FROM VAUDOUX TO VOODOO

Voodoo, vodun, voudoun, vaudoux, voudou, vodou. A bewildering choice is available to anyone – but particularly English-speakers – wanting to refer to the Afro-cultural beliefs and practices of Haiti and its diaspora. This light venture into the field of what might be called (with apologies to Clifford Geertz[1]) "thick etymology", or the politics of spelling, attempts to explain how this situation came about and why it remains problematic.

After introducing some descriptions of *vaudoux* in French-language accounts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, I go on to show how the word was borrowed by English-speaking visitors to the country during the reign of Soulouque, and subsequently acquired an association with child sacrifice and cannibalism that has proved hard to dislodge.

By the 1880s, the Anglicised form *voodoo* began to establish itself, and in the second section of the essay, I try to explain how and why it supplanted *vaudoux*, which virtually disappeared from English-language writings by the end of the century; and I argue that, while it is the result of the domestication of foreign spelling and pronunciation, the word is more alien in English than it ever was in French. This paradox explains the unusual double-life of *voodoo* in the twentieth century, the precision of which as an ethnographic term has been somewhat overshadowed by the way it has been used figuratively in a wide range of contexts: to disparage bad science, for example, or to signal persistent misfortune, or to announce one's counter-cultural credentials.

A final section considers the continuing relevance of this etymological heritage today and briefly examines the arguments for and against the spelling *voodoo*, given the range of *Kréyol* alternatives now available.

Vaudoux

In what is certainly the first extended description of the religious beliefs and practices of the slaves in colonial Saint-Domingue, the lawyer M. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry writes of a sect that worships a snake-god, whose wishes are communicated through a "king" and "queen" during a ritual that involves spirit possession. He uses *vaudoux* as a singular noun, to denote both the deity and the cult devoted to it, popular, he believes, mainly among the "nègres Aradas" from the Fon-speaking region of West Africa, whence the word derives.[2] At this time it was probably just one cult among many, although recent scholars have found evidence in his text that suggests Kongo influences in some of its rituals, anticipating the more complex, hybrid form of the religion familiar to twentieth-century observers.[3]

Indeed, the visiting naturalist M. E. Descourtliz records being told a few years later that "the *vaudoux*" – here used as a plural noun to designate its adherents – "are of different nations". His account provides anecdotal

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evidence of spirit possession, serpent-worship, and the special powers enjoyed by at least some *vaudoux* which lead them to employ charms and counter-charms against their rivals.[4] In 1814, Charles Malenfant added further observations based on his experiences as a French cavalry officer some twenty years earlier, noting the credulous trust in *vaudou* leaders on the part of the African-born slaves, although he also ridicules those whites who cruelly punish members of a sect he believes is no more dangerous than freemasonry.[5]

It is worth stressing – in view of the subsequent developments explored below – that *vaudou* or *vaudoux* is accorded no special significance in these early accounts. Detailed descriptions of religious beliefs and practices appear alongside those of many other aspects of the cultural life of the *noirs*, such as diet, clothing, music, dance and sexual mores. The predominant tone is one of somewhat patronising curiosity, flavouring a more or less ordered classification of customs.

This is true even if – as with Descourtilz and Malenfant – the books also narrate episodes of the protracted and violent struggle against slavery and colonial rule. In such cases, the ethnographic and the historical are often set apart from one another, marked by the use of the present and the past tense respectively. Still, it would be surprising if the emergence of an independent Haiti did not unsettle this bifurcation to some extent. The later commonplace that African religious beliefs played a crucial role in motivating and unifying the rebellious slaves is not supported by contemporary observers,[6] but it does take on a special force in Drouin de Bercy's *De Saint-Domingue* (1814), a detailed argument in favour of re-taking the colony (a project briefly entertained by the restored Bourbon monarchy in France). Enumerating the steps to be taken to secure order, Drouin speaks of the need to deport any armed rebels who fail to surrender when the French army first arrives. He singles out a number of superstitious sects for special attention, to which he devotes a three-page appendix, where we read:

> Le Vaudou est le plus dangereux de tous les nègres; il ne travaille que lorsqu'il ne peut pas faire autrement; il est voleur, menteur et hypocrite; il donne de mauvais conseils aux Noirs, et leur distribue des poisons subtils avec lesquels ils détruisent imperceptiblement les bestiaux, les volailles, les blancs et les nègres qui leur déplaisent.[7]

