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A MORE POWERFUL SORCERER:  
CONVERSION, CAPITAL AND HAITIAN  
TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

He was a giant with stooped shoulders, always dressed in black, who never left the house without a Bible tucked under his arm. When he was about thirty years old and already a highly reputed *houngan* (priest-shaman), he contracted tuberculosis as the consequence of a chill he caught at the falls at Saut d'Eau (pilgrimage festival in honor of the virgin), where he had bathed while possessed by Simbi. His family *loi* (spirits), evoked in succession, were not able to affect a cure, so he gave up serving them and was converted to Protestantism. And since he was of robust constitution, a doctor whom he had the good sense to consult succeeded in putting him back on his feet. Then, after some theological studies in Port-au-Prince as well as in the United States, he became, thanks to his extensive knowledge of *vodou*, one of the most effective adversaries of the popular beliefs in our country. (*All Men are Mad*, Thoby-Marcelin & Marcelin 1970:127)

The popular religion of Haiti, known to outsiders as Vodou, is a complex, dynamic blend of European, African and Creole religious ideologies and practices centered around the material reality of spiritual affliction, sorcery, and magic. The vast majority of the more than two hundred thousand Haitians who arrived in South Florida since the late 1970s identified as Catholics. Echoing a trend in Haiti and throughout Latin America, Haitian migrants have been publicly disavowing both Catholic practice and worship of their African-Creole spirits (*lwa*), and joining Haitian evangelical Protestant churches. The churches are repatriated, indigenized offspring of North American missions that went to Haiti to offer progress and light to the peasants being converted into a source of wage labor for North American capital. The clergy's pursuit of these ruined farmers streaming toward the "core" is only one instance of Protestantism's recurring ties to global capital reproduction.

In this paper, I argue that poor Haitian migrants construe conversion as a rhetoric and set of behaviors for mastering a model of individual, social, and economic success in the United States. At the same time, the rhetoric and behaviors practiced in Haitian Protestant evangelical congregations offer converts an appropriate escape route from the fetters of obligation and interdependence that undergird their transnational domestic and ritual ties. Haitian pastors help fit migrants with the religious armor to resist the spiritual and magical enforcement of those moral obligations. Pastors model for their flock the assertive, separatist disposition which, Weber argued, was central to the religion's appeal and initial success in Europe four centuries ago. Yet, underneath the evangelical's modern, ascetic cloak, representations of instant money and private ambition – the illicit rewards of sorcery and magic – remain at the heart of their instrumentalist rhetoric. The continuity below this change of religious costume is an open secret among Haitians. In the eyes of some, the pastors are conspicuous, and maddeningly successful, sorcerers.

This ethnography of conversion in a Haitian transnational community will suggest that religious conversion may not entail the radical break that separatist Protestants, and some believing scholars, assert it to be. Catholicism, Vodou, and Protestantism, the three (now) officially recognized religions of Haiti, co-define, mediate, and reproduce one another in the fluid, plural, and transnational religious landscape of Haiti, which extends beyond Haiti's nine internal provinces to wherever Haitians reside in Haiti's "Tenth Province." Popular religions that cut across religious boundaries seem more and more ordinary in the emerging literature on the "Protestantisms" of the poor of Latin America and Africa, as doctrinal boundaries yield to religious agents' commitment to an immanent, instrumental view of religion. Even the assertive, separatist stance of the Protestants cannot disguise how firmly their congregants remain within a fundamentally integrated spectrum of mystical techniques and strategies to hold illness and misfortune at bay and to interpret their precarious insertion in a harsh transnational system of labor migration and capital reproduction.<sup>1</sup>

#### HAITIAN TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

St. Domingue, the colonial name of Haiti, was France's most lucrative sugar colony. In 1804, the slaves stunned the world economic order by liberating themselves and the colony. During the century following independence,

1. This project builds upon bibliographic and multilateral ethnographic research conducted in Léogane, Haiti, and South Florida, Virginia, and Maryland over the past two decades. The most recent phases of research on religious conversion have been supported with generous help from the Newberry Library, Social Science Research Council, and the University of Notre Dame.

the first free and feared black nation-state was isolated from the rest of the world, the descendants of slaves established a free-holding peasantry (Mintz 1974a). By entrenching themselves as small, independent farmers, they were able to resist pressures from the elite and the state to coerce them into a return to plantation labor. It took the economic and military might of a new colonial power to coerce the Haitian peasants into capitalist agriculture. The United States consolidated its hegemony over the region and, in particular, Haiti during the early 1900s. Over the course of the twentieth century, the Haitian peasant economy was gradually undermined and transformed into one that produces unskilled wage labor for export and increasingly consumes imported food. Intimately linked to the transformation of Haitian peasants into a contingent, mobile labor force are American Protestant missionization in Haiti and the inevitable repatriation of Haitianized Protestant churches to Haitian migrants' settlements in the United States.

The "voluntary" exile of the young adults of Haiti's defeated peasantry must be seen as part of a spatial division of labor taking place on a global scale, within a system of capital accumulation on a world scale dependent upon the perpetuation of patterned differences in the conditions of reproduction of the labor force across different political and geographic units' (Portes & Walton 1981:67). "Traditional" peasant economies are, therefore, a modern relation of global, capitalist economies (Meillassoux 1981). Peasant economies are not homogeneous and their internal differentiation permits their linkages to the world system (Mintz 1973: 95). They appear uniform because constituents of transnational capital, merchant elites, and peasantries have vested interests in the production of tradition that conceals their internal variation (Mintz 1974b:305).

Heterogeneous peasant communities like Haiti's play a dual role in the contemporary world-system. The forces aligned with capital, including coercive peripheral regimes of which the Duvaliers are just one well-known example, destabilize and devalue peasant labor enough to encourage migration into low wage labor (which can be located either inside the territory or in another nation). At the same time, these combined forces leave the peasant economy just viable enough both to pay "rent" to local elites, and to make up the difference between what capital pays these mobile workers and what they and their dependents need to survive. Peasants make up the difference when they raise, feed, and nurture prospective migrants, when they subsidize the cost of migrants' recruitment, and when they provide care for workers who are sick, injured, or retired. They play the part of both "a nursery and a nursing home" for migrants earning wages abroad (Rouse 1992:28).

The monies migrants send home, the funds do not fully compensate home families for the investments in the migrant's upbringing or the loss of their labor at home. Migration maintains the impoverished means of producing raw labor for export; it has not improved the socio-economic conditions of

Haitian society. Haitian migrants' wage remittances, which reached an estimated at \$1 billion in 2004, account for more foreign aid to the country than bilateral lending. Yet as every journalist covering them seems compelled to repeat, Haitians remain the poorest population in the hemisphere.

Haitian migrant laborers have followed and abetted the expansions and declines of North American capital throughout the century. In the early decades they migrated to Cuba, other parts of Haiti, the Dominican Republic (the eastern side of the island), where North Americans were investing in capitalized agriculture. During the latter half of the century, their laborers went to the United States and Canada, becoming part of the broad "new" Caribbean migration feeding the restructuring and relocations of U.S. manufacture (Bryce-Laporte 1979). As service industries replaced manufacture in center cities, low-paying, labor intensive service jobs became a magnet for immigrant workers. Meanwhile, the Caribbean and Central America were themselves attractive frontiers for the intensified "subcontracting" of phases of assembly-line production. According to Barry (1984:13), during the decade of the seventies, a higher proportion of the Caribbean population emigrated than did the peoples of any other world area. New York was Haitian emigrants' primary North American destination, as it was for Caribbean migrants generally. Haitians also migrated to the French departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique, Quebec, and the American cities of Boston and Chicago.

In the late 1970s, both the character of Haitian migration to the United States and the location of resettlement changed. A flotilla of boats, many of them tiny, open sailboats called "canoes" (*kanòt*), which are used for fishing, began leaving Haitian waters for the South Florida coast.<sup>2</sup> Between 1979 and 1981, as many as 70,000 Haitians entered Florida by boat. Almost immediately after taking office in 1981, however, President Reagan moved to "regain control of the borders." The despised "boat people" from Haiti were convenient scapegoats. The United States placed Coast Guard cutters in the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti to interdict and burn Haitian boats, determine passengers' valid claims for political asylum, and repatriate those deemed ineligible for refugee status. Virtually all asylum claims were rejected.

The flow of boats declined to a dribble by 1982, and did not resume with any regularity until October 1991, when tens of thousands of people tried to flee the violent *coup d'état* that ousted the eight-month-old government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, when Coast Guard cutters were again dispatched to prevent the Haitians from reaching the United States. In response to human rights protests of the practice of summarily returning them, the INS set up a detention camp in Guantanamo Bay to process their asylum claims. The INS

2. According to Alex Stepick (1987:137), the first detected Haitian refugee boat arrived in Florida in 1963. The passengers' asylum requests were denied and they were repatriated. Ten years later, another sailboat reached Florida.

found about 40,000 to have valid claims and permitted them to enter the United States. Fearful of the prospect of more Haitian refugees legally crossing our borders, and having no legal way to reduce the high rate of acceptance of valid asylum claims, the government simply closed the camp and resumed the earlier policy of interdicting boats and forcibly repatriating of the refugees to Haiti.

Since the brief, intense waves of boat migrations from Haiti to South Florida, there has been continuous movement of Haitians into and within the county of Palm Beach. There is a small but steady stream coming from Haiti (primarily by airplane), sponsored by former “boat” migrants who have become legal residents. At the same time, Haitian immigrants who previously settled in New York and Boston are moving into South Florida. Like other Caribbean migrants, they had avoided the South because of the dearth of job opportunities and its legacy of segregation. These latter Haitians tend to be from higher social and economic echelons than the boat migrants and have achieved substantial economic success in the United States.

In addition there is substantial relocation of Haitian immigrants within South Florida, which parallels their changing labor incorporation. Alex Stepick’s (1998) analysis of Haitian migrants’ incorporation in the South Florida economy reveals that around 1980, few industries offered employment to the Haitian “boat people.” As a result, the new immigrants could find work only in the most wretched sector: migratory farm work. Sojourners from rural Haiti settled in Belle Glade, Immokalee, Fort Pierce, and other racially segregated and disenfranchised farm worker ghettos to cut sugar cane, and harvest and pack vegetables and fruits.<sup>3</sup> During the summer months they left with labor contractors to work on agribusiness farms along the middle East Coast. Many Haitian immigrants left this irregular, low-paying, and dangerous work as soon as they could; others were pushed out by the agriculture industry itself in retaliation for successful lawsuits filed by Haitian laborers against growers and contractors during the 1980s (Richman 1992a). By the early nineties, most Haitian immigrants in South Florida counties of Palm Beach and Broward were employed in the lower levels of the burgeoning industries of tourism, service, construction, and health care. The ubiquity of Haitian immigrants’ home ownership is concrete evidence of their gradual economic success.

