



### REVIEW ARTICLE

# Haitian/Vilokan Idealism, Lakouism, and Democracy

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## Abstract

This work explores how the Africans of Haiti institutionalized their concepts of total freedom and equality of the Haitian Revolution via the Lakou system of Vodou, which emerges out of their Vodou metaphysics and epistemology, Haitian/Vilokan Idealism, against the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the Affranchis, petit-bourgeois blacks and mulatto elites, seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with their former white colonial masters. The work, using a structurationist approach, phenomenological structuralism, concludes that for Haiti to experience total freedom it must seek to vertically integrate the libertarianism and egalitarianism of its lakou system, as grounded in the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, at the expense of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the Haitian bourgeoisie, which fosters inequality and exploitation.

**Keywords:** Haitian epistemology; Haitian idealism; Vilokan idealism; Vodou ethic and the spirit of communism; Religiosity; Black diaspora; Dialectical; Anti-Dialectical; Phenomenological structuralism; Lakouism; The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism

## Introduction

Total liberty and equality without distinctions became the clarion call of the Africans of the Haitian Revolution who sought to implement these two pillars of their democracy via the lakou system and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism as their form of system and social integration, respectively, in the provinces and mountains of the country against the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the Affranchis, petit-bourgeois blacks and mulatto elites of the island, seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with their former white colonial masters. This work, using a structurationist approach, phenomenological structuralism, to understanding societal and consciousness constitution, explores how the Africans of Haiti institutionalized their concepts of total freedom and equality of the Haitian Revolution via the Lakou systems, which emerge out of their Vodou metaphysics and epistemology, Haitian/Vilokan Idealism, against the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the Affranchis. The work concludes that for Haiti to experience total freedom and equality it must seek to vertically integrate the libertarianism and egalitarianism of its lakou system, as grounded in the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, at the expense of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the Haitian bourgeoisie, which fosters inequality, exploitation, and inhibits democracy.

## Background of the Problem

In the provinces and mountains of Haiti lakous and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism constitute the form of system and social integration, respectively, by which human actors recursively (re) organize and reproduce their practical

consciousness. A lakou is a community of people and houses organized and gathered around a common yard under the directions of a oungan (Vodou priest), manbo (priestess), or family elder that promoted and promotes an egalitarian existence rooted in the Vodou religion and ancestor worship, land ownership arrangements, and working the soil [1]. Within the lakou system, each individual or nuclear family owned/own their own land, through which they provided/provide for basic necessities by growing food and raising livestock for their own consumption and for sale in local markets. They also grew and grow export crops, such as coffee, in order to buy imported consumer goods such as clothes and tools. The lakou thus divided power in a way that allowed rural residents to live and work as they wished (through land and garden ownership to provide for their own subsistence), while preventing the consolidation of wealth, and therefore control and inhibit inequality, in the hands of any one person within the community through a set of customs and secret societies of the Vodou religion that regulate(d) land ownership, land transfers, family relationships, and community affairs. Communal assistance and exchange, via food sharing, harvesting, house building, religious life, and ancestral worship, under the leadership of women also characterized and characterizes lakou life. In essence, the purpose of lakou life is to promote total liberty and equality, via land ownership and self-sufficiency, for all without distinctions and economic differentiation.

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This lakou system and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism diametrically opposed/opposes the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism the Affranchis, petit-bourgeois blacks and mulatto elites, sought to implement by integrating the Haitian nation as a periphery-state within the global capitalist world-system so that they can achieve equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites. Hence, in this article, I argue that, essentially, two forms of system and social integration would structure the material resource framework of Haiti after independence in 1804, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism on the one hand, and the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism on the other. The African majority would be interpellated and subjectified by the enchantment of the world around the former; and their children, young Africans, creole, and free blacks raised or born on the island, although interpellated and subjectified in the former world-view in childhood, many of them would, relationally, marginalize and discriminate against it for the enchantment of the world around the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the whites, mulattoes, and petit-bourgeois blacks (Affranchis). Against traditional readings regarding the constitution of Haitian identity and practical consciousness, the work further concludes that the lakou system and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the Africans emerged out of their Vodou ontology and epistemology (Haitian/Vilokan Idealism), and is not a reaction to slavery or the colonial system. In the final analysis I argue that for Haiti to experience total freedom and democracy it must seek to vertically integrate its lakou system as grounded in the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the African majority as the nation-state's form of social and system integration at the expense of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the Haitian bourgeoisie, which promotes inequality, exploitation, and oppression.

