

With sincere
good wishes, Wally. 2/xii/63
I leave for the Univ. of the W.I.
at St. Augustine, Trinidad, in
June, 1964.

A Caribbean Sister for Krio

BY

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[From SIERRA LEONE STUDIES, June, 1962.]

BOOK REVIEW

A Caribbean Sister for Krio

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Introducing Jamaica Talk ¹ by *Frederic G. Cassidy to Krio speakers and scholars*

IN his recent article ² on the origins of Krio vocabulary Professor Berry does not neglect words brought in by non-native Colonists—"Settlers" and Maroons. The former were "freed slaves who had fought for the British in the American War of Independence and were later settled in Nova Scotia or had become destitute in Britain (the 'Black Poor')", Maroons were those from Nova Scotia who had originally been deported from Jamaica, convicts from Barbados and disbanded troops from the 2nd and 4th West India Regiments.

The arrival of these newcomers could be described in the words of a West Indian calypso as a kind of "colonization in reverse".

Professor Berry points out that "the lexical, grammatical, and phonological parallels between Krio and the English of the Caribbean are too striking and too regular to be due entirely to chance", and quotes the following interesting correspondences:

Krio /anc/	Jamaican <i>hanch</i> , "ant"
/fambul/	<i>fambl</i> , "family"
/arata/	<i>rata</i> , "rat"
/papisho/	<i>pypisho</i> , "puppet-show"
/na/	<i>ina</i> , "into" or Portuguese "na"
/woram/	<i>worəm</i> , "worm"
/jonjo/	<i>jonjo</i> , "mushroom"
/banga/	<i>banga</i> , "palm kernels"

It seems that we are approaching the point where we shall soon be able to ascertain in some detail how far Krio is the development of one or more New World dialects and what are, in fact, its genetic affinities with the English (and other) creole dialects of the West Indies.

For the West Indies—and I use this word in a very broad sense—our materials are a number of important monographs on the English creole dialects of Surinam published by the Bureau for Linguistic Research in Surinam (University of Amsterdam),³ the first two

¹ Cassidy, Frederic G. *Jamaica Talk*, London, 1961.

² Berry, J. "The Origins of Krio Vocabulary," *Sierra Leone Studies*, (No. 12 (New Series), Dec. 1959, pp. 298-307.

³ e.g. Rens, L. L. E. *The Historical and Social Background of Surinam Negro English*; Voorhoeve, J. *Voor studies tot een beschrijving van het sranan tongo*.

numbers of *Creole Language Studies*,¹ the first-fruits of work carried out by the Linguistic Survey of the University College of the West Indies over the last ten years, and a host of articles on problems concerning individual dialects or the relationship of groups of dialects scattered among the learned journals since 1945.

A dictionary of Jamaican English, shortly to be published under the joint editorship of Professor Cassidy and Professor R. B. le Page is eagerly awaited.

For Krio a growing corpus of serious articles is becoming available, especially in *Sierra Leone Studies*.²

To whet the appetite of Krio speakers and scholars for this kind of study I wish to introduce Professor Cassidy's new book, *Jamaica Talk*. I believe that this book will show students of Krio that it is worth their while to become familiar with the work on the dialects of the West Indies which has so far been carried out.

Professor Cassidy was born and brought up in Jamaica. He has returned to the island a number of times and worked at the University College of the West Indies as Fulbright Research Fellow, visiting all parts of the countryside and the capital city, Kingston, with his questionnaires and portable tape-recorder and scouring the published sources for the speech of other centuries in the library of the Institute of Jamaica and in the Library of the University College with his colleagues of the Linguistic Survey of the British Caribbean.

His book is divided into two parts, one on History, Pronunciation, and Grammar, and the other on Jamaican Vocabulary.

The first part is divided into four chapters on Jamaicanisms, Sources of Jamaican Talk, Jamaican Pronunciation, and Jamaican Grammar. Among the Jamaicanisms, which Professor Cassidy classifies under the heads of "preservations, borrowings, new formations, transferred meanings, new formations, and special preferences" are *moonshine* for "moonlight", *kushu* "cashew", *skellion* "scallion", *garden egg* "egg-plant", *reduck* "reduce" (probably a back-formation from *reduction*), *fee-fee* "whistle", *Fancy-Anna* "poinciana", *scaveach* "a method of preparing fish

¹ Le Page, R. B., and De Camp, David. *Jamaican Creole*, London, 1960; Le Page, R. B. (ed.). *Proceedings of the Conference on Creole Language Studies*, London, 1961.

