Edited by Benjamin Hebblethwaite
Transcribed and translated by Benjamin Hebblethwaite, Tahiri Jean-Baptiste and Myrlande Denis
Annotated by Benjamin Hebblethwaite and Megan Raitano

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.a</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyò ta nou de o.</td>
<td>Dyò¹ ta nou de o.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyò ta nou de o, frè o.</td>
<td>Dyò ta nou de o, oh brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se nan Ginen ki genyen lwa e.</td>
<td>Hey, it is Ginen² that has lwa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyò ta nou de o, frè o.</td>
<td>Dyò ta nou de o, oh brother, oh brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se nan Ginen—ki genyen lwa e.</td>
<td>It is Ginen—² that has lwa, hey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyò ta nou de o, frè o.</td>
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<th>1. b</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yabòdò antaye, ansi an Ayibobo—Ayibobo, medam.</td>
<td>We are going to enter the sanctuary⁴.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nou pral antre nan sobagi a. —Abobo! Nou pral antre nan sobagi a la. Sobagi ladogwesan mina o.</td>
<td>—Abobo⁵ ! We are going to enter this sanctuary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oh the sanctuary of the African heritage⁶.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1 The word *dyò* may be related to the Fon verb *do* which means to make or create (*Hebblethwaite 2012:263*). *Lapriyè Dyò* is a prayer made at the beginning of a Vodou ceremony by initiates. The *Lapriyè Dyò* exalts the lwa and the saints, in addition to the ancestral lineage of the Vodou community. McCarthy-Brown (*1991:276*) points out that Catholic prayers such as Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Apostles’ Creed are woven into the *Lapriyè Dyò*. The prayer is memorized and recited by heart by initiates. Although the prayer in not accompanied by drums, hand-clapping punctuates its delivery. The whole line of the first song, *Dyò ta nou de o*, is an example of *langaj* (African language fragments in Vodou songs).

2 Ginen (from Guinea) can refer to Africa as a whole or the paradise where the souls of Vodouists go in the afterlife. It can also refer to the ancestors, living Vodouists, or to Vodou ritual objects. In this case, Ginen is a reference to the spirits.

3 Note that the use of the long dash “—” indicates a call and response structure; therefore, whereas the lead singer sings “It is Ginen” the choir respondents sing “…that has lwa, hey.” Call and response is a salient aspect of Vodou songs in which there is always back-and-forth between the individual and the collective.

4 *Sobagi* or *badji* is the inner sanctuary of a Vodou temple. It usually houses a concrete altar with objects that represent the lwa or offerings to them. The door to the *sobagi* is one of the “stations” for the spirits that are saluted with each cycle of ritual salutation. In contemporary Benin, the official residence of the national Vodun chief, Daagbo Hounon Houna, is called the *Sogbadji*, clearly a trace of the Haitian Creole word. In Fon, the word *Sègbeji* means ‘original purity’ (*Segurola & Rassinoux 2000*). Note, too, that the word *se* or *so* refer to ‘God.’

5 *Abobo* or *Ayibobo* is an exclamation used in the Rada rite. It is often used repeatedly at the ends of songs or lines of songs. It is related to the Fon acclamation *awòbóbó* (*Segurola & Rassinoux 2000*).
Avan n antre, fò nou jete dlo.
Nou pral antre nan sobagi a.
—E ago e!
Nou pral antre,
onsi kanzo Ladogwesan.
—Abobo!
Nan sobagi a,
nou pral antre nan sobagi a la.
Sobagi ladogwesan mina o.

Before we enter, we must pour out water.5
We are going to enter the sanctuary.
—Hey ago8 hey!
We are going to enter,
onsi kanzo5 of the Heritage.
—Abobo!
Into the sanctuary,
we are going to enter into the sanctuary.
The sanctuary of the African heritage.

1.c
Bonjou Papa Legba, gwo lwa mwen.
—Abobo, wi, bonjou, m ap di Alegba.
Bonjou Papa Legba, gwo lwa mwen.

6 Ladogwesan refers to the ounsi of the (Vodou) Heritage. The word dogwe refers to a ritual gesture that occurs during the cycle of salutation for each Vodou spirit. As the cycle ends, the Vodou oungan or manbo point their ason-shaker to the ground and the audience members touch the ground with the right hand and then tap their heart twice.