### Theory and Method

Traditional interpretations of the Haitian Revolution, and subsequent to that the constitution of Haitian identity, attempt to understand them, like the constitution of black diasporic and American practical consciousnesses, within the dialectical logic of Hegel's master/slave dialectic [1-8]. Concluding that the Haitian Revolution represents a struggle by the enslaved Africans of the island who internalized the liberal norms, values, and rules of their former French masters, for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution within and using the metaphysical discourse of their former white slave masters to convict them of not identifying with their norms, rules, and values as recursively (re)organized and reproduced by blacks. Haitian identity/practical consciousness, as such, was and is a simulacrum, of European (French) practical consciousness and identity, which is universalized and presented as the nature of reality as such. This position, predominantly held by white Westerners, is usually juxtaposed against the postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial approaches of Haitian and other black bourgeois intellectual elites (i.e., Aimé Césaire), which highlight the hybridity, ambivalence, négritude, syncretism, indigénisme, noirisme, and créolité, of the Revolution and Haitian consciousness [9].

Both interpretations, contrary to the position of Haitian intellectuals such as Jacques Roumain [10] and Jean-Price Mars [11], who advised the Haitian intelligentsia class to look to the provinces and the peasant classes to constitute Haitian culture, identity, and nation-state, are problematic in that they are ethnocentric and racist. They both overlook the initial African (indigenous) practical consciousness of the majority of the Africans on the island for either the practical consciousness or discourse and discursive practices of the mulatto and petit-bourgeois black elites, Affranchis, looking (because of their interpellation and embourgeoisement) to Europe, Canada, and America for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution, or for their (Affranchis) logic of postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial theories to undermine that African presence in favor of notions of hybridity, créolité, négritude, indigénisme, noirisme, syncretism, intersectionality, double consciousness, etc. In keeping with the logic of structurationist sociology, which emphasizes human identity and consciousness as practical consciousness emanating from their internalization of the ideas and ideals of a social structure that differentiates them as they recursively reorganize and reproduce these ideas and ideals in and as their praxis [12,13]. The understanding here is that Haitian practical consciousness is a product of two opposing social structures. The majority, two-thirds, of the social actors who would come to constitute the Haitian nation-state were African-born amongst a minority of mulattoes, gens de couleur, creole, and petit-bourgeois blacks (Affranchis) on the island interpellated, embourgeoised, and differentiated by the language, communicative discourse, modes of production, ideology, and ideological apparatuses of the West (the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game). As such, given their interpellation and embourgeoisement via the language (French), communicative discourse, modes of production (slavery, agribusiness, mercantilism, etc.), ideology (liberalism, individualism, personal wealth, capitalism, racialism, private property, Protestant Ethic, etc.), and ideological apparatuses (churches, schools, prisons, plantations, police force, army, etc.) of the West, the latter, Affranchis, became "blacks," dialectically, seeking to recursively (re) organize and reproduce the ideas and ideals, the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game, of the European whites in a national position of their own amidst slavery, racism, and colonialism. This entailed attempting to constitute the nation-state within the mercantilist and free-trade ideals of the emerging Protestant capitalist world-system under European hegemony, which sought to maintain Haiti as an export-oriented agricultural periphery state.

The African-born majority, were not blank slates, however, but brought with them from Africa their African languages, communicative discourses, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, and modes of production (form of social and systems integration), the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game, to the island, which they recursively reorganized and reproduced on the plantations and as maroon communities via the lakou system in the provinces

and mountains when they escaped [14-17]. Following the Haitian Revolution, the majority of the Africans, given their refusal to work on plantations or agribusinesses (corvée system), migrated to the provinces and the mountains, abodes of formerly established “maroon republics,” and established a “counter-plantation system” (Jean Casimir’s term), i.e., lakou system, based on husbandry, subsistence agriculture, and komes, i.e., the trade and sell of agricultural goods for income to purchase manufactured products and services, organized around the discursive practices of lakous [18]. Unlike Jean Casimir, this Lakou system, for me, was not a reaction to enslavement, but was grounded in the Vodou religion and its epistemological transcendental idealism, i.e., Haitian/Vilokan idealism. Casimir’s counter-plantation system is nothing but the Africans’ lakou system, which is a discursive practice of the discourse stemming from the Vodou religion and its epistemological idealism, i.e., Haitian/Vilokan Idealism.