² e.g. Jones, E. D. "Some Aspects of Sierra Leone Patois or Krio," *Sierra Leone Studies*, No. 6, 1956, and "Some English Fossils in Krio", *Sierra Leone Studies*, No. 12 (New Series), Dec. 1959, and the article by Professor Berry already cited.

with vinegar ; from Spanish *escabeche* ". Many live Jamaican forms give a new slant on forms listed in the *OED* and, as may be expected, a fair number of early forms collected by Professor Cassidy antedate those collected in that great dictionary.

Of the sources of Jamaican talk the most important are English of various kinds and African of various kinds. As Jamaican Africanisms include a high proportion of Twi forms this may be the explanation of the presence of Twi-words in Krio as suggested by Professor Berry.¹

Creolization had been going on apace by the middle of the eighteenth century and by that time many writers complain of the "Broken Way of talking" of the planters' children. Here is a snatch from a conversation with a creole lady :

"Pray, miss Louisa, will you permit me to help you to a bit of turkey ; it is very fine."

"Tank you, sir, *wid* all my *haut*."

"Pray miss, what part do you like best ?"

"Sir, Ise don't love turkey rump—Ise love turkey bubby."

It is in the grammar that Jamaican speech differs most from educated speech and this situation goes back to the period of pidginization when master and slave used a rather amorphous *lingua franca* to communicate. The slaves, too, being drawn from different parts of Africa and deliberately mixed on the plantations, used this speech amongst themselves. As soon as this language became someone's mother tongue a creole language was born. Professor Cassidy believes that certain Niger-Congo structural patterns have been preserved in Jamaican talk. Some scholars do not subscribe to this theory but it is widely held and applied to other creole (French and Portuguese as well as English) dialects in the West Indies and in several other parts of the Old World.

By printing a small sample of Jamaican speech at the end of this article I hope to give some impression of the appearance of the present dialect.

I shall turn now to the second part which deals with the vocabulary and at this stage may be of most interest. This part covers Work and Occupations, Seasons and Places : Measurements, Parts of the Body : Bodily Conditions, People : Races and Types, Domestic and Social Life, Religion, Belief, Superstition, John Canoe : Other Entertainments, Wild Animals, Birds, Fish, Plants. It also contains

¹ op. cit., p. 306.

a full and useful bibliography which will open new vistas to the Krio comparativist.

As it is impossible to review all the words dealt with by Professor Cassidy I shall confine myself to those to which I wish to add something or from which (and this rarely) I may wish to subtract something.

/koko-/ or /Kuku-maka/ (p. 87), "kind of walking-stick or cudgel famed for its hardness." The Haitian form may be an adaptation. *crawl* (p. 95), the Jamaican version of Afrikaans *kraal* is more likely a West African derivation of *corral* from Portuguese than from Spanish.

pulp-eye (p. 136), seems to be a malapropism for "pop-eye". Even after the Dictionary is published there will be plenty of work to be done on malapropisms, which include such thinly disguised versions of well-known standard expression such as *trump-up* for "stump up" (contribute one's share), *come down to brass facts* "... to brass tacks", *buff teeth* "buck teeth".

gander (p. 141), "to walk or run" is compared with *EDD gander* "wander, ramble aimlessly". Perhaps it may be related to Ulster *dander* "ramble".

buck (p. 144), "butt." This substitution of *k* for *t* is probably not to be related to the substitution of *k* for *t* and *g* for *d* in words such as /sekl/ "settle", /brikl/ "brittle", /wiklo/ "whitlow", /figl/ "fiddle", /rigl/ "riddle", /niigl/ "needle", /bringgl/ "brindle", /kyaangl/ "candle", /dwinggl/¹ "dwindle". I suspect that [k] and [g] in these words are members respectively of phonemes /t/ and /d/ and occur before [l].

crab (p. 151), "to scratch" may be "to claw as a crab does" as defined by Professor Cassidy. It may also be related to Ulster *scrab* "scratch". In northern Ireland cats *scrab*. Cf. *krach* < "scratch".

waiting-boy (p. 166). Add *snake waiting-boy* for a variety of lizard. *tinnen* "made of tin". The latest citation given for this word by the *OED* is 1653. It is rightly recorded as an excellent "preservation". Its survival is no doubt due to its usefulness in avoiding homonymic clashes with *tin*, the dialect version of "thin".