7 Water, like trees, stones, and the fullness of nature, hosts the lwa in Vodou. Water is a metaphor representing purity and mysticism across many religions (Hebblethwaite 2012:230).

8 Ago literally means “Watch out” or “I am here” in Fon. It is used in ceremonies to request entrance to the realm of the lwa. Ago e has an exclamatory function in Vodou songs; it is usually sung with great force at the end of a sentence in a song.

9 Ounsi kanzo are the Vodou initiates who have undertaken the kanzo initiation. This initiation involves kouché ‘lying down’ and staying in the djèvo initiation chamber for several days, fasting, learning, singing and practicing multiple rituals in the Vodou system.

10 Notice the intimacy with which Vodouists relate with the spirits. They greet the spirits with “hello” because the spirits mount the oungan and manbo and other initiates within ritual and hence this greeting is directly related to the infusion of the spirit in the body of a Vodouist. The other thing to consider with regard to this “hello” is the fact that when Legba appears in a Vodou ceremony, one of the things we have seen him do at some length is the ritual greeting of Vodouists. Vodouists, one by one, bow, spin in Vodou’s formal curtsey style, kiss the ground, kneel, and cross their arms and pinkies and Legba, standing on crutches, slowly wipes his brow and then touches their brow. Legba on his crutches only moves around the temple with the greatest of difficulty and thus requires the assistance of Vodouists to move around. In addition to greetings, we have seen Legba visit his shrine represented by a statue of Saint Lazarus.

11 Papa Legba is the keeper of the crossroads. He is the first lwa generally called in ceremonies as he “opens the gates” for the other lwa to enter the temple

12 Alegba is probably an older name for Legba; the a- onset in A-legba suggests that this is a conservative form. However, note that only Legba is attested in contemporary Fon language (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:328). It is also striking that Papa Legba occurs in contrast to Alegba. It is as though the final –a of Pap-a has absorbed the onset a- of A-legba. It is an interesting example of how fixed idioms like Papa Legba may contribute to the loss of vowel-initial words like Alegba.
Alegba, ban m ti moso.
Bonjou Papa Legba, gwo lwa mwen.
Wi bonjou Papa Legba, gwo lwa mwen.
Alegba papa, ban m ti moso.
Bonjou Papa Legba, gwo lwa mwen.

1.d
Miyanvalou mwen, ago ago!
—Abobo!
Miyanvalou mwen, ago ago!
Miyanvalou mwen, ago ago!
Gran chemen bare mwen.
Miyanvalou mwen, ago ago!
Ankò chemen bare nou la!
Miyanvalou mwen, ago ago!
Miyanvalou mwen, ago ago!
Gran Chemen bare mwen.
Miyanvalou ounsi kanzo Ladogwesan mwen!
—Abobo!
Mezanmi, gran chemen bare nou la.
Miyanvalou mwen, ago ago!
—Gran Chemen bare mwen.

1.e
Ala pouvwa Ayisyen genyen.
—Abobo!
Yo pran ason lwa m nan,
yo voye l jete.
—E ago e!
Bondye bon, Lesen bon,
Alegba, give me a little piece.
Hello Papa Legba, my great lwa.
Yes, hello Papa Legba, my great lwa.
Alegba, Papa, give me a little piece.
Hello Papa Legba, my great lwa.

1.d
My Miyanvalou13, ago ago!
—Abobo!
My Miyanvalou, ago ago!
My Miyanvalou, ago ago!
The great path blocks me.
My Miyanvalou, ago ago!
Again the path blocks me here!
My Miyanvalou, ago ago!
My Miyanvalou, ago ago!
Great Path14 blocks me.
Miyanvalou ounsi kanzo of the Heritage!
—Abobo!
Oh heavens, the great path blocks us here.
My Miyanvalou, ago ago!
—Great Path blocks me.

1.e
What power Haitians have.
—Abobo!
They took the ason15 of my lwa,
they threw it away.
—E ago e!
God is good, the Saints16 are good,

13 Miyanvalou or yanvalou is a snake-inspired dance and drum rhythm of the Rada Rite and therefore it is connected with Danbala Wèdo and Ayida Wèdo. The dancer of the yanvalou creates a snake-like movement that flows up and down the spine while the shoulders circulate. The back is somewhat lowered and the arms are held to the hips. The yanvalou dance originates in Dahomey where it used to honor royalty (See Jil & Jil 2009).