### Haitian/Vilokan Idealism

Normally referred to as “animism,” “fetishism,” “paganism,” “heathenism,” and “black magic” in the Western academic literature, Vodou (spelled Vodun, Voodoo, Vodou, Vaudou, or Vodoun) is the oldest monotheistic religion in the world. Commonly interpreted as “Spirits” or “introspection into the unknown,” Vodou is the structuring structure of the people of Dahomey and other tribes of the continent who would arrive on the island of Haiti/Ayiti as named by the Taino natives [19-21]. Ontologically speaking, within the Haitian metaphysical worldview, Vilokan/Vodou, the world is a unitary (energy) material world created out of Bondye. The world is a creation of a good God, Bondye Bon, which created the world and humanity out of itself composed of two intersecting spheres, the profane (the phenomenal world) and sacred (noumenal/Vilokanic, mirrored world of the profane). Embedded in that pantheistic material world are concepts, lwa yo in Haitian metaphysics, from the parallel mirrored (Vilokanic) world, that humanity can ascertain via experience and the structure of its being, form of understanding and sensibility (dreams, reason and rationality, extrasensory perceptions), to help make sense of their experience and live in the world, which is Bondye, and therefore sacred, as they seek perfection and reunification (reintegration) with God, the energy force/source.

That is to say, it, Bondye, provided humanity with objects, concepts, ideas, ideals, and practices, i.e., lwa of Vodou, proverbs, rituals, dance, geometry, knowledge of herbal medicine, trades, and skills, by which they ought to know, interpret, and make sense of the external (phenomenal profane) world and live in it comfortably. These transcendently real objects, concepts, ideas, ideals, and practices can either be known through dreams, divinations, experience or rationality, and becomes the structure (once reified and institutionalized as proverbs, husbandry, dance, rituals, institutions, etc.) through which humanity come to know, hold beliefs and truth-claims. So Bondye, a powerful energy force that always existed created the world and humanity out of itself using four hundred and one transcendently real concepts (God and four-hundred

lwa), ideas, and ideals (geometric principles, mathematics, etc.). Humanity and the world around it is an aggregation of bondye’s material energy, the energy of God, which constitutes its existence. In humanity this existence is composed of three distinct aggregation of energy (ti bon anj; gwo bon anj; ko, the body), all of which are material stuff, which constitute our nanm (souls) where personality, truth-claims, knowledge, and beliefs are deposited, via dreams, revelations, extrasensory perceptions, divinations, experience, reason, the energy source of a God as manifested via a lwa, and can be examined and explored as the synthetic a priori of the human agent.

For humanity to constitute its existence and be in the world according to the will of God or Bondye, in other words, transcendently real concepts stemming from God’s will (the mirrored world of the profane, Vilokan) are embedded in the material world, which is God, and can be ascertain and embodied by humanity via their constituted being as a material being with extrasensory perceptions, reason and rationality, and or through experience. As these transcendently real concepts are ascertain, they are reified and institutionalized, and passed on through humanity via priests/priestesses and early ancestors who institutionalized (reify)/ institutionalize them in the natural world via religious ceremonies, dance, rituals, herbal medicine, trades, concepts, and proverbs. These trades, ideals, proverbs, and or concepts are truisms, mechanisms to ascertain and constitute knowledge, which although they are deduced from the constituted make-up (i.e., consciousness) of the human being, in Haitian metaphysics they are attributed to God and the ancestors who institutionalized (reified) them in order to be applied in the material world so that their descendants can live freely in the world, satisfy their needs, be happy, and achieve perfection in order to reunite with God after their sixteen life cycles.

Hence, unlike German Idealism whose intellectual development from Kant to Schopenhauer, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, and the Frankfurt school produced the dialectic, Marxist materialism, Nietzschean antidialectics, phenomenology, and deontological ethics; the epistemology of Haitian Vodou, i.e., Haitian/Vilokan idealism and realism, produces a hermeneutical phenomenology, materialism, and an anti-dialectical process to history enframed by a reciprocal justice as its normative ethics, which is constantly being invoked by individual social actors to reconcile the noumenal (sacred-ideational) and phenomenal (profane-material) subjective world in order to maintain balance and harmony between the two so that the human actor can live freely and happy with all of being without distinctions or masters. As such, Haitian epistemology as a form of transcendental realism and idealism is phenomenological, in the Heideggerian sense (i.e., hermeneutical), material in the Marxist sense, and anti-dialectical. It refutes Hegel’s claims for the importance of historical formations and other people to the development of self-consciousness. Instead, Haitian/Vilokan idealism emphasizes the things in the consciousness (lwa or concepts, ideas, ideals) of the individual as they stem from the noumenal/Vilokan world, and get interpreted according to their level of