The book ends with a transcription and musical notation of a chant he translates as: "nous jurons de détruire les blancs et tout ce qu'ils possèdent, mourrons plutôt que d'y renoncer."[8]

However, this sense of foregrounded menace is quite unusual, and for the most part, accounts of the 1791 uprising produced in the first half of the nineteenth century pay relatively little attention to African religious practices. No doubt one reason *vaudoux* receded from the literature is that the practice itself was suppressed by successive governments following independence in 1804. Furthermore, visitors tended to associate with the Francophone elites in

the capital, who would have been keen to stress the modern, "civilised", nature of the new nation.

Indeed the "mulatto school" of Haitian historiographers that emerged in the 1840s would not have wanted to grant *vaudoux* any more than a marginal role in the nation's heroic progress. There are fleeting references to *sorciers*, *magiciens*, *fétiches* and *sortilèges* in Thomas Madiou's four-volume study. But *vaudou* and *vaudoux* are conspicuous by their absence, perhaps because even a hint that these magical practices possessed an underlying organisational structure would have been to concede too much.[9] The French abolitionist Victor Schoelcher was one of those who challenged the mulatto view of history, drawing attention to the cause of the black majority oppressed by a small caste. But, even so, snake worship merits only a single paragaph in his survey of the country in the 1840s, which only fleetingly indicates the prevalent use of magic charms (*wangas* and *gris-gris*). Again, no *vaudou*.[10]

When the first wave of British travellers arrived in Haiti as the debate on slave emancipation in the West Indies gathered pace in the late 1820s, they were primarily concerned with assessing economic performance and political stability. Their remarks on religion tend to focus on the corrupt and inefficient Catholic clergy, and its inability to uproot local superstitions rendered imprecisely as heathenism. At their most specific, they tend to assimilate this heathenism to the Jamaican form more familiar to their readers: *Obi* or *Obeah*.[11]

This period of suppression comes to an end during the regime of Faustin Soulouque (1847–59). Under Soulouque, *vaudoux* was encouraged, and the self-styled Emperor made use of its network of rural leaders to reinforce his authority and power (much as François Duvalier did a century later). The Baptist missionary W. W. Webley wrote home in December 1849 of the "increasing indifference of the people to religion and to the worship and service of God," noting that the "nightly orgies and the indecent dances which were formerly indulged in only by the mountain people, are now become the objects of attraction for the mass of the town's people." He is shocked to discover that these dances are considered a form of religious service and that the dancers he witnessed "were in the act of *worshipping a snake*!" And furthermore, in what is possibly the first appearance of the word in an English-language text, he remarks that "they form themselves into one vast society (called les vaudous), which almost deluges the Haitian part of the island."[12]

Soulouque was an object of morbid fascination in Europe and the United States, especially in the France of Napoleon III, with whom he was (sometimes favourably) compared.[13] In a series of influential newspaper articles (later published as a book), Gustave d'Alaux explained how the inexperienced head of state came under the influence of the "parti ultra-africain", whose "superstitions" he describes, drawing mainly on Moreau de Saint-Méry.[14]

When Edward Bean Underhill gives an account of his visit to Haiti in 1859, he too dwells at length on *vaudoux*, quoting extensively from the published

accounts both of d'Alaux and of his host Mr Webley. For Underhill, while the existence of *vaudoux* presents a challenge that missionary enterprise must overcome, it certainly is not a sign of intrinsic racial weakness. For him, the free and independent population of Haiti serves as a positive "example to the coloured inhabitants of other West Indian Islands, as well as a proof of what the race was capable [of]".[15] Their shortcomings are to be attributed to the "legacy of evil, vice, superstition, and ignorance, slavery left them".[16]

This was, however, not the only possible interpretation. The passages on *vaudoux* in Underhill (including those he quotes from elsewhere) are cited to support the arguments of a pro-slavery pamphlet published in New York during the American Civil War. Illustrating the dangers of "Free Negroism", its author finds that *vaudoux* represents not the legacy of slavery but rather the predisposition to return to "original barbarism" that will inevitably assert itself when the blacks are not "under white control".[17]

But the terms of this racist discourse were soon to be gruesomely embellished with the introduction of a new component. The figure of the cannibal has, of course, a long history, especially in the Caribbean, where the word originated.[18] However, while references to cannibalism can be found in early nineteenth-century descriptions of Haiti, this is usually as part of an inflated ideological rhetoric that makes no attempt to particularise it with concrete examples. A tract warning of the "dangers of immediate emancipation" in the British West Indies in 1833 refers ominously – but vaguely – to "human sacrifices and the feast of the dead" in the former French colony.[19] Moreau de Saint-Méry himself makes passing reference to the practice of anthropophagy in Saint-Domingue among slaves from certain parts of Africa.[20] However, no one made any attempt to associate it with *vaudoux*.