¹ In a letter published in the *Daily Gleaner* (Kingston) in late 1960 a correspondent complains of the low standards of literacy of modern Jamaican children and recommends (amongst other reading matter) the "Biddles" (i.e. Biggles) stories. Ironically, his letter was intended as an attack on Jamaican dialect studies.

banana-figs (p. 199). *Figs* are bananas in the islands where French Creole is spoken. This use may have an Afro-Portuguese origin which may also explain Hong Kong Portuguese *figo* "banana" and *figo de Portugal* (Portuguese fig) "fig".

mempau (p. 199), "bread" is Hakka Chinese. Many of the groceries and bakeries in Jamaica are owned by Chinese, most of whom speak Hakka. Many Jamaicans know Hakka expressions such as *tong-nyin* "a Chinese", *peaka-peow* a popular illegal gambling game usually organized by Chinese, *uk-kwee* an insulting term for "Negro". The phonetic development of *clapper* "fire-cracker" may be partly due to Chinese intervention. The Hakka-speaker, like the Cantonese, substitutes *l* for *r*. This would give *clacker* which, by dissimilation and "striving-after-meaning", is easily resolved as *clapper*.

Pop-chow, etc. (p. 394), is *Pak choy*, Hakka and Cantonese "white vegetable".

water-mumma (p. 252). Also *river-maid*, *sea-mammy*, *rubba-Missis*, *fair-maid*, *river mumma*. In Surinam they have a *watra-mamma*, in Trinidad and elsewhere the *mamma glo* (de l'eau), in Brazil the *mãe de água*.

rat-bat (p. 283), "bat" *Bat* means (large) "moth" as in Ulster (see also p. 295).

junjo fly (p. 291), "a blue fly which comes where anything is sour." *Junjo* is the generic folk-name for "fungus" and appears in Professor Berry's list. It also occurs in British Guiana; and in Haiti and other "French" West Indian islands as *djondjon*. A local Spanish variant is *yonyón* from Puerto Rico. Professor Alvarez Nazario believes that this word has ultimately a Bantu origin.

John-Crow (pp. 308-9), "turkey-buzzard." It seems to me that this is *Kyang-Kro* (< carrion crow), become *jang-kro* by folk etymology. OK

Here, now, is a sample story in Jamaican dialect. It is included as Appendix II in Professor Cassidy's book. There is some "contamination" by standard forms and constructions.

/Wans apan a taim, Breda Anansi, oed dat King av a Son. Fram di die im baan im didn waak. An Breda Anansi se iing gwain to mek dat Son waak. Nou, iz pik up iz myuuzik man, wich iz tree kakruoch, dat i tuk intu a guodi, an wen ing riich about a aaf

mailz, tu di King giet, im straik up di myuuzik man. Nou, a gwain tu staat di myuuzik :

King oooo, King oooo, kimbembe King,
 King oooo, King oooo, kimbembe King,
 King Son a kom dong, kimbembe King,
 King Son a kom dong, kimbembe King.

Breda King sen out iz sorvant, an wail ing sen out ing sorvant, tu kom doun an si wat myuuzik woz dat, hout der pliein, di sorvant kom an di myuuzik woz suo swiit, dat di sorvant neva ritorn bak. Di myuuzik staatid up agen :

King oooo, King oooo, kimbembe King,
 King oooo, King oooo, kimbembe King,
 Kingz Waif a kom dong, kimbembe King,
 King Wife a kom dong, kimbembe King,
 Kingkimbembe kimbembe, kingkimbembe kimbembe,
 Kingkimbembe kimbembe, King !

Di Waif kom doun nou, an di Waif neva torn bak. Anansi strike out agen :

King oooo, King oooo, kimbembe King,
 King oooo, King oooo, kimbembe King,
 King self a kom dong, kimbembe King,
 King self a kom dong, kimbembe King,
 Kingkimbembe kimbembe, kingkimbembe kimbembe,
 Kingkimbembe kimbembe, King !

Di King imself kom doun an lef di puo bwaai dat neva waak fram di die im baan. Ing straik out agen :

King oooo, King oooo, kimbembe King,
 King oooo, King oooo, kimbembe King,
 King Son a shoff dong, kimbembe King,
 King Son a shoff dong, kimbembe King.

Den a kingkimbembe kimbembe, kingkimbembe kimbembe,
 Kingkimbembe kimbembe, kingkimbembe kimbembe, King !

Di Son imself shoff, an staatid tu waak, an kom rait doun wer di adaz iz, and der endid, di hend av dis stuori./

I hope a place will be found for *Jamaica Talk* on all liberal West African bookshelves.