#### EVERYDAY TRANSNATIONALISM IN TI RIVYÈ AND ITS DIASPORA

Ti Rivyè (Little River) is a coastal hamlet in the plain of Léogane, in western Haiti. Ti Rivyè is the moral and material anchor of a mobile, transnational community. Though people from Ti Rivyè are spread across Haiti, the

3. Belle Glade’s ordinances enjoining racial segregation were legally challenged in the 1990s.

Caribbean, North America, and France, the vast majority of their expatriate members live in Palm Beach, Broward, and St. Lucie counties, Florida. Mayami (*Miami*) is their term for this location, whose imaginary northern boundary is *Nouyòk* (New York), the primary destination point of the trickle of earlier migrants from Ti Rivyè. Ti Rivyè is a quasi-peasant village. Its people eke out a livelihood through farming (primarily sugar cane), fishing, and marketing of the food. Yet, their main economic activities seem to be producing low-cost labor for export, consuming wage remittances and imported food, and reabsorbing migrants when their capacity to work elsewhere expires. Everyday discourse reproduces their consciousness as producers of mobile labor and consumers of migrants' remittances. Children grow up expecting one day to "leave in search of a livelihood for their family" (*chache lavi pou fanmi yo*). Mundane references in village discourse to members located "outside" (*deyò*) and "over there" (*lòt bo a*) further naturalize the reality of dispersal to South Florida. From "outside" these "transmigrants" (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton 1994) remain intimately tied to their mooring in Ti Rivyè, returning when they can for vacations and religious and family celebrations and when they must to seek therapy and recuperation and convalescence. Since they can only travel infrequently, the migrants' residential concentration in Palm Beach and Broward Counties is an important aspect of their continued involvement with one another and with their home. Independent couriers who specialize in "coming and going" (*va y vyen*) run personalized, efficient, and entirely unregulated parcel services – carrying money, gifts, and cassette tapes between distinct villages and urban neighborhoods in Haiti and their migrant satellite sites abroad.<sup>4</sup>

Audio cassette tapes have provided a vital linkage across this transnational community. For most Haitians, whose domination has long been reproduced by illiteracy in French, the colonial language, cassettes offer a way to "write" in their own beloved, vernacular, Creole (*Kreyòl*). Corresponding by cassette in this emphatically oral, figurative idiom has become so normal that the term "to write (a letter)" (*ekri* means recording a cassette rather than the epistolary form). In the hands of a people with a vibrant oral culture, these letters have developed into an art form. The cassette-letters Ti Rivyè migrants exchange with their home community include songs, poetry, and oral compositions of great intricacy. Island relatives may quote proverbs or sing sacred songs to infuse their communications with pointed and irresistible messages exhorting migrants to be more diligent in sending remittances or fulfilling ritual obligations back home. Hard-pressed workers enduring low pay and hostile conditions in the United States might reply with ingenious communiqués couched in song and verse drawing attention to their hard work and under-

4. The handling of money by these informal couriers casts doubt on the accuracy of official estimates of remittance transmission.

appreciated efforts or difficulties in the far off land. Both recording and listening to these cassettes become “performance events” as extended families or migrant’s stateside workmates gather round to add their own comments, clarifications, and remarks, even drumming and singing, to the recordings (Richman 2005).

In addition to functioning as the primary means of aesthetically and morally satisfying correspondence, cassette tapes serve in an extraordinary religious capacity. During ceremonies sponsored by migrants, a ritual participant will hold a cassette recorder and make a soundtrack of the event, often narrating the unfolding activities. Other participants also approach the recorder to add their own messages and comments. Even worshippers “mounted” or possessed by spirits during the ceremony may address the microphone, allowing the far-off migrant direct access to his or her tutelary deities via audiocassette. The location of Ti Rivyè migrants’ ritual practice remains on the family land, reinforcing a transnational orientation, as migrants remain morally, somatically, and spiritually anchored back home.

The unfolding of rituals between Ti Rivyè and South Florida in a transnational performance space contrasts with the ritual innovations of Haitians in New York described by Karen McCarthy Brown (1991) and Elizabeth McAlister (2002). The earlier movement to New York involved many migrants from the city of Port-au-Prince who were already a generation (or more) removed from the peasantry and were already affiliated with urban temple congregations based on voluntary association rather than descent. This temple Vodou form proved very adaptable to an even larger metropolitan setting.

#### THE CONTEST FOR SOULS IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Haitians in South Florida worship in churches led by Haitian immigrant clergy. Protestant pastors, trained in mission churches established by North Americans during the mid-to-late twentieth century, are completing the circle of the evangelist mission, remigrating to the “center” to set up Haitian community mission churches in the United States. Haitian Catholic priests who were trained in seminaries established by French clergy long ago have also followed the paths of the migrants to minister to Haitian communities in diaspora. Measuring the relative strength of self-identified Catholics and Protestants is difficult because of the flexibility of religious practice and association, the Protestants’ hard-line stance notwithstanding. Père Roland, who heads the Catholic parish in Delray Beach, home to the densest concentration of Haitians (about 17,000) in the county, estimated that in 2001, Protestants slightly outnumbered Catholics. Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick (1993) estimated that 40 percent of Haitians in Little Haiti in Miami were Protestant.

The success of the Protestants in gaining new converts was in part due to the indifference of the Catholic Church in Miami, which was dominated by Irish-Americans. The tens of thousands of Haitians who arrived by boat in the early eighties and settled in towns of Belle Glade, Delray Beach, Fort Pierce, and Lake Worth were barely visible to the Catholic Church. The evangelical churches, on the other hand, responded swiftly to the new migrants' religious "needs" by repatriating portions of North American missions with Haitian pastors at their helms.

The Catholic Church responded slowly to the influx of Catholic Haitians into Palm Beach County between 1979 and 1981. The first Haitian priest settled in the area in 1987. Père Roland, a member of the Scalabrinian order who was raised and trained in Haiti, moved from New York City, where he had been serving a Haitian community. He established Notre Dame, the first Haitian Catholic church in Delray Beach. A second Haitian Church was established in the nineties in Fort Pierce, a town in the county of St. Lucie to the north with about the same population of Haitians as Delray Beach. The Catholic congregations in Belle Glade, Lake Worth, and West Palm Beach have recently hosted their own full-time Haitian Catholic priests, who use space in local Catholic Churches.

Lacking access to a Haitian Catholic church, many Catholics who wanted to attend Christian services and worship in their own language began going to Haitian Protestant churches. Many remained Catholic; many inevitably converted. Their religious mobility seems typical of Latin Americans' practices of shifting between affiliation, conversion, and "backsliding" as post-Protestants to Catholicism (Green 1993 and ). The belated establishment of Haitian Catholic churches offering an accessible, inviting worship style including Creole liturgy, Vodou melodies and drum styles, as well as tolerating or even embracing lay-led charismatic groups whose trance practices resemble Pentecostals,' somewhat reversed that pattern. Père Roland thus told me, "We got them back." His particular church has added extra masses to accommodate the growing congregation of about 1,400 registered members (each representing about 5 family members), and it is currently undergoing expansion and renovation. It hosts myriad religious and social clubs, as well as educational programs targeted at migrants' adjustment; some of these educational programs involve collaboration with local government agencies.

By contrast, the many Protestant congregations organize few social services offering practical assistance to migrants in their new setting, a deficit which does not diminish their support, as it reinforces an ideology of both individualism and the direct, private access to the supernatural. My field research and surveys in Palm Beach and Broward counties revealed that dyadic, personal relations between church members constitute their primary social networks, through which they exchange food, loans, help, rides, job referrals, childcare, and other services. If such dyadic relations do the primary

work of reproducing labor, researchers may be attributing undeserved credit to the churches themselves by portraying them as organized mutual aid societies. R. Andrew Chesnut (1997:104), writing about a Brazilian Pentecostal congregation, argues that the church can be said to practice mutual aid “not primarily as a religious institution but as a community of believers ... Of the 73.9% of (his) informants who had accepted some type of material aid through the church, the vast majority had received it as an offering from fellow members, rather than as a direct donation from the (church).”

The Protestant congregations vary in size and autonomy. A Church of God (*L’Eglise de Dieu*) Holiness/Pentecostal congregation of about 250 member families built an expansive new church in North West Palm Beach in 1994. Another Church of God congregation in the same area recently remodeled and expanded its structure. Nonetheless, fissions are common. One Pentecostal church in Delray has allegedly segmented into four competing factions in the recent past. Another Delray Beach congregation with about 200 member families splintered as its minister, the first Haitian pastor in the area, was charged with and convicted for sexual activity with a member’s minor daughter, his supporters claiming that the false accusations were trumped up by rival members determined to take over the church.<sup>5</sup>

For the evangelical congregants, in particular, the church is the center of a tightly knit Protestant social world separated from both non-Haitians and unsaved Haitians. They arrive dressed in formal but modest attire, the men in suits and the women unadorned by jewelry or cosmetics or the gender-boundary confusion of pants. With children in tow, they spend long hours in church, including most evenings, after working unrewarding and repetitive jobs, part of Saturday, and most of Sunday. Inside the sanctuary the weary find tangible relief, engulfed by the bodily touching and acceptance of fellow congregants whose welcome mirrors the gentle compassion of the key deity, Jesus. The sermons by charismatic and witty preachers inspire and entertain. Full, joyous singing of hymns in French and Creole accompanied by upbeat instrumental music in American gospel and Caribbean styles further draw them in. The invitation to dance joyously is even more enticing given the prohibition of enjoying *konpa* and other secular music and dance outside the walls of the church, along with drinking and smoking, all of which prevent them from socializing with the unsaved.<sup>6</sup>

5. State of Florida v. Joseph Millien, Case 01-1759CV A02. October 26, 1998, West Palm Beach.

6. Melvin Butler’s ethnography (2002:110) of Haitian Pentecostals’ musical ideologies describes how some musicians justify their appropriation of secular *konpa* style, even though the pelvic gyrations of *konpa* dance signify undisciplined sexuality. The church musicians see *konpa* as an appropriate alternative to the feared Vodou and Rara genres.

The style and structure of worship follow the North American Holiness-Pentecostal pattern. The service is a scripted modulation from a cathartic outpouring of migrants' anxiety and hopelessness to a controlled mustering up of self-discipline and certain strength. The ritual oscillation between emotionalism and self-control, which harks back to the denomination's Methodist roots, has been seen as a mediation of the conflicted experience of proletarianization whose ultimate beneficiary was capital. "Wesleyanism addressed crucial contradictions in the development of industrial capitalism...by recognizing working-class displacement, yet harnessing it to the perpetuation of the overall system" (Comaroff 1985:134).

In the first hour of worship, called the prayer service, individual immigrants voice their unbearable struggles as low-paid, exhausted workers and indebted consumers, as the parents of local, endangered, urban Haitian-American children and as the envoys of demanding, long-distance Haitian peasant kin. They cry out directly to an empathetic invisible audience, Jesus, identified as a tender, comforting mother, protector, and font of unconditional love (Romain 1986:140). The supplicants do not deliberately address or acknowledge other sufferers, even though their laments overlap with and echo one another. "The inner isolation" of the Protestant individual, even in the context of a group, is recreated here, as each person focuses inwardly, eyes closed, standing facing the front of the chapel with arms outstretched or kneeling facing the rear of the room, heads resting in the pews (Weber 1958:105). Their private entreaties to Christ coincide in a huge emotional crescendo that is guided to gradual diminuendo by a preacher and musicians.

Certitude and determination take over in the hymns and preaching, obliterating the previous mood of hopeless vulnerability. The weak, dependent self has been replaced by an independent, self-actualizing individual. Metaphors of strength and military might resound in combination with first person possessive pronouns (I, me, my): "my rock," "my fortress," "my redeemer" (Romain 1986:140). Possession of vast quantities of money appears as instant reward for the determined faithful. Like the North American gospel of wealth marketed by such celebrity ministers of as Reverend Ike, these Haitianized versions transform the circumscribed wages of the worker into generative capital.

The individual certitude practiced in worship, as a rehearsal for a daily life bound by asceticism and reclusion, is central to Protestant philosophy. For in the absence of a reliable "test" for election" among the saved, tangible proof is presented by acting assertively as if one was elected. Meanwhile leading a methodical and sober life laundered immoral hoarding of money into positive accumulation (Weber 1958:113). Reviewing the first broad, post-war wave of Pentecostal evangelization in Latin America, Luther Gerlach, and Virginia Hine (1968:35) indeed substantiated Weber's claim that this confident attitude was the expanding religion's "greatest strength." This great strength nonetheless rests precariously upon a utilitarian preference for the outward

appearance of certitude over inner conviction. Haitians are converting to this religious mode of appropriating “capitalist rules of action” (Weber 1958:54). Assessing the historical context and meanings of Haitians’ religious mobility will be taken up in the following section.