During the 1850s, this began to change. A short biography of Soulouque of 1856 adds something new to the account offered by Moreau de Saint-Méry (which it quotes by way of d'Alaux) in referring to the need for "un enfant pour le sacrifier à la Couleuvre, cette déesse jalouse!"[21] More dramatically, a travel narrative published a few years later cites at length the testimony of a Haitian army officer, who claimed to have secretly witnessed a ceremony at which, as the subsequent appearance of an infant's leg on a neighbouring beach is supposed to confirm, a child must have been ritually killed.[22] But the decisive moment came in February 1864 with the trial and execution of eight men and women for the cannibalistic murder of a young girl the previous December in the village of Bizoton, near Port-au-Prince. The "Affaire de Bizoton" attracted a good deal of foreign interest, but it might have passed into obscurity had it not been for the publication of an infamous book by Spencer St John, who was British Minister to Haiti at the time.[23]

St John makes a great deal of the case in his chapter on "Vaudoux Worship and Cannibalism". He quotes extensively from Moreau de Saint-Méry, suggesting that little has changed in a hundred years, but then draws on more recent eyewitness accounts to suggest that Saint-Méry's "excellent

description" may have missed one crucial fact: prevalent (if secret) child sacrifice. As well as providing a detailed account of the 1864 trial, St John draws on the testimony of fellow diplomats, medical friends and local newspapers to authenticate instances of cannibalism going back to the 1850s, often, but not always, associated with "the society of the Vaudoux". To say that much of this is elaborated in a single chapter of a book that also has much to say about history, government, education, language, agriculture and so on would be to miss the central role *vaudoux* plays in the text as a whole. It is present everywhere, and indeed is the main subject of the Introduction, in which the author works hard to make his conclusions sound less credulous by stressing the difficulty he had in writing about the topic.

The failure of the Haitian elite to acknowledge fully the existence of cannibalism and to act decisively against it epitomises, for St John, all that is wrong about the "black republic". And his influence was enormous. Henceforth, travel accounts became obsessed with *vaudoux*, now considered the key to understanding Haiti, which was increasingly figured as dense and impenetrable, where before it was anomalous but fully open to inspection. Distrusting its thin civilised veneer, foreign visitors now attuned their readers to the sound of distant drums, booming from the interior after nightfall.[24]

Voodoo

Six months before the "Affaire de Bizoton", another trial took place that also attracted international attention. On 31 July 1863, the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* reported how an officer of the occupying Union army entered a building on Marais Street and "found about forty naked women – all colored except two – who were dancing the Voudou dance and performing rites and incantations pertaining to that ancient African superstition yclept Voudouism."[25] The police arrested about twenty of them, who appeared in court the following day, although charges were dropped soon afterwards. But the episode was not forgotten: indeed it forms the main substance of the entry on *vaudou* in Larousse's *Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIXe Siècle* (1876).[26] The choice of word here suggests a connection between the religious beliefs and practices of Louisiana and Haiti, almost certainly reinforced by waves of immigration, especially in 1809, when the population of New Orleans almost doubled with the arrival of Saint-Domingue refugees from Cuba. But it would be difficult to distinguish between these cultural forms and those brought by slaves directly from Africa.[27]

The *Daily Picayune* spelling marks *voudou* as a word in Louisiana Creole, a language that was already well established when the area was under French colonial rule and continued to be widely spoken when control passed to Spain, persisting further after the takeover by the United States in 1803. *Voudou* appears routinely in English-language newspapers in New Orleans until well after the Civil War. In George Washington Cable's novel *The Grandissimes* (1880), translations of passages in Creole leave *voudou* unchanged.[28]