14 Great Path (Gran Chemen) refers to the lwa Legba; for example, the composite name Legba Gran Chimen Katawoulo exists (Hebblethwaite 2012: 254). One manifestation of Legba is associated with the Kafou (crossroads), so it seems intuitive to link him to the Chemen (paths) that converge to create the crossroads.

15 Ason refers to the rattling instrument and ritual tool used by the oungan and manbo to salute, call and send away the spirits. It is made of a gourd traditionally decorated with snake vertebrae or beads. The ason is a fundamental part of kanzo-school of Vodou; the instrument is considered sacred for its role in ritual, music, healing and symbolism.
Marasa bon.  
Yo pran ason lwa m nan,
yo voye l jete.

2.a  
Manyanva, Manyanvalou Loko.  
—Abobole!—E ago e!  
—Asanble kilti sa! Mayanva, nou wè!  
Manyanva, Manyanvalou Loko.  
Ki di sa a Manyanvalou e!  
Manyanva ounsi kanzo Ladogwesan yo.  
Manyanvalou Loko.  
Lanj Gabriyél ki di sa a—Manyanvalou e!  
Papa Loko ki di sa—Manyanvalou e!

2.b  
Frè Loko, Loko va de.  
Va Loko, Loko va de.  
Miyanvalou Loko, Loko va de.  
Va Loko Loko va de.  
Miyanvalou Loko— Loko va de. 

2.c  
Agawou gwonde o—Yabôdô! 

| Marasa bon. | They took the ason of my lwa, 
|-------------| they threw it away. |

16 Lesen literally translates to “the Saints” but it is used interchangeably to refer to the lwa; the Catholic lexical fields in Vodou stem from forced conversion to Christianity during the slave trade (as required by the 1685 Code noir “Black code”) and the subsequent use of Catholicism to camouflage and preserve Vodou religion and culture.

17 This song expresses the not uncommon theme of apologetics. Apologetics is a type of argumentation that defends a religion’s right to exist and thrive.

18 Loko is the protective lwa of healing and medicine. He oversees sanctuaries and initiations. In this song the terms manyanvalou are associated with Loko, not Danbala. This suggests that manyanvalou and its variants are associated with the Rada Rite as both Danbala and Loko are fundamental spirits in that Rite.

19 The Angel Gabriel of the Bible and Qur’an is a messenger from God. Here the Angel Gabriel and Papa Loko imbue the text with authority. The reference to the Angel Gabriel also shows how Vodou places the biblical traditions within its orbit.

20 Loko va de is not yet well understood; Loko de and Loko Wa De are also attested in Hebblethwaite et al. (2012:81).

21 Agawou is a violent and powerful lwa associated with storms and earthquakes. His possessions can be dangerous in the sense that the possessed might handle dangerous objects or engage in incredible behavior.
Agawou gwonde nan peyi a.
Agawou gwonde o.
Agawou gwonde nan peyi a.
Se fò, ou mete lepyè a e.
Agawou gwonde e nan peyi a.
Mwen di se fò—ou mete lepyè a.
Eya, Agawou gwonde nan peyi a.
Agawou gwonde, ounsi kanzo Ladogwesan o!
—Abobo!—E ago e!
Agawou gwonde—nan peyi a!

2.d
Ayizan gogo,
—Abobo!
Ayizan golado, Ayizan gogo,
Ayizan golado m, ala fanm a yo fre.
—E ago e!
Ala fanm a yo fre, ago e.
Ago nou la, Danbala Wèdo.
Ago nou la, Ayida Wèdo.
Mare frè ki pral kondwi m ale,
ago e.
Ayizan gogo, Ayizan gogo, Ayizan golado!

Agawou roared in the country.
Oh Agawou roared.
Agawou roared in the country.
It is strong, you placed your foot, hey.
Hey Agawou roared in the country.
I say it is strong—you placed your foot.
Oh yeah, Agawou roared in the country.
Agawou roared, ounsi kanzo of the Heritage!
—Abobo!—E ago e!
Agawou roared—in the country!

2.d
Ayizan gogo,
—Abobo!
Ayizan golado24, Ayizan gogo,
my Ayizan golado, oh how fresh their woman is.
—E ago e!
Oh how fresh their woman is, ago hey.
Ago we are here. Danbala Wèdo25.
Ago we are here, Ayida Wèdo.
Tie the brother who is going to drive me away,
ago e.
Ayizan gogo, Ayizan gogo, Ayizan golado!