#### CATHOLICISM, COLONIALISM AND PROTESTANT MISSIONIZATION IN HAITI

Roman Catholicism was the official religion of the colony of St. Domingue, which was established in 1697, and it remained the state religion of independent Haiti. In 1985 the state recognized Protestantism and it added a third official religion, Vodou, in 2003. The Catholic Church was indigenized after independence in 1804, when French colonists and their priests fled the country. Haitians controlled their own church during the six-decade-long political isolation that served as the metropole’s punishment for Haitian slaves’ successful challenge to colonialism and slavery. Toward the end of the century, however, as Haiti’s Francophile, mulatto elite invited recolonization by France and Germany and ultimately the United States, authority over the church was returned to the Vatican. President Geffrard, Haiti’s tenth president, signed the *concordat* with the Vatican in 1860, declaring, “Let us hasten to remove from our land these last vestiges of barbarism and slavery, superstition and its scandalous practices” (quoted in Nicholls 1979:84). As a result of the accord, French priests gained control not only of the church but also of the principal schools, which were run by religious orders (Nicholls 1979:84).

The return of de facto French control over much of everyday life provoked a nationalist reaction. Indeed, Louis Joseph Janvier, who is regarded by some as the founder of the Haitian nationalist movement in the late nineteenth century, viewed the reassertion of the French Church as the return of French colonial power, and a key threat to Haiti’s sovereignty. Janvier’s vision for the establishment of Protestantism in Haiti was “of a severely Erastian kind in which the clergy, even in matters of doctrine would be controlled by the temporal government” (Nicholls 1979:118). Whereas the appearance of separation of religion from politics is fundamental to modernity, Janvier was advocating the national adoption of an antipolitical religion that would abet the re-penetration of capitalism all too well (Fields 1985, Levine 1986, Meyer 2004).<sup>7</sup>

The civilizing influence of Protestantism was central to Joseph Janvier’s 1883 treatise on Haiti’s foreign affairs. In it, Janvier argued that conversion to Protestantism would provide the requisite religious basis for capitalist economic development in the impoverished peasant nation. Echoing the bour-

7. Protestants are nonetheless ambivalent about the application of the separation of church and state to their own practices. See Laënnec Hurbon (2001:136).

geois discourse of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that disparaged the indolence of European peasants and blamed a Catholic ritual calendar whose many saint days and festivals sapped the supply of labor (Thompson 1967, Weber 1958). Africa, rather than Europe, though, was the analogy Janvier pursued. Janvier went so far as to claim that Protestantism was more suited to the African temperament than was Catholicism, and was in many parts of Africa a valuable means for introducing the “primitive” population to Western cultures. The Protestant, he wrote, “is thrifty and self-reliant, he does not waste his money on carnivals and other frivolities. Protestantism permits free discussion and encourages private initiative ... The Protestant is almost always a more practical worker and a better citizen than the Catholic” (quoted in Nicholls 1979:118). Nonetheless, Janvier admitted that his vision amounted to little more than wishful thinking: “Protestantism will never be a danger for Haiti and would want the affection of Protestant nations” (Janvier 1883:371).

But a century would pass before the Catholic Church would formally recognize that “danger.” The admission came from Pope John Paul II himself during his first and only visit to Port-au-Prince. Pope John Paul said, “The advance of religious groups which at times are lacking the true message of the Gospel and with methods that do not respect real religious liberty, pose serious obstacles to the mission of the Catholic Church and to other Christian confessions.”<sup>8</sup> The Pope was surrounded by the sixty-one Latin American bishops who had gathered in Haiti’s capital for a conference whose top agenda was “preparing actions to stem the rapid growth of Protestant fundamentalist sects in the region.” Archbishop Ligondé of Port-au-Prince announced a national campaign to defend Catholicism in Haiti against the blind proselytizing of Protestants.<sup>9</sup>

In the early twentieth century, and in the hands of Janvier’s followers, the new discipline of Haitian ethnology completed (or mediated) the intellectual linkage between Protestantism and anticolonialism. In the wake of the cultural imperialism and overt racism of the occupation by the United States, which lasted from 1915 to 1934, ethnology responded to the need to assert an alternative, authentic national identity. Studies of the peasants’ religion and folklore provided the material for promotion of an authentic Haitian identity located in peasant life and rooted in African culture. Jean Price-Mars, who authored the first important text on the peasants’ folklore, was Episcopalian. Yet he also extolled the evangelical Protestants, even though the Protestants opposed Vodou even more strongly than the Catholic Church and Protestants constituted the majority of the blatantly racist *colons en khaki*, as Jacques

8. Marlise Simons, “Pope in Haiti, Assails Inequality, Hunger and Fear,” *The New York Times*, March 10, 1983.

9. Marlise Simons, “Latin Bishops See Protestant Peril,” *The New York Times*, March 16, 1983.

Romain, a central member of the ethnological movement termed the occupying force (Nicholls 1970:403, 412).

The paradoxical sympathy between proponents of Vodou and Protestantism can be further explained in response to their temporary sharing of a mutual Catholic enemy. The hapless anti-superstition campaign of 1942 that was launched by the French Catholic Church in concert with President Elie Lescot, tried in vain to rid the Haitian countryside of what was considered the pernicious influence of Vodou. Vodouisants were not the only targets of the campaign, however; Protestants were occasionally persecuted as well. The Catholic Church's demoniacal persecution of Vodou was criticized by nationalists as a recapitulation of the *concordat* of 1860 – a ploy to revitalize a colonial power system. Coming shortly after the official departure of the United States marines, the acquiesce of the Haitian state to the resurgence of French Catholic and colonial power was no doubt a reaction to the nineteen-year-long North American recolonization of Haiti.

North American Protestant missionization greatly intensified in the hemisphere generally, and in Haiti in particular, during the second half of the twentieth century. That period saw the consummation of several happy unions of a repressive Latin American state (including Chile and Guatemala) with an apparently apolitical Protestant mission. Seventy percent of the Protestant missions in Haiti in 1970 had been established in the preceding twenty years, and an estimated 20% of the population was Protestant (Conway 1978:165, Romain 1986:81). The champion of Protestantism in Haiti was President François Duvalier (1957-1971), the first pro-Vodou, pro-peasant, black-nationalist president, who claimed Janvier as his ideological mentor. A medical doctor and ethnologist, who experienced first-hand the antisuperstition campaign of 1942, Duvalier had been a central member of the ethnological group and he authored or co-authored several studies of the peasant religion. The self-declared president-for-life developed a reputation not only for “practicing Vodou” but also for incorporating the practices and priesthood in his ruthless politics. Duvalier appears to have fostered the myth of his promotion of Vodou, which only bolstered outsiders' stereotypes of the exotic, mysterious religion.

Harold Courlander and Rémy Bastien (1966:56) wryly observed that Duvalier's fostering of Protestantism, which opposes Vodou even more strongly than the Catholic Church ever did, demonstrates that “the relationship between Duvalier and religion should be viewed not as one of an individual to a faith, but rather it should be approached from the standpoint of the relations between church and state.” Duvalier finally succeeded in breaking the power of the foreign-dominated Catholic Church. Though he resorted to violence to crush the Church, romancing North American evangelical Protestants was a more effective strategy. The Protestants could be depended upon to avoid involvement in political affairs as much as possible and mean-

while bring “development” into the country. By 1965, more than a third of the schools were run by Protestant missionaries. Duvalier received Oral Roberts at the palace in 1969 (Nicholls 1970:412).<sup>10</sup>

The expansion of Protestant missionization in Haiti since the 1970s especially involved the growth of Pentecostal groups, which systematically covered the country and encompassed the poorest segments of the population. Echoing the findings of many observers of Pentecostal missionization in Latin America, including David Lehmann (1966), Charles-Poisset Romain (1986:190) asserts that “the Pentecostals’ take off” in Haiti was the result of their promotion of the vernacular spoken by the masses, rather than the colonial language of French, spoken and written by the elite few. Moreover, the Pentecostals harnessed their valorization of the Creole vernacular to literacy. The mainline Protestants’ had already presented their “religion of the book” as one of “sociability and civilization” (Romain 1986:145). Literacy was seen throughout the colonized world as a primary means of self-improvement (Comaroff & Comaroff 1993:63).

Romain claims that during the 1970s, missionization was more intense in Haiti than anywhere else in the hemisphere and that Haiti witnessed a greater proliferation of sects during that period than any other country. Though this claim cannot be proven, support for it is the selection of Port-au-Prince for the 1983 Latin American bishops’ meeting with Pope John Paul II, during which confronting the Protestant threat was the salient topic. Fred Conway (1978) noted that the missionary presence was so pervasive during the 1970s that he, like almost all foreigners in rural Haiti, was taken for a Protestant missionary.

In a laudatory recounting of the history of Baptist missionization in Haiti during the mid-century, the Baptist theologian, Edner Jeanty (1991:91), compliments North American missionaries’ skillful deployment of capitalist marketing techniques. He glowingly narrates the accomplishments of one proselytizer with a special knack for selling a new religion to reluctant native consumers. In the process, Jeanty inadvertently admits that Christian missionization amounts to creating consumer desire for a non-essential product. Jeanty writes that Mme Ruben Clarke, who accompanied her husband to Pignon to spread the gospel, was “a dynamic woman who can sell a refrigerator even to an Eskimo.”

Charles Romain’s (1986) and Frederick Conway’s (1978) works illuminate the religious landscape of rural Haiti during the decade which culminated in a massive exodus towards the “source” of progress. Both studies demonstrate that evangelism oriented people toward North American capitalist culture. Conway’s cultural exploration of local understandings of Protestant missionization describes an unequivocal linkage between the reli-

10. Fred Conway (1978:166-67) eloquently captures the paradox of the ethnologist-president’s promotion of Protestantism.

gion and an American dream. He (Conway 1978:193) argues convincingly that “missionary Protestantism in Haiti gives rise less to a Protestant ethic of self-help than to the idea that the way to worldly success is identified with direct dependence on the foreign – North American – missionary.” He cites villagers’ discourse, no doubt mediated by their perception or hope that their North American interlocutor was a missionary, and thus a source of jobs or visas. Villagers reaffirmed Romain’s (1982:159) assertion that the Protestant mission churches symbolized “progress.” While pointing to Protestant missions, people told him, “the country is becoming more and more civilized” in contrast to the backwardness blamed on peasant Vodou. Several converts boasted to Conway that their conversion was a contribution to “development” (Conway 1978:172).

Moreover, the Protestant churches signified modern, capitalist principles, including belief in quantitative accounting and record-keeping. According to Conway, villagers understood that Americans “needed” quantities of converts, and they were willing to pay for them. No one benefited more from their “needs” to build missions and count disciples than the pastors. The clergy was and is one of the few “jobs” for men in rural areas and the field of candidates is vast. Romain (1986:144) comments that “*tout protestant est à la fois pasteur et missionnaire*.” The success of the pastors reflects the convergence of the fluid, informal, lay, and entrepreneurial character of the evangelical practice with local values regarding leadership and spiritual power, namely, diffuse leadership, and charismatic, spontaneous power. Haitians also harbor an intense distrust of authority and bureaucracies, born of their long experience of betrayal by leaders, secular and religious alike. The religion welcomes the man who aspires to have a congregation, begins by praying with two or three people, and eventually builds a congregation. The speech practice of addressing any male evangelical as *pastè* (pastor) reinforces this assumption.

Association with Protestant missions and the implied opportunities of pastoring signify upward mobility both figuratively and literally. For in addition to the social and economic boost of satisfying an American missionary organization’s “needs” is the real possibility of a visa to the United States. Indeed, realization of the miracle of the visa to the United States, the fruit of mission sponsorship, is a frequent theme in pastors’ narratives from the pulpits of Haitian churches in Palm Beach County today. Pastor Sylvain, a pastor with L’Eglise de Dieu, for example, recounted during a sermon how, while working in a Haitian rural parish, Jesus instigated a rift between himself and his superiors. His exile propelled him toward Port-au-Prince and an encounter with a white American missionary. The missionary was establishing a new mission in another part of the countryside, and he invited the pastor to join him there. Then one day the American asked him, “would you like to see the United States?” He soon found himself at the U.S. consulate with a visa in hand for the United States and eventually he became pastor of the Palm Beach County

congregation. Likewise, the narrative of Reverend Millien's route to the pulpit of the first Haitian evangelical congregation in Delray Beach involved these steps: encounter with an American missionary, conversion and training in a Haitian seminary, becoming a minister in a Full Gospel Assembly church, training for six months in Sterling, Illinois, return to Haiti and to pastoring, and, finally arrival in Delray Beach to begin his ministry.