learning, development, capacity for knowledge, and modality, i.e., the way they know more profoundly-kinesthetically, visually, etc., as they anti-dialectically seek to reproduce them in the phenomenal world as their practical consciousness against other interpretive formations in the material world. The originating moments of the Haitian Revolution and its call for total freedom and equality demonstrates the anti-dialectical and normative processes of Haitian idealism; the creation of the phenomenal world of subjective experiences according to one's capacity, modality, developmental stage (both spiritual, physical, and mental), and spiritual court is symptomatic of the phenomenological (hermeneutics) development in Haitian Idealism; and the Lakou system represents its form of system and social integration in the material world so as to facilitate the individual's capacity to live freely without master or owner of production.

### Kantian and Haitian Transcendental Idealism

The Haitian epistemological position, Haitian/Vilokan Idealism, that would emerge out of the metaphysical worldview, Vodou, of the African people of Haiti and their form of system and social integration is a strong form of Kantian transcendental idealism and realism, which would be institutionalized throughout the provinces and mountains of the island [22,23]. Kantian transcendental idealism "attempts to combine empirical realism, preserving the ordinary independence and reality of objects of the world, with transcendental idealism, which allows that in some sense the objects have their ordinary properties (their causal powers, and their spatial and temporal position) only because our minds are so structured that these are the categories we impose upon the manifold of experience" [24]. Haitian epistemological transcendental idealism, Haitian Idealism or Vilokan Idealism, is a form of transcendental idealism in the Kantian sense in that it attempts to synthesize empiricism and idealism (rationalism) via synthetic a priori concepts/ideals the Haitians believe can be applied not only to the phenomenal but also the noumenal (Vilokanic) world in order to ascertain the latter's transcendently real absolute knowledges they call, lwa, gods/goddesses (401 concepts, ideas, and ideals represented as gods/goddesses), of Vilokan/Vodou. So like Kant, Haitian epistemological transcendental idealism, holds on to analytic truths, truths of reasons or definitions, as outlined in their proverbs (pwoveb); a posteriori truth, truths of experience or experiments, also embedded in their proverbs, geometry (veves), rituals, magic, sorcery, and herbal medicine; and synthetic a priori concepts (categories in Kantian epistemology supplemented with trances, dream-states, extrasensory perceptions), truths stemming from the form of the understanding and sensibility of the mind and apparatuses of experience embedded not only in their proverbs and Vodou rituals, beliefs, and magic, but also their understanding of trances, dream-states, and extrasensory perceptions as categories of the mind applicable to the noumenal or Vilokanic realm where transcendental real concepts, lwa yo, exist which they must ascertain in order to live life happily in the phenomenal world.

The latter (trances, dream-states, and extrasensory perceptions)

they believe, in other words, can be applied to the noumenal or Vilokanic world in order to know gods/goddesses, lwa yo, which are immutable/absolute concepts, ideas, and ideals God has created and imposed upon and in the material world, from the mirrored world of the earth (Vilokan), which the people, who embody these concepts, ideas, and ideals, should utilize to recursively reorganize and reproduce their being-in-and-as-the-world in order to achieve perfection over sixteen life cycles [25-27]. Hence, unlike Kantian transcendental idealism, which removes God out of the equation via the categories, which imposes the order we see in the phenomenal world, Haitian epistemological transcendental idealism and realism, Haitian/Vilokan Idealism, holds on to the concept of God, supernatural, and the paranormal to continue to make sense of the plural tensions between the natural (material) world, i.e., the world of phenomenon, and the world as such, ideational, noumena, i.e., the supernatural and paranormal worlds, transcendental real world, which is knowable as truth-claims, knowledge, and beliefs, through dreams, divinations, revelations, experience, reason and rationality, and the synthetic a priori, for pure (development of science, i.e., herbal medicine, etc.) and practical reason (i.e., morals and values). Thus Haitian Idealism, unlike Kantian Transcendental Idealism, implies that the objects, concepts, ideals, ideas, etc., of the (ideational) noumenal world are transcendently real and the form of sensibilities and understandings, which include dream states, trances, and extrasensory perceptions are other categories, which can be applied beyond the phenomenal world, where the objects are really subjective ideas, in order to ascertain the nature of the absolute concepts of the Vilokanic/noumenal world in order to achieve balance and harmony with it in the phenomenal.