Nevertheless, the "Americanisation" of Louisiana gradually leaves its mark on the word in the late antebellum period, as English suffixes are added (*voudoued*, *voudouism*) and the vowel sound is rendered with more familiar spellings (*voudow*, *vodoo*, *voudoos*, *voodoued*). In what is probably the earliest serious scholarly examination of the practice – published in the first issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* (1888) – it is claimed (somewhat prematurely) that the form *voodoo* is the one now "commonly written in the United States".[29] While it does not entirely displace *voudou*, within a decade it will see off *vaudoux*. The author of this article, William Newell, otherwise has nothing to say about this orthographical shift. But we might observe that, paradoxically, the Anglicisation or Americanisation that produces *voodoo* gives us a word that is more exotic in English than *vaudoux* is in French. *Voodoo* cannot be mistaken for an English word; it cannot be broken down into familiar morphemes, and indeed its *oo* sound and internal rhyme aligns it (for imperial ears, at least) with the language of children and savages (cf. *gris-gris*, *ju-ju*, *mumbo jumbo*).

Vaudoux, on the other hand, looks and sounds like a word of French derivation: it includes *doux* and an echo of a form of the verb *valoir*, for instance. Newell, in fact, insists that it is indeed of French origin, adducing a good deal of evidence to suggest that it comes from *Vaudois*, a name given to the followers of mediaeval heretic Peter Valdo of Lyons, and subsequently transformed into a common noun meaning witch or sorcerer. The slaves of Saint-Domingue, he argues, borrowed from European colonists not only the word, but very probably their occult practices too, since he identifies considerable parallels between them.

But what is of perhaps most importance to Newell is that these practices have been grossly misrepresented. Just as the witchcraft persecutions of early modern Europe were based on largely unsubstantiated accusations, so is the more recent craze of books like that of Spencer St John. Newell dismisses the widespread identification of *vaudoux* and cannibalism, not by denying the existence of human sacrifice completely, but by asserting:

> I do not see any reason to suppose that child sacrifice is more common in Hayti than in Massachusetts, where a notorious case has occurred within a few years, or cannibalism for the purpose of satisfying appetite more frequent than in various European countries, where similar acts are matters of record.[30]

This is a refreshing and sensible claim, no doubt, but in Newell's text its force relies on his having successfully demonstrated the European origins of *vaudoux*. He senses, I think, that the association between Africa and savagery (and therefore cannibalism) is so strong that as *voodoo* begins to displace *vaudoux*, his argument is going to sound less convincing.

And although his etymology is profoundly mistaken, his instincts were essentially sound. For while his derivation was repeated by respectable dictionaries and encyclopediae well into the first two decades of the twentieth century, it was not to last. The triumph of *voodoo* went hand in hand with a

consolidation of the cannibalistic motif, as shifting international relations meant that Haiti found its public image more likely to be in the hands of US Marines than British missionaries.

This is evident above all in a number of popular travel accounts by North American visitors during the American occupation of the country (1915–34), and the fascination was soon taken up by the film industry, starting with Victor Halperin's *White Zombie* (1932).[31] The tradition found a new lease of life during the Duvalier era, whose brutal practices of repression coincided with an official appropriation of traditional religious symbols. Meanwhile, the term began to be more widely used to refer, slightingly, to almost any traditional magico-religious practice, whether believed to be of African origin or not. Nowadays, it is also employed as a metaphor to express disdain for rival policies, procedures or bodies of knowledge (hence "voodoo economics" and also, by extension, "voodoo programming"), or to evoke inexplicably persistent misfortune (the Bermuda Triangle is also known as the "Hoodoo Sea", for example, and "cup hoodoo" – a run of bad luck in knock-out competitions – is an expression familiar to readers of British sports journalism).[32]

But alongside this positivist strain that uses the word in a negative sense, there is a romantic tendency in the rhetorical inflation of *voodoo* that gives it a more positive value. The vocabulary of *voodoo*, sympathetically embedded in African American literature and music for a century or more, now circulates widely in mainstream Euro-American popular culture as a sign of "alternative" sophistication, from *Voodoo Lounge* (1994), a late album by the Rolling Stones, to William Gibson's science-fiction novel *Count Zero* (1986), which imaginatively draws on it to suggest a new cosmology for cyberspace.

