

Masters of the Dew - Introduction

- Haitian peasant culture
- Haitian communist party
- 1934, Vincent > prison... exile...
- Repatriation under Lescot, 1941
- *Campagne anti-superstitieuse*
- Social consciousness
- Sociological novel
- The indigenous intellectual movement
- Political fable
- The Haitian peasantry in its international context
- Symbolic realism – The dew & water, the realistic description of peasant life

Quiz 1: Introduction and chapter 1 & 2 plus Vodou [2 pts each]

1. Roumain was **not** interested in Haitian peasant culture.
(a) True (b) False
2. Roumain did found the Haitian communist party.
(a) True (b) False
3. Roumain went to prison for 3 years in Haiti for his ideas.
(a) True (b) False
4. Which president allowed the return of Roumain?
(a) Lescot (b) Vincent (c) Magloire
5. Roumain supported the anti-Vodou “campagne anti-superstitieuse.”
(a) True (b) False
6. Roumain was interested in social consciousness.
(a) True (b) False
7. Roumain’s book is **not** a sociological novel.
(a) True (b) False
8. Who was a major figure in the indigenous intellectual movement
(a) Jean Price-Mars (b) Charlemagne Péralte (c) Langston Hughes
9. Masters of the Dew is a political fable
(a) True (b) False
10. What is a *coumbite* [konbit] all about?
(a) chain gang (b) collective farming (c) mandatory collective work
11. Manuel had been cutting sugar cane in
(a) the Dominican Republic (b) Puerto Rico (c) Cuba
12. What is a universal poetic symbol in this book?
(a) Mud (b) Sexuality (c) Water
13. Manuel’s mother:
(a) Marie (b) Délira (c) Suzanne
14. Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines were troubled by Vodou
(a) True (b) False
15. How is Vodou tradition maintained over generations?
(a) Written tradition (b) Oral tradition (c) Combination of both
16. *Oungan*
(a) Woman (b) Man (c) Spirit
17. *Manbo*
(a) Woman (b) Man (c) Spirit
18. Are the *lwa* perfect?
(a) Yes (b) No
19. A Vodou secret society:
(a) *Lougawou* (b) *Chanpwèl* (b) *Zonbi*
20. Someone possessed by a Vodou *lwa*:
(a) a goat (b) a cat (c) a horse

14. Roumain sees Vodou as

(a) local color in his art (b) a narcotic for the masses (c) the ultimate religion

Masters of the Dew, Jacques Roumain (1946)

Questions for discussion on Chapters 2 & 3

1. What evidence is there for an ecological crisis in this book?
2. Describe Manuel's encounter with the young woman on the road home.
 - How do they part ways?
3. Describe the homes the characters live in.
4. What tools are used for food preparation?
5. What do we learn about Manuel's experience in Cuba?
 - What kind of agriculture is practiced in Cuba?
 - Who is mister Wilson?
 - What kind of activities was Manuel involved in? What violent act did he engage in?
6. What evidence of syncretism can be found in the book?
7. What is Manuel talking about when he brings up "black angels" and "white angels"?
8. What do we learn about the male's obligation in getting married? (Antoine)
9. What rural leisure activities are discussed?
10. Who is Bienaimé? Annaïse?
11. Who were the cacos?
12. What is the root problem in this village?

Masters of the Dew, Chapters 4-5

Provide details:

Ogoun	[Loa of metalwork, blood & war
Papa Legba	[Opens the way; gate keeper; elderly, hunched over, uses a cane
Houngan	
Asson [ason]	[rattle with snake vertebrae around it
vèvè	[Symbol that directs arrival of loa
4 cardinal directions	[Vodou priest points N-S-E-W
Rooster	[living confluence of supernatural force; sacrificed
Gagè	[cock-fight

1. What Vodou musical instruments are featured? Drums, bells, gongs
2. What are some of the roles of Vodouists? Flag-carrier; “La Place” = organizer
3. What do Vodouists do?
4. Describe a Vodou danse or rhythm: bent knees, arms spread
yanvalou
5. Where does Vodou come from? Dahome
6. What do Manuel and Délira do at the ceremony? Dance
Explain: “Dancing and drinking anesthetized them – swept away their shipwrecked souls to drown those regions of unreality and danger where the fierce forces of the African gods lay in wait”
7. What work does Manuel do in the courtyard? Hat maker
8. What government corruption is described? Market inspector stealing
9. What laws persecuted the poor peasant in Roumain’s day? No shoes law
10. How does Manuel rise in this chapter? “Chef”; Hilarion
11. What is Manuel’s mystique?
12. Describe Manuel & Anna’s meeting

Masters of the Dew, chapters 6-7

1. Describe Anna and Manuel's meeting.
2. What do we learn about Anna?
3. How does Anna see Manuel? [
4. How does Anna see herself? [
5. How does Manuel see Vodou? [
6. How does Anna see Vodou? [
7. Why did Manuel dance at the Vodou ceremony?
8. How does Manuel want to change Fonds-Rouge?
9. If he succeeds, what will Fonds-Rouge need?
10. What are some key notions in Manuel's 'political science'? [
11. How does Manuel see Anna in his scheme?
12. How does this reveal gender roles?
13. Who is Gervilen?
14. How is he described? What kind of person is he? And in literary terms, what's his role/function? [
15. Why is Gervilen so concerned about Anna?
16. What does Gervilen promise at the end of the chapter? Why does he promise *that*? [