Within this pantheistic (Spinozian) conception of the multiverse and material world, knowledge, truth-claims, and beliefs arise from transcendently real ideational concepts (lwa yo) of bondye/God as embedded in the earth's mirrored world (Vilokan) and gets deposited in our nanm (souls) intuitively, in dreams, revelations, divinations, extrasensory perceptions, reason, rituals, and or experiences which in turn constitutes and structures the form of the understanding of our minds and bodies (senses) so that we can experience the material world according to our developmental track over sixteen reincarnated life cycles [28,29]. The human being recursively (re) organize and reproduce these (Platonic) transcendently real ideational concepts as their practical consciousness in the phenomenal material world not always in its absolute form as defined noumenally (the sacred mirrored world of Vilokan), but according to their level of learning, development, capacity for knowledge, and modality, i.e., the way they know more profoundly-kinesthetically, visually, etc.

As defined, Haitian epistemology appears as an epistemological transcendental idealism and realism, Haitian Idealism or Vilokan Idealism, that posits that both phenomena (the profane world) and noumena (its mirror image where wisdom, ideals, and ancestors reside) are knowable through experience and the form of human sensibility and understanding (the categories of

Kantian epistemology supplemented with, dreams, divinations, extrasensory perceptions, and trance states), which stems from the energy force of a God, and used to recursively organize and reproduce their being-in-and-as-the-world. So on top of the twelve Kantian schematized categories of the understanding, divided into four groups of three

1. The axioms of intuition, i.e., unity, plurality, and totality;
2. The anticipations of perception, i.e., reality, limitation, and negation;
3. The postulates of empirical thought, i.e., necessary, actual, and possible;
4. The analogies, i.e., substance, cause, and reciprocity.

Necessary for experience by making objective space and time possible, Vilokanic/Haitian idealism adds dream states, trances, and extrasensory perceptions as a fifth group of three to make known the concepts, *lwa*, of the Vilokanic world knowable so that human actors can achieve balance between the phenomenal world and the former (Vilokanic/noumenal). Hence for Kant experience requires both the senses, the a priori forms of sensibility, i.e., space and time, and the understanding, i.e. the twelve categories. A unified consciousness (not a self or the Cartesian “I”), which is a structural feature of experience necessary to provide the unity to our experience, what Kant calls, “the transcendental unity of apperception,” rule-governed and connected by the categories, experiences real objects that we perceive and exist independently of our perception of them. Thus, the spatio-temporal objects are necessarily relative to and subject to the a priori forms of experience, i.e., forms of sensibility and the understanding. In this sense, Kant does away with the noumenal world of absolutes, which is unknowable as the independent objects are phenomenal, relative to the a priori forms of experience.

Unlike Kant, however, Haitian Idealism posits that the *nanm*, which provides unity to our experiences is a material thing, a Cartesian (material) I composed of three distinct entities (sometimes more as Haitian metaphysics suggests that a fourth entity, *lwa met tet*, may constitute the *nanm* of serviteurs in order to guide them in their decision-making) that are also tied to the natural world and can be manipulated in life as well as death. On top of it’s a priori forms of sensibility and Kantian categories are dream-states, trances, and extrasensory perceptions, which allows the *nanm* to have access to the world of Vilokan/noumenal world where we can perceive the things that are phenomenal, relative to our a priori forms of experience, as they are in-themselves in order to achieve balance between the world as it appears to us and how it ought to be so that we can live abundantly.

Thus, Haitian epistemological transcendental idealism (Haitian Idealism, Vilokanism, Vodouism, or Vilokan Idealism) is not only natural, but supernatural and paranormal to the extent that it supplements the synthetic a priori concepts Kant attributes to the categories of the mind with trances, dream-states, and extrasensory perceptions in order that the human actor can have access to the transcendently real concepts,