Vodou

Yet *voodoo* never reigned supreme in English-language accounts. Shortly after the US occupation of Haiti – which had nurtured some of the most lurid voodoo tales hitherto – an anthropologist published what was to be a very influential monograph based on his fieldwork in the Mirebalais valley. Melville J. Herskovits challenged half a century's sensational misrepresentation with an overwhelming emphasis on the ordinary, conventionalised, undramatic life of the Haitian peasant, whose religion he calls, "following native pronunciation", *vodun*.[33]

Later studies by English-speaking scholars make use of *vodun* or recognisable variants: *voudoun* or *vaudun*. And this shift is paralleled in French-language accounts, published in the wake of Jean Price-Mars's path-breaking *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (1928), the first substantial ethnographic study of peasant culture in Haiti.[34] Price-Mars writes *vaudou*, but those who come after him tend to turn away from the French term and have largely preferred *vodou*, although there have been advocates also of *vodu*, and of the rather unusual *vaudoo*.

One can note that the main difference between the preferred spellings of English- and of French-speaking anthropologists is the use by the former of the final *n*. But in the last decade or so, there have been signs of a growing convergence. The editors of a book published in association with an exhibition that toured the United States in the 1990s, *The Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou*, lightly imposed this spelling on its various contributors.[35] It seems that *vodou* is gaining acceptance in less academic writing in English too. The *Lonely Planet* guidebook to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, for instance, uses this form without further comment.[36]

This variation in spelling may be partly explained by the existence of several systems of orthography for the language most commonly spoken in Haiti. Only since 1979, when the system introduced by the Institut Pédagogique National (IPN) was granted official status by the government, has standardisation begun to look possible. The main point, though, is that orthography is not simply a question of approximating "native pronunciation". Consider the name of the language itself: by spelling it *Creole* one emphasises the predominantly French roots of its vocabulary, but *Kréyol* accentuates its distinctively Afro-Caribbean formation.

Vodou is one of the few words in *Kréyol* that is of demonstrably African origin, and even though Moreau de Saint-Méry knows this, he writes it *vaudoux*, assimilating it to French spelling conventions. As I have shown, English-language accounts were initially content to take over *vaudoux* unchanged (with the result that the religion would appear somewhat more outlandish to their readers than to their French counterparts). Anyone today translating nineteenth-century French texts about Haiti into English would be advised to follow suit. But in the twentieth century, *voodoo* becomes available, and for that reason seems right for the English translation of *vaudou* in Price-Mars's work of 1928.[37] However, when scholars begin to take note of *Kréyol* forms, translations ought to reflect this. Although the title of Alfred Métraux's popular monograph is *Le vaudou haïtien* (1958), his scholarly articles use *vodou*, and so to publish it in English as *Voodoo in Haiti* fails to register the orthographical changes over the preceding thirty years.[38] At any rate, the case for *voodoo* here is not so clear cut.

But it is important to recognise that *voodoo*, *vaudou* and *vodou* are not words for the same thing. *Voodoo* is not simply the English equivalent of *vodou*, as Bob Corbett claims in his article on "The Spelling Voodoo".[39] On the one hand, *vodou* has a quite precise ethnographic reference (as do *obeah* and *santería*, two other Caribbean religions whose names have resisted Anglicisation). On the other, *vaudou* and *voodoo* are also used much more indiscriminately to hint at the presence of any form of magic or witchcraft, and usually not dependent on any assumed knowledge of Haiti at all. This is particularly the case with *voodoo* which, as I have argued, is a more exotic word in English than *vaudou* is in French, and for that reason has acquired the extraordinary rhetorical power touched on at the end of the previous section.

Anglophone and Francophone scholars began to use *vodou* in response to this semiotic slippage, in an attempt to overcome deep and long-standing misconceptions of Haitian religious beliefs and practices. It cannot be dismissed as a form of contemporary "political correctness", as Corbett implies. Those switching from *voodoo* to *vodou* are responding to a shifting semantic horizon just as those who switched from *vaudoux* to *voodoo* did a hundred years ago. In any case, Corbett confirms the importance of language when he insists on capitalising it as *Voodoo* in an attempt to stress its status as a religion rather than simply "a practice of magic".[40]

However, it would be a mistake, I think, to exaggerate the harm that *voodoo* can cause. The word is familiar, and is still widely employed in English-language writings on Haiti, often as a way of gently introducing the reader to another form (" 'Voodoo' or, more properly, *vodou* . . ."). And it would be harsh to condemn those authors who continue to insist on *voodoo*, and who claim that it is the substance of what they write about the religion that matters, not what word they use for it. Harsh, not because spelling is not important, but because, arguably, today, *voodoo* no longer looms large in the lexicon of Haiti's misrepresentations. If anything, international attention on the country has returned to the focus it had during the first half of the nineteenth century: its economic and political state.

