

A HEALING PARADIGM FOR A NEW HAITI

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Védrine's speech at the Haitian Multi-Service Center 19th graduation
Speech by guest speaker, E. W. VEDRINE*
(Boston, Massachusetts- June 9, 2007)

Distinguished guests, administrators, teachers, staff of Haitian Multi-Service Center, parents, friends of the graduates, and graduates. It is quite an honor for me today for having chosen me as the guess speaker of the 19th graduation of Haitian Multi-Service Center. Immediately after Mr. Dulson

Brunace contacted me to see if could volunteer to be your guest speaker of today's commencement, my answer to him was, "yes" without scratching my head.

To the graduates, I want to say congratulations for having crossed one of the bridges in your life, and one that deals with education. I want to congratulate you for your perseverance and hard work enabling you to reach one of the most important goals on your list.

Here, in the United States, often times at graduation we hear the word "commencement" or *kòmansman* in our Creole language. So, we don't have problem understand these cognates or related words. In this sense, the certificate that you are going to receive today should not mean the "end" of education to you, but rather the beginning. So, you still have more miles to go since knowledge is infinite; there is no end to it. Every day, we learn something new at the University of life where all of us are both students and teachers.

I take this great opportunity to congratulate the graduates and everyone who was supporting them in reaching today's goal; first I would like to mention the teachers of the center. When saying "graduation is commencement", we can also see it as a form of *renaissance* (something new, a rebirth) or a new step that one has climbed in life. So, we already imagine the joy in your heart today for such an accomplishment, a whole reward for your hard work at this center and that you are now ready to move on, ready to climb a higher step.

In moving on to this higher step, some of us may see it as a key to open works' doors; some may see it as an opportunity to move forward intellectually. But regardless of the interpretation of your certificate today, I want to congratulate you again for this great achievement in life. I am also taking this opportunity to remind you not to forget about your duty *vis-à-vis* your community here in the Greater Boston and Haiti. Yes, it is important to remind you of your community in terms of your responsibility to try to bring your own contribution because the certificate you will soon receive is like a torch (or what we call in Creole, *flanbo*) in your hand. When having a torch, it's purpose is to light. So, each graduate is going to have a torch in their hand.

People use a torch when it is dark; they use it for lighting. And first of all, we see Haitian Multi-Service Center as the main center that distributes these lighting tools because its role is to prepare people of the community and today, you are among those people who have benefited from the work it has been doing over twenty years in our community of the Greater Boston. So, with this torch in your hand today, besides your main goal to find a better job, to move forward in school and to live better in the American Society don't forget to think about your contribution to help your community here, other Haitians in need (one way or another) and also, don't forget to continue supporting Haitian Multi-Service Center the way you can. This educational center is your house, so always make yourself comfortable at home. Don't abandon it after receiving your diploma today. Keep in touch with its administrators, teachers, and staffs because the center has also become part of your family in life.

I urge you to think about all the problems that our community has been facing and of the help you can provide for some improvement. Because today, you have a torch in your hand, one that is lit to shine. People who are in the dark will benefit from its illumination. That is, the knowledge you have acquired from the Haitian Multi-Service Center will always find a spot or place somehow in our community.

I also want to tell you that it is the moment to think about Haiti – your native country. Think about what you can do with your knowledge to help Haiti. Our mother land needs a piece of it. So, think of all possible ways that Haiti can benefit from that knowledge (it can be through some of your advice, your participation in the regional organizations in Diaspora to help Haiti /or the organizations of your local region in terms of what you can do while in here, a country where you have so many opportunities).

We should also be proud of our accomplishment. Nothing wrong with that. But on top of it, we should be more proud when doing something that our community in Diaspora and the mother country, Haiti can benefit from. So, in all that you can do in your capacity, forget not Haiti's needs and her suffering, forget not millions of Haitians in need not only in Haiti but as well as in her Diaspora.

In closing, we have the privilege of living in today's greatest country of the world (the United States) and in the two greatest centuries: the 20th and 21st. So far, we have seen it all, but at the same time our community is in need.

We still have many problems going on in our native land and because of all the opportunities that many of us are enjoying here, we tend to forget those in need (whether they are part of our local community or back home in Haiti). So, hold on tight (*kenbe la!*).

Again, I congratulate you and the teachers, administrators and staff who were always there supporting to enable you to cross one of the major hurdles in life. Your real challenge to share with your community the knowledge that you have acquired from the Haitian Multi-Service Center starts today and with the help of God and the wisdom you'll be asking from him, certainly you will be able to move forward in crossing more important bridges in your life in order to meet your goals and also to help your community in return. Thank you! May God bless you. God, bless America!

For a national and permanent identity card in Haiti
(December 9, 2006)

Why can't Haiti import beautiful ideas (to its advantage)? that other countries can? With the way high technology is spreading out in the century of globalization, it makes sense for everywhere on the globe to see what's good in it to take advantage of. In debating such an issue, we see the importance to have a computerized system in Haiti. This electronic system would help a lot in closing some gaps at the national level.