*lwa yo*, of the noumenal (Vilokanic) world, which they can internalize and perfect as their practical consciousness over sixteen births and rebirths after which they reintegrate into Bondye where their essence can become concepts, ideas, and ideals [30]. Moreover, it posits that these transcendently real ideals, *lwa yo*, are part of the noumenal world (sacred world of Vilokan), which is not a plural world as plurality belongs to the world of phenomenon, and can eventually be known by dreams, revelations, sensory perceptions, divinations, human reason, understanding, and experience. However, in the human sphere the world of phenomenon and its plurality is a result of the different levels of development (reason, experience, capacity, spiritual court, and modality) of the human subjects (not all humans develop their form of sensibilities and understanding at the same rate or in the same life cycle) and their interpretations of the noumenal concepts of Vilokan. Albeit humanity is reincarnated until they have ascertained all of the true concepts of the unitary (noumenal) world, which can be done so through experience and a priori, and will seize to exist (will seize to experience reincarnation) once they do so. The phenomenal world, in other words, is simply the world of relativity and plurality constituted by imperfect beings interpreting the contents of their consciousness anti-dialectically (constantly fighting against the praxis of others for their own understanding and happiness) as their practical consciousness.

This is why, epistemologically speaking, the phenomenal world in Haiti, looks like an epistemological anarchic world where everyone exists for their own liberty and existence according to their own developmental track, capacities, modalities, and belief systems (methods) governed by an eye for an eye normative worldview, reciprocal justice, which prevents others from encroaching on an individual’s (regardless of their level of development) right to exist. Out of this phenomenal world of relativity and plurality en-framed by the noumenal, the concepts of liberty and equality would, anti-dialectically, arise, drive the Haitian Revolution, and constitute Haitian identity and society in the provinces and mountains of the country where the Africans recursively organized and reproduced their ethos via the *lakou* system, i.e., a system intent on transmuting liberty and equality into democracy and total freedom.

That is to say, it is the unitary and universal knowledge of the transcendently real noumenal world as constituted in the metaphysics of Vilokan/Vodou, which allows for the creation of the phenomenal (subjective) world of relativity and plurality wherein everyone is entitled to their own ethos given their level of learning, development, capacity, spiritual courts, and modality, which would, anti-dialectically, give rise to the Haitian concepts of liberty and equality that would en-frame the Haitian Revolution and an equality between men and women unparalleled throughout the world. The latter concepts, liberty and equality, as discerned and defined by the Africans who would commence the Haitian Revolution at Bois Caiman calls for total liberty and equality for all, without distinctions and or masters, so that they can live free, happy, and equal to

all in the society. God, and the human being as god embodied, is the only master of (their) being's existence.

Hence in the phenomenal world everyone is entitled to recursively (re) organize and reproduce their existence without encroachment from another. Which means the human actor is always anti-dialectically fighting against imposition from another within an en-framing normative ethic of reciprocal justice. Haiti's developmental problem is that the epistemological anarchic phenomenal world has been its *modus operandi* since the revolution amidst the attempt to constitute the world around, not the transcendently real (ideational) noumenal world, but bourgeois science and work, which (treating humans as means to an end) fosters inequality, servitude, disharmony, and imbalance. The latter the legacies of slavery and colonialism recursively organized and reproduced by the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with their former white colonial masters.

### Discussion and Conclusion

In other words, the arrangements of individual, social and familial obligations, relationships, and interactions move outwards from the central cosmic, geometric, spiritual, and communal worldview or language game of Vodou, also known as the mystery system, through its power elites, *oungan yo* (priests), *Manbo yo* (priestesses), *Bokor yo* (witch doctors), *gangan yo/dokté fey* (doctors of herbal medicine), and *granmoun yo* (elders); the agricultural mode of production, husbandry, and commerce (*komes*), which provide food for sustenance and herbs for medicinal purposes; and their ideological apparatuses, *lwa yo*, *lakous* (*lakou yo*), *peristyles*, *alters*, *secret societies*, *herbal medicines*, *vévés*, *Vodou ceremonies*, *magic and rituals*, *songs*, *dances*, *musical instruments*, *proverbs*, and *zombification* [31,32]. In Vodou, the emphasis is on balance and harmony with the laws of creation, cosmic forces, nature, the community, and within the individual all of which are interconnected. As such, agricultural production, i.e., the tilling, cultivation, and protection of the earth by men and women for food and medicinal purposes; husbandry, for food, clothing, and the making of musical instruments; and the trade (commonly referred to as commerce, *komes*, usually performed by women) of agricultural and animal products for other goods are emphasized as the proper form for human environmental, communal, and individual interactions with nature and each other. Hence initiates of Vodou are environmentally conscientious as village religious, medicinal, and agricultural life is depended on the environment, which is deemed sacred, an extension of the primeval pan-psyche field of *bondye*.