It may be that it is not a single word that defines Haiti any more, but what Joel Dreyfuss calls "the Phrase", which

> comes up almost anytime [sic] Haiti is mentioned in the news: the Poorest Nation in the Western Hemisphere. These seven words represent a classic example of something absolutely true and absolutely meaningless at the same time [. . .]. The Phrase is a box, a metaphorical prison. If Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, that fact is supposed to place everything in context. Why we have such suicidal politics. Why we have such selfish politicians. Why we suffer so much misery. Why our people brave death on the high seas to wash up on the shores of Florida.[41]

At any rate, the Haitian Ministry of Tourism is today happy to acknowledge *vaudou* on its (admittedly *Kréyol*-free) website, which encourages both foreign visitors and inward investment.[42] For the moment, at least, it is no longer figured as a threat or an embarrassment to the elite – something which has led in the past to vigorous "anti-superstition" campaigns by the Church, most recently in the 1940s, but also haunting its alleged complicity in the vicious attacks on vodou religious leaders in the *dechoukaj* of former Duvalierists following the overthrow of "Baby Doc" in 1986.

In a more recent move towards reconciliation, the then president, former Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide, announced the consolidation of the religion's place in national life in a decree of 4 April 2003 which, in the words of the press release, promised that

> Vodou is henceforth to be fully recognised as a religion, empowered to fulfil its mission throughout the country consistent with the constitution and the laws of the Republic, pending the adoption of a law relating to its legal status.

That the New York *Daily News* chose to report this under the punning headline, "Voodoo's all rite, sez Haiti gov't", with a more or less matter-of-fact article, may well indicate that the old spelling has lost some of its bite.[43] Its power to evoke the exotic in such a wide range of contexts no longer depends on its Caribbean associations, and when it *is* used in a Haitian context, *voodoo* is now likely merely to raise a smile which, ruefully perhaps, begins to put its sensational past into perspective.

ALASDAIR PETTINGER

15 Ruthven Street
Glasgow G12 9BY
United Kingdom

NOTES

[1] C. Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture", *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London, 1975), pp. 3–30.

[2] M. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint-Domingue* [1797], 2 vols, ed. B. Maurel & É. Taillemite (Paris, 1958), Vol. 1, pp. 64–9.

[3] See D. Geggus, "Haitian Voodoo in the Eighteenth Century: Language, Culture and Resistance", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 28 (1991), 21–51.

[4] M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haiti, 1799–1803*, 3 vols (Paris, 1809), Vol. 3, pp. 180–7.

[5] Colonel Malenfant, *Des Colonies, et particulièrement de celle de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1814), pp. 215–20.

[6] See D. Geggus, "The Bois Caiman Ceremony", *Journal of Caribbean History* 25, 1–2 (1991), 41–57; and "Marronage, Voodoo and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt of 1791", *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Meeting of the French Colonial History Society*, ed. P. Galloway & P. Boucher (Lanham, MA, 1992), pp. 22–35.

[7] Drouin de Bercy, *De Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1814), p. 177.

[8] Ibid., p. 178.

[9] T. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti* [1848], 4 vols (Port-au-Prince, 1922), Vol. 1, pp. 102, 105–6, 146–7, 264–5; Vol. 3, p. 30.

[10] V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti* (Paris, 1843), Vol. 2, pp. 295–6.

[11] W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti* (New York, 1827), p. 310; C. Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, 2 vols (London, 1830), Vol. 1, p. 167; J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St Domingue* [1837], 2 vols (London, 1972), Vol. 2, p. 273.

[12] W. W. Webley, "Haiti" (letter dated 8 December 1849), *Missionary Herald*, February 1850, included in the *Baptist Magazine* 42 (London, 1850), 122–3. This passage pre-dates by 15 years the first citation recorded for *vaudoux* in the OED.

[13] See J. Dayan, *Haiti, History and the Gods* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA, & London, 1995), pp. 10–13.