#### LWA, AFFLICTION, AND KINSHIP

In Creole, the term "Vodou" (or Vodoun) refers to a genre of ritual music and dance performed in honor of a category of spirit. A legacy of the African cultural past, the term is the Fongbe (Benin) word for spirit. Over time, outsiders applied the term to refer to the religion as a whole, a usage widely accepted, though foreign to many in the countryside. Spirits are called *lwa* (pronounced like French *loi*). Their iconography and naming blends African and European influences; some are based on Catholic saints, and many have African names. Indeed the term "saint" is used by some rather than the word *lwa*.

*Lwa* can be thought of as super (in the sense of all-too) human beings who are inherited through family lines among land-holding descent groups. Their primary power is their ability to afflict and protect members of these descent groups. They are, in other words, the protagonists of a cult of affliction and healing (Murray 1984:301, Brown 1991:345). Said to be from Ginen (Guinea or Africa) and to dwell there still, they crystallize a deep historical memory of the violence and displacement of the African ancestors' past. In the countryside, where families still retain at least a portion of the land and the spiritual legacy left by their nineteenth-century ancestors, *lwa* are unique to each lineage (Murray 1984:198). Yet they are also distinct from ancestors, who are worshiped in their own right and whose primary role, in virtue of their proximity to the other world, is to mediate relations between members of kin groups and their inherited *lwa*.

Although the entire descent line inherits the full complement of spirits "served" by the founding ancestors who purchased the land and left it for their descendants, each member may share an intimate relationship with a particular inherited *lwa*. The heir does not, indeed cannot, initiate the relationship. Instead the spirit is thought to express "love" for the particular "child" through possession-performance (involving either that heir or another person) or dreams. The spirit may "claim" (*reklamen*) only one living heir. When that person dies, the spirit may claim another member, though years may pass until a new heir is claimed. Protracted migration has affected this system. As long as the "horse" is "outside," the members cannot commune with their spirit "in person" to benefit from their protective blessings, advice, or entertaining

antics. The great emotions surrounding a long-absent migrant's return include the hope of reuniting physically with the migrant's embodied spirit.

When *lwa* feel neglected or ignored by the heirs, especially by the ones they have specially claimed, as they often do in their remote home in Guinea (Ginen), they retaliate by sending affliction, "seizing" heirs with somatic illness, misfortune, and property loss.

Feeding is the encompassing symbol of ritual discourse and action. "*Lwa*'s displeasure is cast as hunger, and a ceremony staged to satiate a "hungry spirit is called a "feeding of spirits" (*manje lwa*) or a service of spirits (*sévis lwa*). The ritual work is explicitly designed to entice the hungry spirit to make the long journey from Guinea to appear through possession-performance in the body of an heir to accept the lavish and copious offerings, music, dance, and food. Worship by the kin group is a collective effort, spectacularly staged with prayer, feeding, animal sacrifice, music, dance, visual art, and processions, to ward off illness by enticing the avenging spirits to "release" their victims, and to prevent future attacks. Migrants do not escape the mobile *lwa*'s orbit. Indeed they are prime "choices" of avenging spirits and primary sponsors of rites taking place back home.

The ritual structure which mediates the circulation of Ti Rivyè's only remaining viable economic resource – labor – is not a traditional pattern, but rather a recent innovation. During the 1940s, a few ritual specialists (*gangan*) rose to prominence whose authority was based upon a new source of power, a lengthy and expensive initiation rite to "take the *ason*" (*pran ason*), the sacred gourd rattle and bell used to "communicate with the *lwa*." The professional *gangan ason* incorporated formalized performance roles associated with urban shrines and they introduced new rituals that were nevertheless classified and perceived as unchanging "authentic African/Guinean" (*fran Ginen*) traditions practiced and transmitted by the "African" founders of the descent groups. Among the "new" ritual forms were rites of passage, including mortuary rites ("sending the dead to the water" and "retrieving the dead from the water" (*voye/wete mò nan dlo*) and the initiation of women "servitors" (*ounsi*)).

The increasingly elaborate "services for the *lwa*" required the participation of corps of initiated women "servitors" (*ounsi*), along with Catholic prayer, singing, dancing, drumming, flag bearing, processions, animal sacrifice, and copious offerings of costly imported foods and drinks. Despite its authority as an allegedly ancient African practice, this modern tradition developed in response to major social and economic upheaval in the plains of Haiti, which culminated in the transformation of the free-holding peasants into producers of migrant laborers and consumers of wage remittances (Richman 2005, Murray 1980). These ritual practices reformulate a displaced system of traditional peasant morality, carved out of the very disrupted, monetized processes it tries to conceal. Converts at the turn of the millennium are not abandoning traditional Vodou (whatever it may have been) but rather a

modern, monetized form whose contradictions in part paved the way for the encroachment of another modern religion.

Rijk van Dijk (1998:155) has argued with regard to discourses on tradition in Africa, “we have to shift our perspective from nostalgic theory to a theory of nostalgia.” The imagination of the African authenticity and artificial timelessness (including before Protestant incursions) of Vodou suggests a sort of fundamentalism that is common in modernity’s discourses of history and “primitives.” Indeed this modern narrative of Vodou tradition erroneously portrays *lwa* as universalistic nature spirits, representations which naively impose a modern notion of the abstract, equivalent individual, who can worship the same deity as everyone else (Dumont 1970). The notion of the abstract, equivalent individual allows all human labor to be reduced to the same essence in order for their different labor to be exchanged for varying quantities a uniform quality – money. This “magical” transformation is the basis of commodity fetishism (Marx 1977:165). Protestantism takes the homogenizing process a democratic step further by installing a direct line of communication from any person to the deity for instant messaging.

Neither are *lwa* nature gods (Deren 1953). *Lwa* do not wield powers to control air, land, or water. Even though ritual discourse and visual imagery often compare spirits to aspects or forces of nature, for example, Danbala Wedo’s energy with that of a water snake and Ogoun’s anger with thunder, it does not follow that Danbala is a water snake or that Ogoun controls storms. This erroneous idea is a modern representation of the tradition-bound, scientific thought of “others” who are in a different intellectual “time” (Fabian 1983) and a “primitive” reading of analogical classification (Lévi-Strauss 1966).

The extraction of *lwa* from their particularistic social, moral, and economic contexts suits not only some writers and journalists, but also brokers of religious tradition. Max Beauvoir, a Sorbonne-educated religious professional who represents Vodou to tourists, the nation-state, and the *New York Times* may be the most renowned of these entrepreneurs (Goldberg 1981).<sup>11</sup> Beauvoir’s clients are modern subjects – independent individuals – from the Haitian elite or middle classes and even non-Haitians who are actively searching for meaning within modernity who convert to a romanticized Vodou, which has selectively appropriated aspects of the religion, rendered them harmless and offered them up as authentic African forms (see Peel 1994:163). Vodou conversion is of course unfolding in relation to the masses’ abandonment of their peasant religion and identification as Protestants. The nation-state has yet formally to recognize this change, and appropriates the authenticity of Vodou for its own purposes. Folkloristic performances of Vodou grace many official reunions sponsored by the nation-state, especially those “outside.”

11. Marlise Simons, “Power of Voodoo, Preached by Sorbonne Scientist,” *The New York Times*, December 15, 1983.

Though the Haitian peasantry emerged in and against a wholly modern system, as Sidney Mintz (1971:37) has reiterated, their descendants in places like Ti Rivyè have yet to countenance the notion of the autonomous, free individual. As if in defense of their moral economy of difference and hierarchy, a Creole proverb says: *Tout moun se moun men tout moun pa menm* (Everybody is a person but not all persons are equivalent).<sup>12</sup> As the peasants of Ti Rivyè have confronted the collapse of their rural economy and their transformation into a nursery and nursing home for cheap mobile labor, their religious ideology and practices have also changed to mediate their experience. The conflicts between individualism and community, wage labor and non-alienated consumptive production are mediated through religion, through the dialectic of Guinea and Magic.

#### GUINEA AND MAGIC IN DEVELOP-MAN

Guinea and Magic represent two, opposed moral systems or ways-of-being-in-the-world. Guinea (*Ginen*) signifies tradition, mutuality, and moral authority. The term Guinea refers to the far-off, mythical place “on the other side of the water” where the ancestors migrated from, to which they return at death, and where the lineage’s *lwa* continue to live. Guinea is also epitomized by the involved concept known as “inheritance” (*eritaj*), which stands at once for lineal kin’s inalienable, inherited land, their peasant ancestors, and their spiritual legacy (Lowenthal 1987).

Magic (*Maji*) is Guinea’s other, its ground figure (Larose 1975:106). Magic is associated with wage labor, the outside, unbridled individualism, and, therefore, sorcery. The “work” of Magic is believed to be executed by a kind of spirit known as *pwen*. *Pwen* means “anything that captures the essence or pith of a complex situation” (Brown 1991:151-2). This class of powers is called a *pwen* because their Magical force seizes the (bad) essence of money and wage labor, animating monetary gain with unnatural, life-giving powers. *Pwen* are manufactured and sold by sorcerers. One has to travel far away to buy them. They help their masters make money fast, but they inevitably turn on the latter. It is assumed that anyone greedy enough to buy the illicit labor power would be hard-pressed to pay the wage slave its due. The disgruntled, or “hungry” *pwen* consumes its master’s most precious “products,” children.

Paradoxically, these illicit powers are the lever in the Guinea-Magic dialectic. Although *pwen* are created out of Magic, *pwen* eventually become

12. I offer a Creole proverb to apply to the North American version, reflecting a system that professes equivalence at the same time as it creates Others and blames victims who fail at self-reliance: *tout moun se menm, men tout moun pa moun* (every person is the same, but not everyone is a [valid] person).

incorporated into Guinea as a class of (inferior, but nonetheless authentic, Guinea) spirits known as *zandò*. The key to Guinea's appropriation of the *pwen*'s vitality is its concealment of the ritual process whereby it transforms these "bad" powers into a class of Guinea spirits. Guinea depends upon its other to give life to itself. Guinea has authority but no power, no *pwen* of its own. So it must "gather up" the vitality of Magic. Although Guinea repudiates "seeking" (*pwen*), it depends upon absorbing Magic's life-giving contagion. To maintain its façade of authority, Guinea conceals this dependency.

Those at home, the producers of migrants, situate themselves on the morally superior side of Guinea while symbolically placing migrants on the elicit side of Magic. In effect they castigate migrants for going outside the moral community, getting consumed by wage labor, and consuming the wages for themselves. Elsewhere (Richman 2005), I analyzed an exchange of ritual songs in the cassette correspondence between a migrant named Ti Chini (Little Caterpillar) and his eldest brother and surrogate father, Se Byen (It's Fine). One of Ti Chini's improvised sacred songs was a particularly elegant critique of a process that promotes those who stay behind while it "*pweni-fies*" those toiling hard in distant infernos (where they must also brave racist hostility, intensified by Americans' special hatred of natives of Haiti). Exemplars of Guinea nevertheless find the *pwen* useful and valuable. They want to harness the *pwen*'s vitality, but they pretend not to need it. His lyrics lampooned the arrogant conduct of those who claim Guinean pedigree. At the song's denouement, the highhanded "Guineans" are shamed into reclaiming and respecting their migrant as one of their own.