Village life in the majority of the provinces is constituted around the *lakou*, family compound, and its *peristyle* where everything is shared. All provinces, cities, communes in Haiti have *Lakous* and *peristyles*. The three dominant *Lakous*, *Souvenans*, *Badjo*, and *Soukri*, are located in *Gonaives*, Haiti and maintain the rites and traditions of *Dahomey*, *Nago*, and the *Congo*, respectively. The social class structure of the

*lakous* (*lakou yo*) and the villages or regions they influence are not based on the mode of production but on the spiritual relationship, which is tied to nature, i.e., the sun, earth, the cycle of birth, rebirth, and death in nature. That is religious leaders and elders of the community constitute the power elites of the society followed by the middle-aged, and the young. The elders are the intermediaries between the young and the religious leaders. The functions of the religious leaders, *oungan yo*, *manbo yo*, and *gangan yo/dokté féy*, are healing through herbal medicine, performing Vodou ceremonies to call or pacify the spirits and bring about harmony to village life, initiating new *oungan* and *manbo*, telling the future, reading dreams, casting spells, resolving village disputes, protecting the society, and creating protections. Conversely, *Bokor yo* are the sorcerers and police force of the society. They are responsible for black magic, patrolling village life, through *Sanpwels*, *Bizangos*, and *lougawous*, and meting out punishment through zombification.

Via the *lakou* system the Africans recursively reorganize(d) and reproduce(d) the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism as a form of system and social integration for total liberty and equality, against the Protestantism Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the *Affranchis* and mulattoes seeking to integrate them into the inequality of the latter system via the organization of work and labor. As such, whereas the *lakou* is a community of people and houses organized and gathered around a common yard under the directions of a *oungan*, *manbo*, or family elder that promoted and promotes an egalitarian existence rooted in the Vodou religion and ancestor worship, land ownership arrangements, and working the soil. The Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the *Affranchis* seeks to enslave the Africans via the organization of work and integration into the global capitalist world-system as laborers for capital thereby undermining the total liberty and equality of the *lakou* system, which does away with the owner/worker dichotomy.

Within the *lakou* system, each individual or nuclear family owned/own their own land, through which they provided/provide for basic necessities by growing food and raising livestock for their own consumption and for sale in local markets. They also grew and grow export crops, such as coffee, in order to buy imported consumer goods such as clothes and tools. The *lakou* thus divided power in a way that allowed rural residents to live and work as they wished (through land and garden ownership to provide for their own subsistence), while preventing the consolidation of wealth, and therefore control and inhibit inequality, in the hands of any one person within the community through a set of customs and secret societies of the Vodou religion that regulate(d) land ownership, land transfers, family relationships, and community affairs. Communal assistance and exchange, via food sharing, harvesting, house building, religious life, and ancestral worship, under the leadership of women also characterized and characterizes *lakou* life. In essence, the purpose of *lakou* life is to promote total (individual) liberty and equality, via land ownership and self-sufficiency, for all without distinctions and economic

differentiation. The mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois free blacks, a Francophile neocolonial oligarchy, countered/counter this counter-plantation/lakou system through their control of the ports, export trade, and the political apparatuses of the state, which increased their wealth through the taxation of the goods of the African peasants who were/are in-turn forced to leave their lands seeking economic opportunities in the capital city, Port-au-Prince, or abroad [33-36].

Contemporarily, the continuous struggle between the mulatto merchant/professional class and the black landowning managerial classes for control of the state and its apparatuses, at the expense of the African masses in the provinces and mountains whose children they arm and use against each other as they migrate to Port-au-Prince amidst American neoliberal policies seeking to displace the masses off their land for tourism, agro and textile industries, and athletics (basketball and soccer) continues to be a hindrance for the constitution of a sovereign and democratic Haitian nation-state. The former two, interpellated and embourgeoisied in Western ideological apparatuses, seek to constitute Haiti, with the aid of whites (France, Canada, and America), as an export-oriented periphery state within the capitalist world-system under American hegemony against the desires of the masses of Africans in the provinces and mountains seeking to maintain their komes, subsistence agriculture, and husbandry, i.e., the lakou system, which are deemed informal, so as to exercise their total freedom and liberty.

