrounds
 - b. Ex: speaker with a White father and Black mother does not describe herself as mixed race/“mixte”/“métisse” yet highlights her parents' “races”
- La langue créole**
 - a. To know créole affirms your Antillean identity
 - b. Scared of losing their accent - linguistic assimilation
 - c. “Je regrette que la langue créole n’ait pas plus de place dans ma vie” (Aurore, Ladjé Kow, 2025)
- The diversity of the Antilles: la pluralité et la singularité**
 - a. Antillean = unique because it is both a singular and multicultural identity
 - b. To be Antillean is to implicitly acknowledge your island's diversity
 - c. Having only one identity is impossible - Franco-Antillean = “un mix de tout”
- Locational identity: being in France, vs. being French**
 - a. Some speakers identify/resonate with the label “Français(e)”, while others completely reject it
 - b. Identity changes depending on how they experience the White métropole and its gaze, opportunities they receive, etc.

Literature Themes

- French universalisme and communautarisme
- Colonization and departmentalization
- Assimilationist Republican values
- “Éloge de la Créolité” : the Créole manifesto
- Afro-Francophone movements: Négritude
- Créolité, Antillanité, and Créolisation
- Franco-Antillean lived experiences, migration
- “Liminal” identities - Antilleanness and Frenchness

“Quand j’étais en Martinique, j’étais Martiniquaise, j’étais pas Antillaise. Et quand on arrive en métropole, moi, je suis devenue Antillaise [...] C’est vraiment en arrivant en métropole que toutes ces barrières entre les îles, elles sont complètement cassées” (Aurore, Ladjé Kow, 2025).

Methods

- Listened to Franco-Antillean online interview/panel podcasts
- Created podcast transcripts using Microsoft Word Dictation
- Worked with 2 native French speakers at the College to check podcasts' accuracy
- Coded transcripts for manifest and latent themes
- Recognized positionality: White American college student, nearly fluent in French, potential cultural misunderstandings

References

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Conclusions

- The diversity of responses parallels that of the Franco-Antillean world itself.
- Race, language, and culture are social constructs! Identities will be constructed differently in every place and cannot be homogenized.
- Créole and Franco-Antillean identity is always shifting based on trends in populations and controversial discussions (particularly of race).
 - “Les identités ne sont jamais fixes, elles ne sont jamais statiques” (Myriam Moïse, Portail des Outre-Mer, 2023).
- Future Research: formal interviews with Martinican or Guadeloupean participants, asking about experiences with upbringing, assimilation, and identity shifts.
- Exploring implications of modern-day integration standards, immigration from les Antilles to France.

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