Guinea and its "other," Magic (*Maji*), are the empowering representations of a powerless, "peasant" community, a way of making sense of and exerting symbolic control over their history. Their African and Creole ancestors freed themselves in violent revolution against the plantation order of colonial Saint Domingue. The swift establishment of a free-holding peasantry undermined efforts by early independence leaders to force them back onto the plantations as wage laborers. But the cosmopolitan elite, supported by the state and European patrons, moved to repossess the peasants' land. Their encroachment during the late nineteenth century upon the peasants' principle weapon in their struggle to stay free made it easier for the new, twentieth-century colonial regime, the United States, to commandeer the peasants' labor power, hastening their return to the plantation as dependent wage laborers. During the first half of the last century, Haitian labor power benefited American agribusiness in Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic; in the latter part of the century displaced Haitian peasants "freely" alienated themselves for capital in the United States itself. Today the vestigial peasantry survives by raising children for export. Since the land tenure system can no longer reproduce itself, it requires the labor of its migrant proletarians – its *pwen* – to remain peasant.

A similar ethnographic case is found in Michael Taussig's discussion of *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (1980). The Cauca Valley site in Columbia is structurally akin to Léogane: the population is a "reconstituted peasantry" (Mintz 1974a) descended mainly from African slaves; intensive foreign capital penetration violently encompassed the peasantry early in this century. Large-scale sugar plantations today employ "free" mobile laborers who are of peasant origin; they are nominally Catholic. Taussig asserts that the Cauca Valley workers symbolize their incorporation as "neophyte proletarians" through their notion of the *muñeco*. Like *pwen*, *muñecos* are means of individualistic gain, associated with faceless, migrant wage labor. *Muñecos* magically confer life-giving force to the petty cash handled by the poor, turning ordinary money (use value) into capital (exchange value). Taussig does not, however, reflect upon how these illicit financial powers can be transformed to reproduce a struggling "traditional" system.<sup>13</sup>

The use of tainted wages, the quintessence of alienation, to energize a system that eschews wage labor seems paradoxical, but it is far from unique. C.A. Gregory's (1982:648) insight that money can "change form and function as an instrument of gift exchange" has been substantiated across a range of colonized societies. Incorporated societies have invented ways of ritually purifying tainted wages. When migrant workers returned from the coast to Papua New Guinea, they and their products were made to go through a special rite of passage that involved a three month seclusion in the men's house and culminated in a distribution of the "gifts" they brought back (Gregory 1982:185). Feeding stands out as a widespread symbolic process of converting money into moral value. Fijians "drink cash"; a Malaysian community "cooks money" (Toren 1989, Carsten 1989). As we have seen, feeding is the dominant metaphor for ritual action and the chief means of transforming a *pwen* into a Guinea spirit.

In Johnathan Parry and Maurice Bloch's (1989:25) formulation, societies in economic transformation endeavor to control the articulation of two "organically essential transactional orders." One is a cycle of long-term reproduction associated with morality, substance, the social unit, and the inside analogous to Guinea; the other is a short-term exchange cycle associated with wage labor, competition, and impersonal contracts similar to Magic. Incorporated societies endeavor to separate the two domains (keeping Magic from contaminating Guinea's authority), yet they also have to link them because "the long term is sustained by the vitality of the short-term cycle" (Parry and Bloch 1989:26). Parry and Bloch (1989:26) also discuss the long-term domain's anxiety that

13. *Muñecos*, in Taussig's scheme, occupy a fixed place in a rigid dichotomy between use-value and exchange-value, peasants and proletarians, good and evil. Taussig's later work on shamanism and mimesis, which theories interplay and appropriation, indirectly addresses this gap in his original and ground-breaking analysis of sorcery and wage labor in South America.

“individual involvement in the short-term cycle will become an end in itself which is no longer subordinated to the reproduction of the larger cycle; or, more horrifying still, that grasping individuals will divert the resources of the long-term cycle for their own short-term transactions.”

Guinea, in other words, has cause for anxiety toward *pwen* (migrants) who might exploit their exploitation for their own ends, using the short term to subvert rather than to vitalize the long term. Guinea’s high-handed treatment of *pwen* (the home kin’s arrogance toward its migrants) is ideologically justified by the belief that undisciplined *pwen*, who are not controlled through ritual feeding become so ravenously they “eat up” Guinea’s people instead. But the long-term cycle’s “develop-man” (Sahlins 1992) revitalization tactics can go so far as to provoke its *pwen* to rebel.

A comparative example of a society’s recourse to a “develop-man” solution to reproducing their “traditional” ritual system with ever-increasing scale and grandeur only to help usher in the feared Protestant “development” comes from Central Africa. The similarities between Haitian religious change and the Malawi case described by Karen Fields (1985) cannot be attributed to African retentions (Herskovits 1958, Scott 1991, Palmié forthcoming), but rather to the structural parallels between the encounters of a nonalienated moral economy with colonial capitalism. Confronted with the colonial capitalist disruption of their social and economic relations, Malawi elders used a traditional mechanism to exploit the migrant labor of young men hoping to gain enough resources to be able to marry. These young men were understandably receptive to an opportunity to rid themselves of these kin-based obligations to greedy elders. The men were among the first to embrace Christianity, which instituted monogamous marriage as a contract between two autonomous individuals and the family as an independent or nuclear unit.

#### TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANTS AND THEIR TRANSNATIONAL LWA

Although they are characterized as ancient, immutable repositories of “African” tradition, the *lwa* have shown that, like their “children,” they, too, can adapt to changing conditions of global reproduction. With so many of their children now living and working “over there” (*lòt bò*), these mobile, transnational, African *lwa*, who have always been travelers in the Haitian imagination, are busier than ever. I once had the opportunity to interview a spirit about her protection of migrants. The female spirit possessed a male ritual leader, who was conducting a healing rite for an absent migrant in the presence of the migrants’ parents and me. The spirit, whose name is Ezili Dantò/Our Lady of Lourdes, said to us, “Every three days I am in Miami ... I have to keep watch over everything that goes on. Miami is where the core is” (*Tou le twa jou m Mayami. Fò m veye tout sa k pase. Se Mayami noyo a ye*).

Miami (South Florida) is where most of the migrants from “her” Ti Rivyè village now reside. Like all of the spirits, whose movements are said to be like the wind, Ezili Dantò can instantly traverse these international boundaries to “watch over” her peripatetic dependants abroad.

Spirits are said to “protect” the migrants. Consider how Ti Chini, a migrant in South Florida introduced above, used the term protection with regard to his patron *lwa*, named Baron Lakwa: “I have my protection here. My protection won’t abandon me in anything I could achieve, in anything I could get, it’s there with me” (*M gen pwotèj mwen la. Pwotèj mwen pa sa kite m menm nan tout sa m te kapab realize, nan tout sa m te kapab genyen, yo la a avè m*). Pepe, a *gangan aason* in Ti Rivyè, reinforced Ti Chini’s view when he explained to me how the *lwa* intervene in the lives of their emigrant “servitors.” Rather than the term “protection,” Pepe favored verbs deriving from contract: *garanti* (to warrant, to guarantee) and *degaranti* (to withdraw a warrant, to undermine). To illustrate the *lwa*’s guaranty, Pepe referred to the case of Lamèsi, a resident immigrant of the United States who not only contributed to the rituals for her *lwa* but also returned each year to attend them:

There are (migrant) people like Lamèsi. She always returns to see how the annual service for the *lwa* is going. She sees how the work is going. It guaranties her. It supports her. It satisfies her. She knows that if she doesn’t find anything today, tomorrow she’ll find. She knows too that if she is employed, she won’t be fired for any old reason. Instead of de-guarantying her, it always guaranties her little bonus even higher.

*Gen moun tankou Lamèsi. Li toujou vini pou l wè kouman fèt la ap pase. Li wè jan travay la ap mache, li garanti li. Li apiye li. Li satisfè l. Li konnen jodi li pa jwenn, demen lap jwenn. Li konnen tou, si li nan yon travay li pa ka revoke pou nenpòt kondisyon. Angiz li degaranti li, li toujou garanti ti bonis li pi ro.*

As long as an immigrant continues to “take care of” (*okipe*) her *lwa* in Ti Rivyè, the spirits may reciprocate by guarantying her employment opportunities in South Florida. The alternative, in Pepe’s words, is the option of “de-guaranty,” whose symptoms cover the range of ailments and disappointments commonly experienced by low-wage workers living and laboring in unsanitary, over-crowded, and insecure conditions. Often perceived as streaks of bad luck, these afflictions are typically multistranded: chronic ailments, failure to find and keep employment, accidents, and ominous dreams. Pepe described how an emigrant might be de-guarantied by a *lwa*:

If the person is in a job that pays \$200 or \$300 (a week), the *lwa* can make you lose your job. The *lwa* can make you sick so you’ll never find work and you’ll spend everything you saved. The *lwa* can also make you get into a car accident, lose your job, and make you an alcoholic so that you can never guaranty anything in that country.

*Si moun nan yon travay l ap touche \$200., \$300., lwa a gen dwa fè ou pedi travay la. Li gen dwa fè ou malad pou ou pa janm jwenn travay e ou depanse tout sa ou te genyen. Lwa a tou gen dwa fè machin fè aksidan avèk ou, pedi djòb ou, li gen dwa fè ou bwè rom, kleren pou ou pa garanti oken anyen nan peyi a.*

The *lwa* discipline wayward migrants by thwarting (*anpeche*) and “de-guarantying” them. Pepe claimed that *lwa* do not only afflict negligent migrants with their own “*lwa*-caused illness” (*maladi lwa*), but spirits also indirectly punish migrants by withholding protection from “human-caused illness” (*maladi moun*), or sorcery. *Lwa* are said to protect migrants by “standing up for” (*kanpe pou*) them against sorcerers’ attacks. But a *lwa* who feels neglected by her or his chosen heir will leave that person vulnerable to sorcerers’ sudden aggression. Pepe thus continued, “if you (the migrant) abandon them,” he said, “you are abandoned too. Then you will – pow” (*Si ou bandonnen yo, ou bandonnen tou. Epi ou gen dwa plop tou*).

There is a seemingly ubiquitous perception that those who dare to better themselves will inevitably become a target of sorcery, “killed for what they had achieved.” This belief is typical of a peasant moral economy’s critique and containment of capitalist ideology (Weber 1958, Thompson 1963, 1967, Taussig 1980). As economic emissaries or human *pwen*, steeped in the muck of wage labor, migrants provoke deep ambivalence. Indeed some migrants avoid returning home, foregoing the opportunity to convert their tainted wages into moral values, for fear that they will be magically poisoned. Though they can be “hit” with poisonous powders anywhere in the world, and Ti Rivyè natives are believed to have been assailed in Florida, the likelihood is believed to be far greater in Haiti. Migrants’ premature deaths are often attributed to sorcery. The grieving make sense of the assault on their emissary by finding an answer in sorcery, blaming an accessible relative or neighbor instead of the structural violence inflicted by more remote forces against which they are powerless (Lindenbaum 1979, Farmer 1992). But they can exert some symbolic control over a *maladi moun* by soliciting the help of a counter-sorcerer, if not too late to rescue the afflicted, then in time to take revenge and cut short the life of another emissary before he or she realizes the family’s mission abroad.

Belief in the spirits’ control over migrants’ health and productivity thus immerses migrants, families, and ritual intermediaries back home in the diagnosis of affliction and the quest for a cure. Narratives of spiritual and human interference in the migrants’ productivity circumvent the home family’s humiliation and scorn and instead solicit their help and their concern. Mediation of these long-distance crises transforms oppressive, externally imposed conditions into something the migrants and their families back home *can* control.

Thus spiritual and sorcery affliction beliefs and discourse symbolize and reinforce migrants' role as emissaries of their families' social, economic, and ritual interests. The social norm of generosity and giving to one's capacity influences the view of migrants as the kinsmen with "bigger wrists" (*pi gwo ponyèt*). Migrants are expected to contribute not just to their own but also to their extended family's ever-increasing ritual and secular obligations. As a result, migrants are frequently the victims of vengeful spirits, which only an expiatory, healing rite performed by their home family, regardless of the migrant's absence, can assuage. The migrant's sponsorship of a "feeding of the *lwa*," whether in person or at a distance, symbolizes the migrant's generosity, which in turn diffuses accusations of hoarding that might provoke sorcery. At the same time the migrant's gift of wages for ritual purposes "buys" some sorcery protection from the satisfied spiritual guests at the ritual feeding as well. Through their remittances, migrant wage laborers, the people peasants are producing for export, now "guarantee" the traditional, peasant ritual economy.