[14] G. d'Alaux, *L'Empereur Soulouque et son empire* (Paris, 1856), pp. 63–78.

[15] E. B. Underhill, *The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Condition* (London, 1862), p. 167.

[16] Ibid., p. 175.

[17] J. Campbell, *Free Negroism: Or, Results of Emancipation in the North and the West India Islands* (New York, 1862), p. 13.

[18] See P. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London & New York, 1986), pp. 13–43.

[19] A. Brough, *The Importance of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (London, 1833), p. 22.

[20] Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique*, Vol. 1, pp. 49, 53.

[21] T. Guérin, *Biographie de l'Empereur Soulouque: Solution de la question haïtienne* (Paris, 1856), p. 27.

[22] P. d'Hormoys, *L'Empire de Soulouque* (Paris, 1862), pp. 8–9.

[23] S. St John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic* (London, 1884).

[24] See, for example, in the years immediately following St John: J. A. Froude, *The English in the West Indies* (London, 1888), pp. 181–8, 340–9; H. Prichard, *Where Black Rules White* (Westminster, 1900); S. Bonsal, *The American Mediterranean* (New York, 1912), pp. 47–120.

[25] "Voudou Meeting Broken Up", *Daily Picayune*, 31 July 1863, quoted by B. Touchstone, "Voodoo in New Orleans", *Louisiana History* 13 (1972), 371–86 (p. 375).

[26] P. Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIXe Siècle*, 17 vols (Paris, 1866–90), Vol. 15 (1876), p. 81.

[27] Scholarly research (as opposed to unfounded speculation) on voudou in colonial and antebellum Louisiana is still in its infancy. But see: G. Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of an Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1992), esp. pp. 163–5, 187–96, 301–2.

[28] G. W. Cable, *The Grandissimes* [1880] (London, 1988), p. 88.

[29] W. W. Newell, "Myths of Voodoo Worship and Child Sacrifice in Hayti", *Journal of American Folklore* 1 (1888), 16–30 (p. 16).

[30] Ibid., p. 30.

[31] Some of these accounts were actually written by US Marines: F. Wirkus & T. Dudley, *The White King of La Gonave* (Garden City, NY, 1931); J. H. Craige, *Black Bagdad* (London, 1933) and *Cannibal Cousins* (London, 1935). See also W. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (London, 1929), and B. Niles, *Black Haiti* (New York & London, 1926). For a useful overview, see J. M. Dash, *Haiti and the United States* (Basingstoke, 1988).

[32] *Hoodoo* is a North American variant of *voodoo*, first recorded in the 1880s. The words are sometimes used interchangeably in the United States, but they commonly mark a distinction. *Voodoo* more often refers to the more organised religious or quasi-religious ceremonies (such as communal dancing and singing), which had become rare in New Orleans by the end of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, *hoodoo* is usually associated with the business of root doctors and conjure men and women who assist their clients to influence others by means of contagious and sympathetic magic – or to counter or protect against such influence. Not easily distinguished from Euro-American forms such as palmistry and spiritualism, *hoodoo* continues to flourish across the rural South and any large cities where there are significant African American populations, although it also attracts a significant white clientele.

[33] M. J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), p. 139.

[34] J. Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle* [1928] (New York, 1954).

[35] D. J. Cosentino, ed., *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou* (Los Angeles, 1995).

[36] S. Doggett & L. Gordon, eds, *Dominican Republic & Haiti* (Melbourne, Oakland, London & Paris, 1999), p. 329.

[37] J. Price-Mars, *So Spoke Uncle* [1928], trans. M. W. Shannon (Washington D.C., 1983). Shannon, however, defends her choice of *voodoo* not on historical grounds but with reference to current North American usage. See pp. xxv–xxvii.

[38] A. Métraux, *Le vaudou haïtien* [1958] (Paris, 1977); A. Métraux, *Voodoo in Haiti*, trans. H. Charteris (London, 1959).

[39] B. Corbett, "The Spelling Voodoo", http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/voodoo/spelling.htm (visited 27 August 2003).

[40] Ibid.

[41] J. Dreyfuss, "A Cage of Words", in: *The Butterfly's Way: Voices from the Haitian Dyaspora in the United States*, ed. E. Danticat (New York, 2001), p. 57.

[42] See http://www.haititourisme.com

[43] *New York Daily News*, 11 April 2003, p. 31.