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22 This exclamation is frequently heard during Vodou ceremonies. Although it is difficult to link this expression directly to the Fon language, it is worth noting that *Yabadaóóó* is the Fon response given to the congratulatory expression *ajámácóóó* (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:525).

23 Ayizan is the Vodou lwa who protects temples and initiation. She is associated with palm fronds, hence their use in initiation ceremonies. During the cycles of the Rada Rite that are dedicated to her, the ounsi initiates braid and construct a kind of loose staff out of palm leaves in her honor. When it is completed, one female initiate picks up the palm staff, now wrapped in a white cloth, and dances with it while saluting the stations of the temple. Near the end of the salutations, the rhythm quickens and the bearer of the *ayizan* palm staff briefly, but vigorously, transforms into Ayizan and immediately moves out of the peristil and into the altar room. We have seen this occur in numerous *kanzo*-type ceremonies. *Ayizàn* is considered a ‘great divinity in Allada, Benin, and among the Pedah people of Benin. Ayizàn is also the Vodoun (spirit) of the market in Ouidah (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:88). [here]

24 In the Fon language *gola* is a ‘round and decorated cap worn by chiefs and Vodouists. The expression *golò vodún* means ‘vodun cola bean’ which Vodou adepts consume as protection against sorcerers (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:194).

25 Danbala Wèdo are his wife Ayida Wèdo were the first lwa created. The serpent spirit, *Danbadahwèdó*, is well-known in the contemporary Fon language of Benin (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:121). Danbala and Ayida are both represented by snakes and they are associated with spirituality, purity, mysticism, good-fortune and fertility.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>3.a</th>
<th>3.b</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Djobodo antaye, ansi an, ayibobo!</strong>&lt;br&gt; Ayibobo, medam!</td>
<td><strong>Danbala Wèdo,</strong>&lt;br&gt; lasous o m a prale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wèdo, m rele Wèdo,</strong>&lt;br&gt; ki lwa sa?&lt;br&gt; Danbala Wèdo!&lt;br&gt; —Abobo!—E ago e!&lt;br&gt; M ape mande ki lwa sa,&lt;br&gt; yo di m se Wèdo.&lt;br&gt; Vini mande o ki lwa sa,&lt;br&gt; yo di m se Wèdo la,&lt;br&gt; lwa m nan!</td>
<td><strong>M pokorive,</strong>&lt;br&gt; m tande teta nan dlo mande,&lt;br&gt; kote y a wè mwen?&lt;br&gt; <strong>M pokoro la,</strong>&lt;br&gt; m tande Odan o do.&lt;br&gt; <strong>M pokororet la,</strong>&lt;br&gt; epi m tande Odan.&lt;br&gt; <strong>M pral salye drapo mwen</strong>&lt;br&gt; pou m aux...&lt;br&gt; epi <strong>kouch...</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>Abobo! E ago e!</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>Danbala Wèdo,</strong>&lt;br&gt; m pral salye drapo lwa m nan!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wèdo, I call Wèdo,</strong>&lt;br&gt; Which lwa is this?&lt;br&gt; Danbala Wèdo!&lt;br&gt; —Abobo! —E ago e!&lt;br&gt; I am asking which lwa is this,&lt;br&gt; they tell me it’s Wèdo.&lt;br&gt; Come ask which lwa this is,&lt;br&gt; they tell me it’s Wèdo here,&lt;br&gt; my lwa!</td>
<td><strong>Danbala Wèdo,</strong>&lt;br&gt; to the source I am going.&lt;br&gt; I have not arrived yet,&lt;br&gt; I hear tadpoles in the water ask, where will they see me?&lt;br&gt; I have not arrived here yet.&lt;br&gt; I hear behind me behind me.&lt;br&gt; I have not appeared here yet&lt;br&gt; and I hear behind me.&lt;br&gt; I am going to salute my flag so that I can go...&lt;br&gt; and woosh...&lt;br&gt; <strong>Abobo! E ago e!</strong>&lt;br&gt; <strong>Danbala Wèdo,</strong>&lt;br&gt; I am going to salute the flag of my lwa!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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26 Danbala Wèdo is often offered a basin with water at ceremonies. He and Ayida are believed to intertwine their bodies under the water to support the earth. Snakes master the elements in their ability to climb, slither and swim and thus symbols associated with the snake’s natural habitat are often used such as water, roots, trees and the sky.