#### MIGRANTS' RESISTANCE AND CONVERSION

Some Ti Rivyè migrants attribute their gradual, if modest, success in the host society to the positive interdependence between their home kin, the *lwa*, and themselves. Dutiful deployment of their bigger wrists for ritual expenditures on the family land in Ti Rivyè has resulted in an enhanced "guaranty" and "protection" of their productivity in the host society. Regular demonstrations of generosity to the spirits of their descent groups have solidified their social relations and reputations across their transnational community, modes of "productive consumption" that are as valuable to a migrant's labor reproduction as are investments in land and livestock.

But other migrants have met disappointment as they struggle to survive in the lowest rungs of a hostile, discriminatory South Florida economy and, meanwhile, stay "healthy." In the background is the frustration of poverty. The migrants are not as successful as they hoped and, in spite of remittances, their home families are still poor. The migrants' frustration is further linked to their perceptions that their families no longer look upon them as people but see them rather as insensate beasts of burden. They slave away in hostile, foreign countries for the sake of people who resent them for having left. Many migrants complained to me that their home relatives were lazy and just ate up their remittances rather than invest them. Since many in Mayami are working very hard and are still very poor, and expect to recuperate and/or retire in Haiti, they are bitter and worried about their lack of economic security back home.

Some migrants are turning to conversion to resist their perceived domination by home kin, ritual mediators, and spirits. By converting, they take symbolic control of their remittances and the terms of their relationships

with the home without appearing to reject their kin relations (which are modeled and enforced by beliefs in *lwa*). They have rejected their *lwa*, withdrawn from the system of family ritual obligations, and joined Pentecostal churches. They blame the *lwa* for being useless to them, for colluding with their families and ritual leaders who exploit them, for turning a blind eye to migrants in need, even though those migrants have sent money for rituals. One of the first of my friends from Ti Rivyè to use conversion as a means of rebellion was Ti Chini, whose positive comments on the reciprocal dependence between migrants and *lwa* were cited above. His doctrinal switching is similar to Field's (1986) analysis of the strategic uses of conversion by Malawi migrants to rebel against a system of onerous kinship and ritual obligations made all the more onerous by the elders' attempts to counteract the crumbling sources of traditional authority. Ti Chini had considered himself a loyal emissary for family and spirits alike. His family's alleged "waste" of his remittances, his failure to get ahead, his spate of bad-luck injuries in an orange grove, and a diagnosis of diabetes – all despite having sent thousands of dollars for ritual purposes – finally pushed him over the edge.

When he converted to Protestantism in 1992, he sent me a cassette letter explaining his drastic decision.

Well, Karen, here is the reason why I converted. Regardless, I would have converted anyway. How could I be serving *lwa* for all of these problems to keep on happening to me in both the land of Miami and in the land of Haiti? Why? When a *lwa* needs to eat, I provide for him/her. If I'm (sitting) over here working these lousy jobs, and (my older brother, a *gangan*) Se Byen sends word that he's going to do such and such work in Haiti, like it or not, I have to send off \$200 or \$300. Why? For the *lwa*. And then, after I've done all that work, who should have the biggest problems but me. Look how long I've been in another country working. I could just tell you, someone would think I must have something wrong with me, because whenever I have money in my hands, I don't know what to do with it ...

Why? I am standing here today. In one year alone, Karen, I sponsored a service at home. It cost me \$1,500. I tell you up until the present I still owe (a man from Ti Rivyè). I still haven't been able to pay off the money for that service. Does that mean you have *lwa*? For me to have done all those things for the *lwa*, for you to watch me borrowing to feed you, and slaving away at picking tree fruit to raise the money, well, as far as I'm concerned, there are no *lwa* anymore. My life is in God's hands. My life is in the hands of the Eternal. My life is not in the hands of the *lwa*. You understand? My life is in the hands of God. My life is not in the hands of the *lwa*. I remove myself from *lwa*. I remove myself from Satan. Now I am in the hands of God. All of my being is in the hands of the Eternal. And that's why I converted, Karen. It has given me a respite ...

*Anben, Kalin, men pou tè, rezon ki fè m konvèti. Nenpòt ki jan, fò m te konvèti kanmenm. M pa sa gen – m ap sèvi lwa pou tout pwoblem sa yo pede rive m nan peyi Mayami, kil peyi Dayiti. Sa k fè sa, lè lwa bèzwen manje, mwen bay li. Si kankou map chita la, m ap fè vye dyòb isi, Se Byen voye di m l ap fè tèl travay Ayiti, vle pa vle, fò m jwenn \$200, \$300 pou m voye ale. Pou ki sa? Pou lwa. Lè m fini, lè m fini fè travay sa yo, ki moun-pou ta genyen pi gwo pwoblem, se mwen menm. Gade dat m antre nan youn peyi m ap travay. M ta kòm di ou, ou a di s'on bagay mwen genyen, depi s'on kòb ki antre nan menm, pou m pa wè sa pou m fè ave l...*

*Sa k fè sa, men mwen, men jodi a m kanpe la. Gen yon ane k ènsèl, Kalin, m fè yon sèvis lakay. Li koute m \$1500. Ma di ou Jiska mentnan m dwe Silien. Kòb sèvis Jiska mentnan m poko kapab fin peye l. Atò, ou gen lwa? Pou m fè tout bagay sa pou lwa, pou ou wè m prete, pou m ba ou manje, lè fini se redi an ba redi pou m ap keyi grenn bwa pou m sanble pou m peye lajan an. Anben, mwen, si se pou mwen, m pa nan lwa ankò. Lwa m nan menm Bondye. Vi m nan men Leternèl. Vi m pa nan men lwa. Ou konprann? Vi m nan men Bondye. Vi m pa nan men lwa. M retire m nan lwa. M retire m nan Satan. Kounye a m nan men Blondie. Tout fòs mwen nan men Letènèl. Anben se sak fè, Kalin, mwen konvèti. Sa ban mwen yon reposit.*

It seems obvious from Ti Chini's bitter letter that resistance to ritual exploitation, rather than firm conviction in the superiority of Protestant doctrine, was the reason Ti Chini converted to Protestantism. His periodic confirmations of confidence in the Protestant's God (and rejection of Satan) did not stand on their own; they were, instead, set against repudiations of his ungrateful, fickle spirits.

Conversion is a strategy migrants have used to resist their perceived roles as exploited emissaries for kin and spirits. For some it is a temporary move. Ti Chini, for example, "backslid" into Catholicism (and serving *lwa*) after the drastic move got his family's attention and the conversion failed to protect him from further affliction. His wife, Maxia, who had stayed in Haiti, also shifted between the two religious and healing options. After Ti Chini succumbed to his illness, which was attributed to sorcery against an ambitious migrant, she also got ill. She, too, suspected sorcery, which she felt as a shadow hovering over her. She joined a Protestant congregation and the conversion brought her relief from the persecution. The "dead spirit" (*mò*), the agent of a sorcerer, left her alone, and she painlessly abandoned the Protestants. "It (Protestantism) didn't interest me anymore," was how she explained her strategic return to Catholicism and serving *lwa*.

Maxia's practical religious logic helps to explain the apathy of some Catholics (who serve their *lwa*) toward Protestant converts like herself. Catholics' tolerance of Protestants also underscores the extent to which the opposition to Protestantism is a creation of the Pentecostals themselves (Conway 1976:252). Catholics who serve their *lwa*, on the other hand, con-

front fewer contradictions openly turning to Protestantism in times of health crisis. Indeed as Roger Dorsainville, a mid-century Baptist theologian, keenly observed (cited in Pressoir 1942:5), a *gangan* (or *manbo*) will occasionally advise conversion. Having exhausted his or her own spiritual resources, a *gangan* or *manbo* may suggest that a desperate patient visit a Protestant healer, for which conversion is a requirement of treatment. Such an honest admission of failure by a *gangan* or *manbo* can only enhance professional credibility.

In the case of the urgent quest to save my late godchild, whose nickname was Alimèt (Match), a similar ideological flexibility prevailed. Alimèt was sixteen when she died in 2000. She grew up in a household headed by her paternal grandparents that included her parents and her siblings. Her late paternal grandfather, Joiecius, was a *gangan a son*, and he has been succeeded in the role by his son, Alimèt's father. Alimèt had been chronically ill for many years, despite the interventions of her grandfather and a series of biomedical doctors, including a surgeon. Thus when her maternal grandmother, who is Protestant, approached her paternal family and asked to take her away "to enter her in Protestantism," they agreed, knowing that conversion was a requisite part of the therapy. When their Protestant in-laws failed to cure her, they bore them no ill will. An important aspect of Alimèt's Protestant maternal kin's determined efforts to save her life is their pragmatic concern for results before religious conviction. The depth of Alimèt's Protestant conviction was not a factor in her treatment. Indeed, conversion, which is a prerequisite for Pentecostal healing, may proceed without the agent's conscious participation (Conway 1976:252).

The role of conversion in the quest for therapy is widely reported in the literature on conversion in Latin America, which only underscores the extent to which these popular religions are cults of affliction and healing for whom doctrinal boundaries are there to be transgressed (Ireland 1993). Among the most well-known narratives of conversion to Pentecostalism is Sidney Mintz's (1960) account of the life of Don Taso, whose conversion was prompted by a health crisis. Mintz admits at the outset that the study was a sort of quest for scholarly therapy, addressing Mintz's need to explain Taso's sudden, seemingly rash religious change and his subsequent bid for a rationalized, self-centered life. The parallels between my study and Mintz's are obvious, from the conversion of a key consultant to analyzing religious conversion to modernity in a Marxian and Weberian mode.

#### PROTESTANT MAGIC AND IMMUNITY

The tactical use of conversion as rebellion is described in the literature on Haitian ritual practice. Alfred Métraux (1953, 1959) noted the use of conversion as an act of revolt against *lwa* more than half a century ago, before the

postwar expansion of Pentecostals in the country. Métraux explained how the act of conversion represented “a magic circle” of protection from discipline by *lwa*. He quoted what a Marbial person told him: “If you want the (*lwa*) to leave you in peace, become a Protestant.” Métraux added the insight that “No doubt it is the challenging attitude adopted by Protestants towards the (*lwa*) which has finally convinced the peasants that this religion confers upon its adepts a sort of supernatural immunity” (Métraux 1959:352).

Métraux’s analysis of the instrumental use of conversion closely echoed the internal Protestant critique. The Haitian Protestant theologian, Roger Dorsainville, had previously lamented that a “true conviction and profound commitment to be saved” were “rarely” the reason people converted. “Protestantism,” he asserted, “is pursued as a superior *wanga* [magical power], the pastor is like a more powerful sorcerer” (*L’Evangile est also recherché comme “ouanga” supérieur, le prédicateur est comme un bocor puissant*) (quoted in Pressoir 1942:8). The magic circle also protects the convert from very real fear of sorcery, a social weapon long used by peasants throughout the world to limit individualism and greed and enforce reciprocity.

The appeal of Protestantism as the antidote to pre-existing forms of sorcery reverberates with analyses of many colonized and missionized African societies. In Malawi, the Watchtower sect entered as a new witchcraft eradication movement, offering total inoculation to anyone who converted. As Karen Fields (1985) explains, Protestant conversion offered an escape route for young migrant men from an increasingly onerous “traditional” system.

I have often heard the perception of conversion as strategic defense against sorcery. Denise, who migrated to South Florida from Ti Rivyè told me after her conversion in the mid-nineties, “As soon as you convert, nothing can harm you” (*Depi ou konvèti, anyen pa ka fè ou*). Her new religion has neither replaced nor diminished her belief in the reality of sorcerers’ powers but rather persuaded her that it offers the most protective armor against evil forces.