The grandon class, composed of Western educated professionals, former drug dealers, entertainers, and police officers attack the former Affranchis class, which is now a comprador bourgeoisie (composed of Arab merchants) seeking to build, own, and manage hotels and assembly factories producing electronics and clothing for the US market, under the moniker the children of Dessalines against the children of Pétion in the name of the African masses of the island, the majority of whom are peasant farmers interpellated and ounganified by the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism. Instead of focusing on infrastructure (artificial lakes, potable water, food security, mache-modern market spaces for komes, universities, and state-owned companies for the peasant class to sell, etc.) to augment national agriculture and the productive forces of the latter group, who constitute eighty-five percent of the population, the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks emphasize job creation through foreign direct investment in tourism, agro and textile industries, privatization of public services, infrastructure for an export-oriented economy similar to the one they had under slavery, and the constitution of a political bourgeoisie in control of the state apparatuses.

In other words, at the base of the lakou system emanating from the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism is agricultural production at the family level for subsistence living, trade, and independence so as the individual can live free and equal to all. Expanding the system at the national-state level would mean,

- 1) Promoting agricultural production at the family level for subsistence living and trade;

- 2) Light manufacturing, textile production, etc. on every lakou for lakou consumption;
- 3) Tertiary industries for service and entertainment at the lakou communal level;
- 4) Infrastructure, i.e., schools, roads, medical facilities on each lakou provided by the state as a result of taxation of each lakou, not the individual;
- 5) Community policing provided by each lakou; military provided by the state via recruitment from the lakous.

In the aggregate, this socioeconomic lakou system would be governed politically as the Africans did prior to the advents of Islam and Christianity on the continent. Traditional West African political structures were constituted around “a hierarchical bureaucracy of kings who were regarded as being invested by divine right, ruling in accordance with the will of the ancestors and some omnipotent power. The kings had their own councils and advisers, or ministers of state, who supervised military affairs, external affairs, the treasury, justice, courts, etc. The various subordinate districts within the kingdoms had their rulers, and the villages had their headmen” [9]. In the constitution of the contemporary Haitian nation-state via the lakou system as en-framed by the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, in place of the king would be the president ruling in accordance with the will of the ancestors and the people. The president would have their own councils and advisers, or ministers of state, who supervised military affairs, external affairs, the treasury, justice, courts, etc. He/she would be appointed for life by the representative body, parliament, of the various communes and communal sections within the nation-state. This parliament would constitute a political body replaced every seven years by lot, like the American jury system, from each lakou, which would be governed by its headperson as determined by the will of the ancestors and the people of the lakous, of the communes and communal sections.

Contemporarily, however, instead of vertically integrating the lakou system (expanding the agricultural capacities of each lakou; establishing centers of secondary industries for local consumption and exports on each lakou; facilitating the rise of tertiary industries on the lakous for leisure and entertainment; and providing schools, medical facilities, which combine holistic medicine with western, and other infrastructure) to achieve the vision of total democracy, equality, and liberty among the masses to constitute the Haitian nation-state. The black skinned, white-masked elites (Frantz Fanon’s term), under the neoliberal projects of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, seek to integrate Haiti as a periphery-state by displacing the Africans off the land in order to facilitate their migration to the capital cities of the state where the masses become a cheap labor force to be exploited for global capital and the Haitian bourgeoisie operating manufacturing and textile factories for the West. However, their inabilities-given the voting power of the majority-to constitute two dominant rotating political parties to implement the desires

of their former white colonial slave masters, leaves Haiti in perpetual turmoil. As in slavery, the African masses continue to fight, against their interpellation, embourgeoisement, and differentiation as wage-earners (commodities) in the tourism trade and textile factories of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and spirit of capitalism of these two power elites seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites at their expense.

As the current historical conjuncture parallels the conjuncture of 1791 either a unifying national conference that parallels Bois Caiman or a second war of independence will determine the outcome of this perpetual economic and cultural civil war in Haiti. As for now, the masses of Port-au-Prince, galvanized by the grandon class, protest against the neoliberal capitalist world-system under American hegemony under the moniker, the children of Pétion v. the children of Dessalines. Although viewed within racial terms, Pétion representing the mulatto elites and Dessalines the African masses, the metaphor, contemporarily, have come to represent Marxist ideological categories for racial-class (nationalistic) struggles on the island of Haiti against dictatorship, the Haitian oligarchs, and American neoliberal policies on the island: the ideological position of Pétion representing the neoliberal views of the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks; and Haitian nationalism, economic reform, and social justice representing the ideological position of Dessalines as articulated by educated segments of the petit-bourgeois class claiming to speak for the African masses, the majority of whom are more so the descendants of Macaya and Sans Souci (African soldiers who fought against the Affranchis when France attempted to reconquer the island in 1801) than Pétion or Dessalines/Toussaint.

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