27 Odan is an older name for Danbala. Today in the Fon language the serpent spirit is referred to as Dàn (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:121).

28 *Drapo* refers to a Vodou flag that depicts a lwa or the lwa’s vèvè. They are usually sewn with intricate beading and used ritually during ceremonies. Most communities have two flags that represent two of the major spirits of the community; the two flag-bearers (*pot-drapo*) present the Vodou flags in the company of the *Laplas*, the master-of-ceremonies, who leads them, in military fashion, while clapping a sword. The sword and flag suggest the incorporation of military symbolism in Vodou, an unsurprising element given Vodou religion’s contribution to animating the Haitian Revolution.
O do m ap salye drapo mwen pou m ale!
Ayida Wèdo, m pral salye drapo lwa m nan!
O do m ap salye drapo mwen pou m ale!

3.c
O nou tout blan e!
—Abobo!
Danbala Wèdo, basen reken an ki tonbe nan Figye a.
O nou tout blan e!
—O nou tout blan, medam!
Basen sa pase Danbala Wèdo.
Basen sa pase Ayida Wèdo.
O nou tout blan, e.
Nout tout blan, medam.
—Ayibobo!
ki tonbe nan Figye a—eya nou tout blan e.

3.d
Èzili Freda o Alada Dawomen, o kay mwen.
—Abobo!
M ape rele mètrès
ki soti anba dlo, se fanm chans mwen.
—E ago e
—Pale, pale, pale medam, w!
Si Zota pa ta o kay mwen.

O do, I will salute my flag so that I can go!
Ayida Wèdo,
I am going to salute the flag of my lwa!
O do, I will salute my flag for me to go!

3.c
Oh we are all white!
—Abobo!
Danbala Wèdo, the basin of sharks that fell into the Figye.
Oh we are all white!
—Oh we are all white, ladies!
This basin is because of Danbala Wèdo.
This basin is because of Ayida Wèdo.
Oh we are all white, hey.
We are all white, ladies,
—Ayibobo!
who fell into Figye—hey yeah, we are all white.

3.d
Èzili Freda o Alada Dahomey, oh my house.
—Abobo!
I will call the mistress
who comes from under water, my luck woman.
—Hey ago hey!
—Speak, speak, speak ladies, yes!
If Zota wasn’t in my house.

29 The nearly identical name is still found in contemporary Fon language spoken in Benin: Ayidohwèdó in Benin’s Vodun culture refers to the spirit of the rainbow; this spirit is also represented by two pieces of iron in the shape of snakes (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:85).
30 Basen reken (basin of sharks) may refer to the middle passage across the Atlantic Ocean.
31 The fig tree is considered to be a resting tree (pye repozwa) for the Vodou lwa.
32 Blan (white) probably refers to the white attire that is required in the Rada rite.
33 Èzili Freda is the sexualized member of the Èzili family. She is a mistress to many of the other lwa and is held in high regard by the homosexual community within Vodou. When she possesses someone, Èzili Freda likes to be pampered, given a mirror, make-up, jewelry and champagne.
34 Alada Dahomey refers to the town of Allada in Benin (formally Dahomey). Èzili is attested in the form Azlì in the Fon language of Benin. In Fon, Azlì refers to a lake and to the Vodoun spirit of that lake. In addition to the similar pronunciation, Azlì and Èzili also share in common water as their mythic dwelling place. Alada Dahomey is thus a toponym used in Haitian Creole that signals the geographic origins of the lwa Èzili.
3.e  
**Do e wa! Do e wa! Do e wa!**  
Èzili k ap dodo la.  
Dodo Jozèt!  
—Anhan!  
Dodo Sara!  
—Anhan!  
Dodo Rita, gade Dadi k ap dodo la.  
M a di dodo Jozèt  
—Rasin Figye k ap dodo la!  

4.a  
**Djobodo antaye, ansi an,**  
Ayibobo—Ayibobo!  
Ayibobo, medam—Ayibobo!  
Agwe, Vodou miwa e.  
Abobo, E Ago E  

Agwe Tawoyo Vodou miwa e.  
Agwe Vodou miwa a se.  
Agwe Vodou miwa e.  
—E Ago e!—Abobo!  