Catholics (who serve their *lwa*) I interviewed nonetheless refuse to accept the explanation that conversion is merely an escape from sorcery. They argue the opposite: conversion is a license to sorcery. “People convert precisely so they can do *wanga*” (*konvèti pou yo kapab fè wanga menm*). Converts switch their religious “costume” so that they can make money illicitly, money they won’t have to share or redistribute, and they do it with impunity. Converts think that their sober, separatist behavior will pre-empt accusations of patronizing *gangan* so that they can secretly pursue magic and sorcery while removing themselves from obligations to a social and ritual redistribution system which serving *lwa* necessarily entails.

It is widely suspected that converts secretly patronize *gangan* for private magic or sorcery. While living in a Ti Rivyè village, I had been curious about the strangers who occasionally walked into the compound I shared with a matrilineal extended family. They would ask for Joiecious, the *gangan*

*ason*. I finally asked the ritual leader who those strangers were. “They’re Protestants,” he told me, as if I were the only one who didn’t already know that obvious fact, “they come from the capital city.”

Pepe, the *gangan ason* who commented about the migrants’ guaranty and de-guaranty, also frankly admitted to me that many of his clients are Protestants. He quickly dismissed my query about the Protestant’s offer of strong protection against sorcery. “If they say they convert so nothing can harm them,” he responded, “then why do they come to see *gangan*? And why do they have sacred things hidden in their houses?” In a curious echo of Dorsainville’s 1940s lament about converts seeking stronger *wanga* from Protestant pastors, Pepe further asserted that “Pastors get *wanga* (charms and spells) and *dyab* (money-making powers) which they plant at the front of their yards so when foreign missionaries pass by they will notice them and give them money and send them to the States. They have to fill their churches to satisfy their sponsors. And they are good talkers, too.” Pepe thus echoed Joiecius’s (and others’) charge that “It’s a business; it’s so they can make money” (*Se yon biznis; se pou yo fè kòb*).

The *gangan ason*’s disclosures about their Protestant clients of course draw attention to the contradiction that these stewards of “authentic Guinea” communal rituals that model mutuality also prepare private magic for ambitious individuals. The ritual professionals openly “serve with two hands” the two sorts of “houses” they manage, one for *lwa*. These “houses” are conspicuously located in near[by?] or adjacent yards. And during rituals, where others become vessels for the spirits, who can voice social criticisms in a licensed performative frame, typically through songs, they make themselves vulnerable to be criticized for taking advantage of others. The communal license to playfully resist the *gangan ason* ultimately reproduces the authority of the latter. Neither Joie, Pepe, nor any other *gangan ason* I interviewed admitted to me that the pastors’ command of *wanga* was a threat to their own. Protestant incursion may not have diminished the *gangan*’s private trade as sorcerers and counter-sorcerers. But in the safe context of ritual, they have admitted the existence of the Protestant threat. I have twice noted that *gangan ason* (other than Joie or Pepe) publicly lament a decline in attendance at rituals that seemed nonetheless to draw crowds of people. In one instance, Emile, a ritual leader, addressed the spirit, Ezili Dantò, who had “mounted” a person at a large “feeding” in her honor, complained, “Everyone around here is converting. There are only a few of us left, but we’ll never stop serving the *lwa*.” The *gangan ason* might have added, “with the help of our migrant emissaries as long as they don’t convert.”

THE PROTESTANT *DYAB*

The pastors' sermons heard in Palm Beach County's evangelical Haitian churches substantiate Dorsainville's charge that converts value their new faith for delivering a "superior *wanga*." As for being "more powerful sorcerers," the ministers do not manipulate objects, but the instant reward and magical protection they offer rhetorically is as efficacious as the magical words that sorcerers utter when they manufacture *wanga*. They are skilled preachers who charm their flock with their relaxed, accessible style, vivid narratives, and wit (and contradict thereby the stereotype of the stern "pastor"). Congregants howl with laughter as they glimpse their own disavowed practices from a safe distance in the words and mimicry of the pastors' sermons. The orators captivate parishioners with miraculous stories of persons who converted and the next day discovered checks for \$100,000 in their mailboxes. A sermon by one L'Eglise de Dieu pastor during an evening prayer service, for example, was a remarkably straightforward approbation of migrants' newfound liberation from the burdens of their former moral economy. The sermon, which he delivered in October 2000, had an indelible refrain. It was rendered in the oddly graceful mixture of Creole and English that is typical of Haitian immigrants' speech: "*Jezi, set nou free*" (Jesus sets us free).

What did he mean by freedom? If he implied spiritual freedom, it was only in an indirect sense, as he continued to explain in Creole-English: "*Free de pwoblem ou, free de soufrans ou, free de det ou dwe yo*" (Free of your problems, free of your suffering, free of the debts you owe). Jesus liberates you from your pecuniary obligations to send your wages back home. Jesus frees converts from the system of obligations tying them to their lineage, their spiritual legacy and their inherited land. Fidelity to Jesus liberates you from your obligations to contribute to rituals back home, which are major mechanisms for sharing and redistributing resources among kin. The morality of hoarding is reconfigured. Now, it is good to keep the money in your own pocket. It is even better to go and spend the money rationally buying food for the children at the corporate chain supermarket as opposed to wasting it foolishly on leisurely pleasures.

Haven't you noticed people who are working three jobs so they can send money back home to feed the devil? As long as you understand the Bible, your money will stay in your pocket [places his right hand on his right pants pocket]. You don't send it off; you go to the Win-Dixie with it. The Win-Dixie is beautiful [nice]. You can buy nice food for your children there.

*Ou pa wè mounki travay 3 dyòb pou yo kapab voye lajan bay dyab manje. Depi nou konprann Bib la, lajan nou rèt nan poch ou. Ou pa voye li ale; ou pral nan Win Dixie avè l. Win Dixie bèl, nou kapab achte bèl manje pou ti moun nou yo.*

What does he mean by “devil” (*dyab*)? The devil is the “other” in this righteous discourse, a diffuse, catch-all term for anything connoting the old religion. It confounds categories that people who serve the *lwa* carefully distinguish. The misuse of the term equates the anthropomorphic spirits of descent groups (*lwa*) who hail from the mythical time of Guinea (*Ginen*) with illicit powers manipulated by sorcerers. It is a super-*pwen*, a purchased (as opposed to inherited) magical power in its most antisocial and lethal form. The Creole term *dyab*, which derives from the French *diabole*, retains the old French meanings. *Dyab* is a symbolic representation of impersonal contracts forged between ambitious, antisocial individuals.

The devil is a power that you buy. It makes money fast, pure capital, which distinguishes itself from savings because it reproduces itself (as opposed to converting commodities into capital) and does so through evil means: stealing life from humans and animals to vitalize money. But it is difficult to keep devils in check. They inevitably turn on their masters or their masters’ progeny. Indeed a contract is said to be made of an exchange of human life for money growth for a certain period of profit whose final payment is death. Corresponding representations of the theft of human life to make illicit money grow comes from the reluctant proletarians of the Cauca Valley, Colombia (Taussig 1980).

Notably, the L’Eglise de Dieu pastor drew upon his own extensive knowledge of ordinary, “superstitious” belief and practice both to give them meaning and to mock them. His portrayals drew hoots of knowing laughter. He did not seek, therefore, to deny the existence of *dyab*; he instead offered his faith as its most powerful antidote, a magic circle of protection. If you believe in Jesus, *dyab* cannot touch you. But this pastor’s sermon was particularly focused on proving how a Protestant’s faith could protect him or her from the financial costs of being afflicted or associated with *dyab*.

The devil can’t touch you as long as you know the Bible. There are people who have *zonbi* on them. [Zonbi are mobile powers manipulated by sorcerers and “sent on” victims.] They pay \$2,500 to remove them. There was another man, the devil took him. The person who was treating him made him stand on all fours, as if he were a cow or a horse. [Bursts of laughter in the pews.] This is a serious thing, you know, don’t laugh. They hit him; he bled. [More howls, and another admonishment not to laugh because it was real.] They put a bridle in his mouth, and injured his mouth, and made him walk around like that so the devil would leave him. But as long as you know Jesus, you don’t have to do things like that.

*Dyab pa ka manyen ou depi ou kbɔn Bib la. Gen moun ki gen zonbi sou li (ki peye konbyen mil dola pou l kite l) . Gen yon moun, dyab la pran. Yo mete l sou kat pye tankou bèf. Yo bal kou, san koule. Yo mete brid nan bouch li, blese bouch li, fè l mache kon sa pou dyab la kite li. Men depi ou kon Jezi, ou pa bezwen fè bagay sa yo.*

Next, the pastor told the story of a destitute and desperate man who, like the hero in the Jack and the Beanstalk fable, gave his last \$100 to a group of Christians who were singing on a street corner. He instantly made \$100,000, which conveniently had been earlier cited as the cost today of a college education for a child. Ironically, the preacher's central message appropriates the very same images that make doing *wanga*, buying *dyab*, illicit: individual ambition, money that grows by itself.

The man didn't have anything. His children were hungry. He took his last \$100 and was going to a store to buy food for his family. On the way he saw people gathered who were singing [hymns]. He gave them the \$100. When he got back home, his wife asked him what he bought with the money. He told her, "we have to talk about something." He told her he gave the money away. She said, "what?" The next day he received a check for \$100,000.

*Misyè pat gen anyen. Pitit li te grangou. Li jwenn \$100. Lal yon kote, li we moun k ap reini. Li ba yo \$100. Lè tounen lakay madanm nan mande ki sa l achte ak kòb la. Le di nou gen yon bagay pou nou pale. Li di li bay moun kòb la. Li di, "ki sa?" "Nan demen li resevwa yon chèk pou \$100,000. Ou wè Jezi?*

The story ended without a suggestion of how the man should consume or distribute the riches. The assumption is that the money will be saved to make more money; the duty of individual (is) toward the increase of his capital, which is assumed as an end in itself" (Weber 1958:51) and "man is dominated by the making of money" (Weber 1958:53). This silence about moral use of the discovered wealth contrasts with the discourse of serving *lwa*, with its emphasis on sharing, giving to one's capacity, and reciprocity, as well as its incessant critique and containment of individualism and greed, which are graphically symbolized in the imagery of *dyab*.

Ironically, the Protestants' discourse sacralizes instant rewards and private gain, the very means associated with immorality and sorcery. The American exemplar of this witchcraft, according to Max Weber, is Benjamin Franklin. Weber begins the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism with citations from Franklin's autobiography in which the "colorless deist" recounts the story of "his conversion to (utilitarian) virtues" (Weber 1958:52-3). Weber emphasizes Franklin's blithe application of metaphors of biological reproduction to money. "Remember that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turn is six, turned again it is seven and threepence and so on" (Franklin, quoted in Weber 1958:49). Weber compares Franklin's logic to sorcery, and he quotes a mid-nineteenth century satire, *Picture of American Culture*, "They make tallow out of cattle and money out of men" (Kürnberger 1855, quoted in Weber 1958:51).

This Puritan devil is the very kind of sorcerer's power that the communal morality associated with *lwa* repudiates. But now it is cloaked and authorized through bodily practices of restraint: abstinence from secular music, dancing, drinking and smoking, modesty in dress and austerity in sexual relations; in other words, monogamous marriage within an autonomous nuclear family unit, unfettered by ties to lineages. As migrants resist their perceived exploitation by kin and *lwa* by turning away from this moral economy, they can reorient themselves toward the acquisitive spirit of the Protestant American dream. An "uplifting" song intoned at L'Eglise de Dieu prayer services captures this ethic. The first verse states, "*Depi Jezi adopte mwen, mwen se yon milyonè*" (Since Jesus adopted me, I am a millionaire).

