Summary of Ras Eddy Dieujuste’s Interview
By Tahiri Jean-Baptiste, 2014

Ras Eddy believes that Haitian Vodouists retain their holiness because they do not subscribe to the concept of original sin. He believes that if individuals assume that they are inherently sinners, as in the case of Christianity, then that belief becomes reality. Eventually this belief erodes the divinity of the individual. Vodouists, on the other hand, believe that they dwell within God and thus are inherently godly. Accordingly, Ras Eddy believes that Vodou is fundamentally pure though it is at times subjected to the will of individuals.

In order to explain this concept, Ras Eddy compares Vodou to knives. Knives can be used for everyday tasks like cooking and cutting, or they can be used for evil acts like murder. The knife is not the murderer; it is the individual who chooses to use the knife to commit murder who is at fault. Vodou operates in a similar way. Vodou is not evil, nor does it set out to harm anyone in any way. The same cannot always be said of practitioners of Vodou. Ras Eddy also noted that Vodou practitioners utilize Vodou in accordance with their level of education.

Education in Haiti is largely Christianized. This education, according to Ras Eddy, is often anti-Vodou. This exacerbates a disparity in the demographics of who practices Vodou. Thus, Vodou can be considered the religion of Haiti’s peasantry. Of those Haitians who do receive an education, Ras Eddy argues that they do not fully comprehend what they are taught because the instruction is in French. They cannot advance nor can they surpass intellectual expectations because the vast majority of them do not speak French adequately. Of those who do speak French, their understanding of the language is rudimentary and does not allow for creativity or ingenuity. Furthermore, not only is the education in French and not Creole, the content of the education does not focus on Haitian people, history and culture. Ras Eddy’s solution for educational reform is for Creole speaking Haitians and Haitian Vodouists, who emphasize the preservation of Haitian culture and tradition, to form their own school systems outside of the school system found in Haiti.

Ras Eddy advocates educating the masses from a Vodou and Creole perspective. His personal philosophy can be characterized as one that accentuates love, and the celebration and acceptance of differences cross-culturally. Overall his ideology is centered upon world altruism.

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