4.b  
Agwe Woyo, Agwe Tawoyo,  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>M ape rele mètrès—manbo—</th>
<th>I will call the mistress—manbo—</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ki soti anba dlo,</td>
<td>who comes from under water[^35]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se fanm chans mwen.</td>
<td>my luck woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M ape rele mètrès</td>
<td>I will call the mistress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki soti anba dlo—se fanm chans mwen</td>
<td>who comes from under water—my luck woman.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^35]: Here is an explicit mention of Èzili’s mythic dwelling place in the water.

[^36]: Agwe is the lwa of the seas and the islands. He is married to Lasirenn, a lwa who is represented as a mermaid, and his mistress is Èzili. *Agbè* in Fon is ‘the divinity of the sea’ (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:28). The bilabial sound [b] systematically semi-vocalizes as [w] in Haitian Creole. Note that the [w] retains the bilabial features.

[^37]: Mirrors are symbolic of the ancestors because it is believed that their realm is a mirror-image of our own world.

[^38]: The word *sè* or *se* means ‘the powerful and essential part of a being,’ ‘spirit,’ ‘destiny,’ ‘fate,’ and ‘God’ (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:404).

[^39]: An expression close to the Haitian Creole *Agwe Tawoyo* can be found in the Fon language of Benin: *Agbetawoyô* is a compound word composed of *Agbè* ‘a stretch of water,’ *tò* ‘water,’ and *awoyô* ‘onomatopoetic sound of the sea’ which means ‘the ocean in its immensity’ (Segurola & Rassinoux 2000:28).
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<tr>
<td>Bad weather corners me 40—abobo! —hey ago hey! I am on the water. I am on the island Laklas. Agwe Woyo, Agwe Tawoyo, bad weather corners me—hey ago hey! Agwe Woyo, man of the wala eel. —bad weather corners me. Agwe Woyo, man of the salt water. —bad weather corners me. Agwe Woyo’s boat disembarks. —Abobo! Upon my arrival on the island, <strong>I received some time.</strong> Agwe Woyo’s boat disembarks. <strong>Captain Sévo</strong> asks: what will we do? Seashell answered: we will do like this, it is for the lives of the children. Agwe Woyo’s boat disembarks. Upon my arrival on the island, I received a time. 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.a Aoche Nago—Awo! Nèg Nago di kochè! Yòbòdò! Balizay o, m a rele Ogoun Balizay o.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.a Aoche Nago 42—Awo! Nago men say kochè! Yòbòdò! Oh Balizay, oh I will call Ogoun Balizay 43.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

40 Agwe or Agwe Tawoyo protects sailors.

41 This song stands out for containing numerous spirit voices and elements that are woven into a compact narrative with an important message about a lwa’s favors. The song’s narrator is “on the water” and “on the island” and bad weather suggests danger. Yet Agwe and his entourage, the Captain, the boat, and the Seashell, give the narrator some more time on earth. The song thanks Agwe for his help through a storm in life. Going under the water (anba dlo) to receive special mystical knowledge is also a narrative associated with some oungan or manbo. The disenfranchised thus gain access to the prestigious status of healer (see McCarthy-Brown 2010 [1991]:224).

42 *Aoche Nago* translates as “By the power of the Nago lwa.” The word *Nago* refers to the traditions of Yorùbá origin. According to Fama (1996:21), *awo*, the response given to *aoche Nago*, is the ‘collective reference for believers of the Yorùbá religion’; *àwùjo* is also an ‘assembly of peers’ so another translation may be ‘the Yoruba assembly’ (Fama 1996:21). Jil & Jil (2009:125) consider *Awo* to be related to *Lawo*, another term for *Iwa* (spirit). *Awo Achè Nago* for them means ‘By the grace of the Nago spirits.’

43 Ogou Balizay is a part of the Ogou family or flock that is associated with war, defense, soldiers, power, metallurgy and passion. Hebblethwaite *et al* (2012:271) lists *Ogou Balisaj*, an apparent variant of *Ogou Balizay*. 

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University of Florida, NEH Collaborative Grant, 2014

9
Oh I call Ogoun Balizay.
My panama hat\textsuperscript{44} fell off.
Oh Balizay, yeah, oh call Balizay.
My panama hat fell off.

5.b
Olicha\textsuperscript{45}, Olicha Fawo e.
Olicha, Olicha Fawo e.
Fawo e, Fawo e!
Fawo e, Fawo e, we are going to cross the pass,
Alesou Fawo Pyè.
Olicha, Olicha, Fawo e! Hey hey, abobo!
Fawo e, Fawo e!
We are going to cross the pass of
Alesou Fawo Pyè
Olicha Nago, Olicha!
—Abobo!