Mother _____

Father _____

Masters of the Dew, Jacques Roumain

Quiz II on chapters 6-7

1. What does Manuel want to bring to Fonds-Rouge?
(a) wealth (b) trees (c) water (d) foreign investment
2. In Cuba Manuel learned about the *huelga*. What is that in English?
(a) labor contract (b) strike (c) layoff (d) worker revolt
3. Manuel views women as essential to his plan.
(a) True (b) False
4. Manuel does not *really* want to reconcile Fonds-Rouge.
(a) True (b) False
5. Annaïse [Anna] calls Manuel “my master.”
(a) True (b) False
6. What metaphor does Roumain use to characterize Gervilen?
(a) shadow (b) light (c) blood (d) water
7. In chapter 7 Gervilen reveals his problem with:
(a) drugs (b) petty crime (c) alcohol
8. Gervilen threatens to harm Manuel.
(a) True (b) False
9. Gervilen wants to marry Annaïse [Anna].
(a) True (b) False

10. Annaïse carefully explained to Rosanna why she was late coming home.
(a) True (b) False

Masters of the Dew: chapters 8 & 9 questions for discussion.

Eight

1. Describe the food problems in Fonds-Rouge and in Manuel's family.
What are people doing to overcome the drought? (The Simidor's news)
2. Why is the name "Bienaimé" (e.g. "Well-Loved") ironic?
3. What kind of woman does Délira want for her son?
4. What is Manuel keep secret from his mother?
5. What is youthful about Manuel's mother? ("...a bird's song in an old nest...")
6. How does the narrator view alcohol?
7. What does it take to suddenly get rich according to Bienaimé?
8. How does Manuel get on the track of the water?

4. "négresse sérieuse et travailleuse"
7. "des compromissions avec le diable"

Nine

1. Explain Manuel's statement: "it's work that he accomplished and that's what brings existence to life across the centuries: the usefulness of man [and woman] on this earth".
2. Describe the link between nature and sexuality in this chapter.
3. Why does Anna say she'll be at "Manuel's service..." and that "I'll be the servant of your desires".
4. The sex-scene is described in what terms?

4. “vague fiévreuse”, “une angoisse indicible naissait en elle, un délice terrible qui prenait le mouvement de sa chair” ... “ce long sanglot qui la laissa anéantie dans l’êtreinte de l’homme”

Master of the Dew, Chapter 10 questions for discussion:

1. What happened to Dorisca and Sauveur?
2. Manuel does want to reconcile Fonds-Rouge?
3. Bienaimé also wants to reconcile Fonds-Rouge?
4. Who said this “The right that *you* found it! [...] The right that our enemies haven’t got any rights!”
5. What is Roumain’s deeper message about Haiti and development?
6. Describe Gervilen? How is his represented?
7. What kind of foreshadowing does Roumain give us about Gervilen?
8. What kind of letter is going to Rosanna? Is Manuel going to write it?
9. What are some of the settings or locations described in this chapter?
10. What is a *simidor* [*simidò*]
11. Interpret: “...in spite of poverty and disease, they are shooting up fast like bad weeds. (It’s hard to kill a Negro off. He’s tough like nobody’s business”)
12. How would you describe the structure of this book?
13. What *kind* or *genre* of novel would we classify this as?

Masters of the Dew, chapter 11 questions for discussion

1. What is the major objective of Manuel in this section?
2. What kind of arguments does Manuel come up with?
3. Explain: "...a mass sung... for both Dorisca and Sauveur... that would reconcile them in the grave... restless **dead folks** are troublesome, they're even dangerous..." (131)
4. Explain: "Cia, his wife, down with a fever... which no medicine had been able to check. Dorméus claimed that an evildoer had cast a **spell** on her, so he as asking a large sum of money to ride her of it. The greedy dog!"
5. Explain: "You, Gervilen, from the dead Dorisca you've inherited **blood** that's too hot"
6. Explain: "Brothers!...They're trying to buy you. They're trying to trade your **honor** for a little water."

Masters of the Dew, Questions for chapter 12

1. What is happening to Gervilen?
2. What kind of plan is Hilarion concocting?
3. What kind of work does Manuel do at home?
4. Who does Délira meet at Mahotièrè? What kind of interaction do they have?
5. Explain: “These days, that isn’t easy to find, no. There are too many of these young girls who’ve lost their respect for the ways of our ancestors. The city has turned their heads... They’d rather go work as cooks for some rich mulattoes.” What does this refer to more broadly?
6. What evidence of syncretism do we find in this chapter?
7. What bold move does Manuel make in this chapter?
8. Interpret: “Manuel brushed Gervilen from his thoughts as one waves away a mosquito.”
9. How does this chapter end?