#### GEDE AND THE PASTOR

The Protestants' ascetic posture and their assertive attitude may not fool non-converts, but non-converts are disinclined to challenge them publicly. Norms of graciousness and indirection prevail, and few are willing to give someone an incentive to retaliate public humiliation through sorcery and/or political persecution. The trickster *lwa*, Gede, is the one agent who publicly takes on the arrogant and self-righteous, and the figure of the pretentious, sober pastor is a handy target of Gede's wicked mockery. Brown (1991:330) describes Gede as a "transformation artist" who "redefines the most painful situation – even death itself – as worth one good laugh." Protestants' pretensions of their virtuous lack of sexual desire and female inhibition make them ideal fodder for Gede and his audience who do not believe in childhood sexual innocence or protecting children from sexuality. When asked to draw a picture of a human being, the children portray people with genitalia. As for virginity, parents care less about a young woman's protection of her purity than her strategic deployment or foolish waste of her sexual resource, sometimes referred to as "the little square of land," between her legs (Lowenthal 1987, Richman 2002).

At one ceremony I attended, which coincides with the Catholic fête of All Souls Day at the end of October, a male Gede spirit had mounted a senior woman named Claris. Once the Gede arrived in her body, "he" was re-costumed in denim, a triangular hat, and spectacles – a hilarious "disguise." Someone conveniently handed Gede a little Bible, and he took on the persona of a sober pastor. Now pastor-Gede-Claris stood, encircled by an attentive crowd, the Bible, spread open, cupped in one hand, his index finger alternately stabbing at the words on the pages and piercing the air to emphasize his points. The "pastor" taught us what the Good book said. Out poured a deluge of rhyming sexual profanity, followed by an unbridled give and take in vulgarity between the ridiculous minister and his sanctified "congregation."

This hilarious scene was a cathartic reformulation of a tense situation. The “social drama” (Turner 1957) underlying the performance turned on the conspicuous absence of two connected beings: a spirit and a kinswoman who was the spirit’s favorite “horse.” I learned about Josilia Calixte from conversations with members of her extended family and with Erika Bourguignon, the anthropologist who conducted ethnography in her village in the late nineteen forties, as well as from written accounts by Bourguignon (1976), Odette Mennesson-Rigaud (1951), and Alfred Métraux (1959). These various sources concurred in portraying Josilia as a “big servitor.” She was the paternal niece the “big” priest-shaman at the shrine, a healer in her own right, and a successful transnational migrant. She had just renounced the spirits of her lineage and converted. For nearly four decades, her patron spirit and Clarice’s had danced together in the “heads” of their “horses.” They had been a reliably spectacular duo at the annual December rites known as *maji* (magic), during which the pounding of powders in a giant mortar goes on without pause throughout the night accompanied by non-stop ritual drumming, dancing, and singing.

Now, a month before the approach of the annual rites, the timing of Gede’s commentary on Protestantism was deliberate. Everyone was aware that without Josilia, the ceremony would be lacking. (Indeed when I returned to the temple for the start of the annual rites, the priest [Josilia’s paternal cousin] said drearily to no one in particular, “There is no one left to dance [at the service] ... everyone has converted” [*nan pwen moun pou danse ... denye moun konvèti*]). Gede’s imitation of the evangelist’s feigned Puritanical restraint was one way for her ritual community to reframe the immediate crisis of Josilia’s conversion and to defuse their disappointment with vulgar humor. This complex reality was made visible in the mimetic interplay of three selves: Clarice, who had lost her “partner in mime,” became possessed by the naughty spirit, Gede, who, in turn, became an ascetic and hypocritical pastor. Gede’s “conversion” to ascetic Protestantism was her “cover.” Gede-Clarice’s ribald humor uncovered the pretense and exposed the sexual and material appetites hidden under the pastor’s sober guise.

Gede-Clarice’s mimicry crystallized the contradictions exploding in the scandal involving the first Haitian pastor in Delray Beach, which I followed through interviews with Catholics, Protestants, and clergy, as well as newspaper articles and court transcripts. Pastor Millien, who established himself as the definitive steward of new Haitian immigrants’ adjustment, was described in the local newspaper as the “charismatic and revered leader” and “something of a cultural guru.” According to the report, Millien is “a pastor who oversees all aspects of his congregation’s life, including whom parish members can date (and marry) and when they can go on vacation. He guides

immigrants carefully into American society, overseeing their negotiations when they rent an apartment or buy a car.”<sup>14</sup>

My interviews with local Haitian clergy and lay people confirmed Pastor Millien’s involvement with new immigrants’ adjustment to basic consumer practices in the host society’s economy. The Pastor indeed helped wean Haitian immigrants of their old saving habits which did not include banking or interest-bearing accounts but rather rotating credit groups (*eso*) and asking trusted others to hold money for them. The sums could be quite large (up to \$75,000) as a result of the pooling of money by *eso*. Reverend Millien helped immigrants establish bank accounts, but instead of assigning the church as a beneficiary of the accounts, he was named the joint owner. People who later discovered that their funds had been withdrawn by the joint owner had no legal recourse to recover their money. While shepherding the migrants’ Americanization, Pastor Millien offered to protect them from the immoral effects of that process. Congregants were instructed, for example, to bring their televisions to the church, and one day he held an outdoor TV-smashing event to rid the congregation of a pernicious source of licentious and disrespectful influences (but perhaps also to pre-empt competition with Reverend Ike and other prosperity gospel televangelists. The rumor among non-Protestants was that the televisions wound up for sale in Reverend Millien’s store in Port-au-Prince.) As for disciplining children, he was seen by many congregants to be more capable in parenting than parents. Teenage girls spent weeks, even months living in his household under his and his wife’s authority. Several young women said that “they considered him more of a parent than their own parents.”<sup>15</sup>

Reverend and Mrs. Millien oversaw the girls’ bodily purity as well. Mrs. Millien testified that she escorted the girls to doctors’ offices for gynecological exams. Yet Pastor Millien was the final authority on their chastity. He personally determined their virginity, and in some cases, its forfeiture. The girls were mum about the assaults until one disclosed to her future husband that she was no longer a virgin. He reported the case to the police. Two others subsequently came forward to reveal that they had also been “tested” by the pastor. In 1998, Reverend Millien was tried and convicted of sexual activity with a minor and was sentenced to eleven years in prison by Circuit Court Judge Howard Berman. But in a subsequent trial before the same judge, his attorneys questioned the use of the sentencing guidelines and his sentence was reduced to five and a half years, which he began serving in April 2001.<sup>16</sup>

14. Scott Gold, “Pastor Guilty of Molesting Girl,” *South Florida Sun Sentinel*, October 28, 1998.

15. Scott Gold, “Pastor Guilty of Molesting Girl,” *South Florida Sun Sentinel*, October 28, 1998.

16. State Florida v. Joseph Millien, Case 01-1759Cf A02. October 26, 1998, West Palm Beach.

The scandal involving Pastor Millien has been the topic of local Palm Beach County news (television and newspaper), Creole radio programs, and much conversation since it first broke out in 1998. One version of the story circulating among local Haitians about Millien's conviction for child molestation was that a new bride was discovered not to have been the Protestant virgin she pretended to be. The family had sworn to the groom and his relatives that the girl had had no previous relations with men; they and the pastor had surveilled her closely. Then she revealed that the man who had sex with her when she was fifteen years old was the minister himself.

Millien's transgressions are not presented here as representative of pastors' sexual immorality, but rather the consummation of the contradictory gospel of money saving and bodily abstinence. Gede's mockery of the pastor indiscreetly exposes what may lie underneath the facade of the sober, Puritanical stance: vulgar and wanton desire for money. These contradictions are not lost on non-converted Haitians in Palm Beach County. Catholics discussing the scandal therefore regretted that the pastor was not brought to justice for his hypocritical theft of the process of orienting new Haitian immigrants to modern, American routines of banking, and car and home ownership. But they took solace in the disgrace of a *visye*, a cheat who was caught and punished for his plans to protect of their young females' bodies from the effects of mastering the American and Protestant model of success.

A pithy description of a fictional Protestant sorcerer, which was cited at the beginning of this paper, refers to a minor character in *All Men are Mad*, by Philippe Thoby-Marcelin and Pierre Marcelin (1970), is a wicked, insightful satire of religious hypocrisy and cynical uses of conversion. The novel is set during the hapless antisuperstition campaign in Haiti during the 1940s. The pastor's qualities reflect the themes reported here: modest formal dress, bible always in hand, a skilled talker and mimic, strategic use of conversion after a crisis, missionary training in Port-au-Prince and the United States, and his success as an adversary of the beliefs he knows so well. Writing in the 1960s, the Marcelins did not predict the next step in changing structure of Haitians' encompassment by capital, to which the entrepreneurial pastors like Reverend Millien would quickly adapt: the boatloads of adult children of ruined peasants sailing from Haiti to South Florida between 1978 and 1982. These "more powerful (Protestant) sorcerers" extend migrants considering rebellion from their role as human *pwen* immunity to the discipline of *gangan* and *lwa*. They arouse the prospect of instant money that is the reward for conversion to the virtues of utility, individualism, and limitless accumulation.

## CONCLUSION

While the processes causing Haitian migrants to turn to evangelical Protestantism are not unique, Haitians' interpretations of their conversions are. The forms that North American Pentecostal Protestantism provides are filled with indigenous concerns, images, and morality. For the Haitian transmigrants described here, the ready content is migrants' existing ambivalence about independence versus obligations to kin (including spirits), a tension inherent in the moral opposition between Guinea and Magic, between serving inherited *lwa* and pursuing individual *pwen*, *wanga*, and *dyab*. This tension is a symbolic reformulation of free-holding peasants' inauspicious encounter with development, a process that has turned them into producers not of food but of people for export.

The rhetoric of sermons and songs converts a safe space for discursively engaging this ambivalence. Far from making a clean break with Vodou, or forgetting about the tension between Guinea and Magic, *lwa* and *dyab*, or between mutuality and individual ambition, Protestant discourse makes them hyperreal. As the masterful orators demonstrate in their mimicry of non-coverts, they are all too familiar with the details. This rhetoric constantly invokes the Catholic-Vodou "other," all the while collapsing the other's dichotomy between *lwa* and *dyab* and dismissing it all as devil worship. The rigid armor Protestants wear through sober, separatist behavior is in fact porous. As congregants laugh at the pastors' fantastic tales of ridiculous exorcizing treatments, for which migrants waste their precious wages, in recognition of their own repressed practices, they are vicariously participating in the ritual which they will then disavow.

Birgit Meyer's (1999) analysis of Pentecostal conversion among the Ewe in Ghana offers striking similarities to this study. Meyer argues that Ewe's appropriation of missionary Pietism depends a great deal on the image of the devil. Converts "translate the devil" to return to what they conceive of as their "past," which they will then methodically renounce. In a ritual frame, "converts can return to what they represent as their 'past' and from which they eventually want to disassociate themselves. This ritualized return to and subsequent rupture from the 'past' is a need evoked by people wish to proceed, for, as we have seen, modernity for Ewe Christians is highly ambivalent because it entails a great number of conflicts both within and between people" (Meyer 1999:214).

Haitians' pragmatic orientation toward religion offers a symbolic idiom for controlling their incorporation in broader and unequal systems. Through their empowering narratives of affliction and healing and conversion and deconversion, actors reiterate that they are not powerless. They can act positively to interpret and affect their fates. Doctrinal boundaries are transgressed by this deeper commitment to an immanent, instrumental view. Religious

“agents” affiliate passingly with evangelical churches; they convert and they also backslide. Stoll (1993) argues that insufficient attention has been paid to the many post-Protestants like, Maxia, partner of Ti Chini, who justified ending her flirtation with Protestantism by saying to me, “it wasn’t interesting to me anymore.”

Jean-Pierre Bastian’s critique (1992) of the misplaced fundamentalism in scholarly analysis is relevant to Haitian religious conversion and de-conversion. Bastian not only argues for replacing the term, “Protestantism,” with “protestantisms,” but also for the recognition that “the heterodox religious effervescence we are witnessing in Latin America is none other than a “renewal of ‘the popular religion’ of rural Catholicism without priests” (Bastian 1992:329). Recalling the prescient words of Roger Dorsainville, who lamented Haitians’ creative rooting out of the inside, or the *pwen*, of the Protestant ethic without true conviction, we are witnessing in Haitian transnational communities none other than a revival of the popular religion with more powerful sorcerers.

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