5.c
Little boy, little boy,
You’re mother sent you to find water.
She did not send you to find wood.
If you hear shooting, if they do it,
do it to them too.
—you may hear shooting, if they do it,
do it to them too.
Little boy, little boy,
your mother sent you to find water.
She did not send you to find wood.
you may hear shooting, if they do it,
do it to them too.\textsuperscript{46}
—E aoche!

6.a
Oh papa Dessalines\textsuperscript{47},

\textsuperscript{44}Ogou Panama is a lwa associated with the Vodouist politician, President Hippolyte (1889-1896). He was known for wearing a panama hat. Legend has it that while chasing his rival on horse-back, his hat fell off. He didn’t stop to pick it up and after falling off of his horse, he died of a heart attack.

\textsuperscript{45}Olica is considered to be an evil-doing lwa. He is associated with the Ogou family. Olica is said to have knowledge of healing and poisoning plants. Òrìsà is the general Yorùbá and Cuban Santería name for \textit{spirit or divinity}; as song (5a) has just ushered in the Nago Rite, it is no surprise to see other spirits of Yorùbá origin emerging.

\textsuperscript{46}This appears to be a \textit{chante pwen} or song of warning. Notice the eye-for-an-eye theme that emerges in this text.
Voye on ti priz limyè pou nou, ak yon ti kras konsyans, pou n ka chita ansanm, pou n sove peyi nou. Nou pati!

Rasin Figye, bon bagay!
Alfabetizasyon se chemen je klere pou 2004 ka vin pi bèl. Ayiti, yo di w pral bèl, se vre.
—Alfa!
Ayiti pou peyi m: viv Ayiti!
—Peyi a pral bèl o, mon Dye!
Tout moun vin konn li, peyi nou va mache.
—N ap fè 2004 la, n a di, viv Ayiti!

6.b
Moun sa yo, ki moun yo ye?
Yo bliye ki sa nou te fè pou n te ba yo pouvwa.
—Anmre, nou pa t dòmi nan ntwit, se vre.
Moun sa yo, ki moun yo ye?
Yo bliye ki sa nou te fè pou n te ba yo pouvwa. Gen nan yo
ki vle sa chanje.
Gen nan yo
ki pa gen volonte.
Yo pa vle n avanse.
Mezanmi, gad sa yo fè nou!

send a bit of light for us, with a little bit of conscience. so we can sit together, in order to save our country. And we’re off!

Rasin Figye, good stuff!
Literacy is the path of illumination for 2004 to become more beautiful. Haiti, they say you are going to be beautiful, it’s true.
Literacy is the path of development for the nation to be more beautiful. When everybody knows how to read, our country will work.
We will do 2004, we will say long live Haiti. Long live Haitian Haiti, long live Haiti!
—Literacy!
Haiti for my country: long live Haiti!
—Oh the country will be beautiful, my God!
Everybody comes to know how to read, our country will work
—We will do 2004, we will say, long live Haiti!

6.b
These people, which people are they? They forgot what we did to give them power.
—Help, we did not sleep at night, it’s true.
These people, which people are they? They forgot what we did to give them power.
There are those among them who want this to change.
There are those among them who have no will.
They don’t want us to progress.
Oh heavens, look what they did to us!

47 Jean-Jacques Dessalines was a leader of the Haitian Revolution and the first ruler and emperor of Haiti (1804-1806). He was assassinated by rivals.
48 This song provides evidence that literacy is of great importance to Vodouists, contrary to the claim that some Protestant polemicists make.
49 This may refer to the 2004 coup d’état in Haiti that removed President Aristide from office-Aristide left office with the assistance of the United States government in order to prevent violence. Later Aristide described the events that transpired as a kidnapping and alluded to himself as a modern Toussaint Louverture who was himself kidnapped in 1802 by the French general Leclerc.
Gad sa yo fé n, Ayisyen, 
gad sa yo fé nou. 
Gad sa yo fé, mezanmi, 
gad sa yo fé nou. 
Yo kraze peyi n, o Bondye.

Mezanmi gad sa yo fé nou. 
—Woy, woy, woy, 
mezanmi, gad sa yo fé nou, 
woy, woy, woy! 
Mezanmi, yo kraze peyi a. 
—Woy, woy, woy. 
Mezanmi, yo kraze peyi a, 
woy, woy, woy. 
Mezanmi, moun yo divize nou. 
—Woy, woy, woy, 
Mezanmi, yo divize nou. 
Woy, woy, woy.

6.c
Twòp san koule o, 
nou di ase, 
twòp san koule nan peyi a. 
Ayiti, twòp san koule, se vre. 
Twòp san koule o, an verite. 
Twòp san koule nan peyi a. 
Zotobre tonbe, malere mouri o! 
Lavalasyen tonbe. 
Konvèjans mouri o. 
Se pa fòt nou, 
se fòt zanmi ipokrit yo 
—ki fè sa rive la e.

6.d
Ayisyen si n te gen inyon, 
nta rive deja. 
Peyi mwen, o peyi mwen! 
O peyi mwen o, w pa prale. 
Ale m ale, m ale, m ale, m ale,

Look at what they did to us, Haitians, 
look at what they did to us. 
Look what they did to us, my friends, 
look what they did to us. 
They destroyed our country, oh God.

Oh heavens\textsuperscript{50}, look what they did to us. 
—Oh my, oh my, oh my, 
oh heavens, look what they did to us, 
oh my, oh my, oh my! 
Oh heavens, they destroyed the country. 
—Oh my, oh my, oh my, 
Oh heavens, they destroyed the country, 
oh my, oh my, oh my! 
Oh heavens, the people divided us. 
—Oh my, oh my, oh my, 
Oh heavens, they divided us, 
oh my, oh my, oh my!

6.c
Too much blood has spilled, 
we say enough, 
too much blood has spilled in the country. 
Haiti, too much blood has spilled, it’s true. 
Oh too much blood has spilled, in truth. 
Too much blood has spilled in the country. 
Big shots fell, oh the poor died! 
Lavalasyen\textsuperscript{51} fell. 
Konvèjans\textsuperscript{52} died. 
It is not our fault, 
it’s the fault of our hypocritical friends 
—that made this happen here.

6.d
Haitians if we had a union, 
we would have already prospered. 
My country, oh my country! 
Oh my country, you aren’t going anywhere. 
I’m really going, I’m going, I’m going, I’m going,

\textsuperscript{50} Mezanmi has no literal translation in English. While it comes from the French \textit{mes amis} (my friends), in Haitian Creole it expresses surprise or exasperation hence our translation of “Oh heavens!”

\textsuperscript{51} Lavalasyen refers to partisans of the Lavalas political party founded in 1996. Jean-Bertrand Aristide created the Lavalas party and was its first candidate and elected President.

\textsuperscript{52} Konvèjans was a political party in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Haiti.
wi, m prale.
Lavalasyen, si n te gen inyon, n ta rive deja.
Peyi mwen, o peyi mwen, o peyi mwen, o adje!
Ale m ale, m ale, m ale, wi, m prale.
Konvèjans, si n te gen inyon, n ta rive deja.
Peyi mwen, o peyi mwen, o peyi mwen, o adye.

Kote lwa yo?
M rele lwa yo, m pa wè lwa yo.
Anba, ye, anba, ye, anba, ye!
Ayisyen, si n te gen inyon, n ta rive deja.
—Ale m ale, m ale, m ale, wi, m prale.
Peyi mwen, o peyi mwen, o peyi mwen, o adye, adye, adye!

yes, I’m going
Lavalasyen, if we had a union, we would already prosper.
My country, oh my country, oh my country, oh goodness!
I’m really going, I’m going, I’m going, yes, I’m going.
Konvèjans if we had a union, we would have already prospered.
My country, oh my country, oh my country, oh goodness.

Where are the lwa?
I call the lwa, I don’t see the lwa.
Under, yeah, under, yeah, under, yeah!
Haitians, if we had a union, we would have already prospered.
—I’m really going, I’m going, I’m going, yes, I’m going.
My country, oh my country, oh my country, oh goodness.
Oh goodness, oh goodness, oh goodness!

—Benjamin Hebblethwaite, Tahiri Jean-Baptiste, Myrlande Denis, and Megan Raitano
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53 Songs 6a–6d expresses different thematic content from songs 1-5. Songs 6a-6d appear to be in the chante pwen genre that departs from religious and mythological themes and centers on cultural criticism. This criticism addresses political failures, illiteracy, problems with power, and disappointment with the Haitian economy, among other themes.