Many of us, since childhood, would start observing our parents who used to pay an annual fee for an id card. Many would be happy to do it as good citizens. Poor innocent people! But, what has this card really done for them beside the idea of exploiting them? Has Haiti's IRS (Internal Revenue Service) really taken their problems into consideration? Wasn't it a quick business to fill the racketeer governments' pockets who never had any vision for Haiti? It's a bunch of questions we can ask when looking at Haiti that is being hanged on an underdevelopment cliff. Certain countrymen would have already given up when wondering what kind of curse has fallen on Haiti since two hundred years that Haitian governments cannot solve a series of small problems that include in the country's basic infrastructure? Is it really money that is being lacked? Is it the absence of political will? Is it the absence of human resources?

The idea to write an article on this issue was floating in my head since a long time when looking at the importance it has when there exists no system to computerize everything. Not only to find references quickly, but in the case of Haiti also, that could have been blocked a series of delinquency crimes. The question we can ask when tackling any subject related to high technology is: how much money that would cost Haiti? The money issue is one that many Haitians would focus on many times, one of the issues that scare me because many of us still say that Haiti is a poor country; it doesn't have money (as if that would be the most important thing in its development) whereas if we take a pen to calculate the amount of money in remittance that goes to Haiti yearly (what the Diaspora send to support their family to help somehow), it's more than 800 US dollars (according to statistics published in research related to that).

Some Haitians (who really care about their native country) still think that if the head is not decapitated, there's still hope to wear a hat (as the Haitian proverb puts it). So, this small group remains optimist whether there is possibility for change to occur. Yes, that is possible! We, who would be in the rank of people who think like that, well we'll continue to see the possibility for a series of dreams to be concretized. That's true, being individual without power, we'd be limited (in terms of what we'd like to do and see for Haiti's welfare). But if we'd raise our voice, if would agree to embrace a series of things that we see would be advantageous for Haiti, well many of these dreams could become reality. Yes, there is possibility for them to become reality. Yes, there's possibility to become reality if we would start putting aside our differences, our prejudices, our blind political fanaticism, all of our bad attitudes (toward other Haitians), lack of respect (for each other), our selfishness, pride ... and to embrace union, patriotic love, the philosophy of "*combutism*" or collective work, and everything positive that we could embrace to help Haiti moving forward.

Going back to our subject in order not to lose its thread, we aim at permanent identity card and one that is mandatory that all citizen should have had (as their identity, an identity card that they could use for all transactions in their everyday life and to remain something personal (and they would memorized this number). Yes, it's important to remain like that because it represents someone in particular. It's the government and the police that would have access to it in order to have access to someone's file in particular if they are investigating somehow on someone.

In the United States, as many of us know and we can take for example, it is by this way the government (federal or national) controls everyone because it's mandatory for everyone who resides in this country to have an identity card called "social security card" (in English). It is with this number, an individual can make all transactions needed to be made, and once someone has the legal document to live legally in the United States, that person will get this number free of charge (after applying for it in a government office). It's an identity card composed of nine digits (000-00-0000). Once entering it in the computer (to research on someone), it downloads all the information on an individual can have. So, it's not a number that can be dragging, because it's all a person private life of that is intertwined with it.

We have mentioned above how it could help controlling delinquency. Yes, it can help in all cases to identify in a wink of time an individual file. So, if this file would be crafty, it would at once identify that (according to the government publication inside the system on that). Rapidly, we can mention that as of now there are enough Haitian specialists in the domain of computer science, particularly in the Diaspora who would be more than happy to help the Haitian government in this sense (if they'd add that to the list of important project to help Haiti).

Many of these technicians could go to Haiti (voluntarily) to participate in a series of seminars on that, doing training with Haitians in the country (those working with government job or in the private sector) who are trying to use a computerized system. I hope that readers who read this article can open discussion on it, embellish it with more ideas, add on to it and examine the possibilities to bring this claim to the Haitian government to add up to their list of projects they would have; one like this in order to start establishing a computerized system that is helping in the development of Haiti.

What's really needed to be done to reforest Haiti?

(February 2007)

Deforestation has been one of Haiti's main problems destroying its environment. So, nothing concrete has been done so far to solve that problem, or any long term program in the future. There has been recent talks

of cooperation between Brazil and Canada to help Haiti with reforestation, according a Haiti's local radio broadcasting:

“Brazil and Canada announced on Monday (Feb. 5, 2007) their intention to bring technical and financial resources to a reforestation project in Haiti. This announcement was made by the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Celso Amorim, at the conclusion of an interview with the Canadian Chief of Diplomacy, Peter MacKay in the presence of Fritz Longchamp, president Preval's cabinet chief(1).”

Though members from any foreign country can go to Haiti to help somehow, but still one of the Haiti's biggest problems remains the absence of “leadership”. In this sense, we see “political will” in which we can see “love to do the maximum for one's country”. Professor Gerald Murray, an American Anthropologist, who researched in Haiti for ten years (based in Tomazo), presented a paper at the University of Massachusetts-Boston in the early 80's when I was attending this institution as student. He reports that he participated in a project planting one million trees; among them, many that bore fruits. “But what happened next?”, he asked.

When he went back to Haiti few years later, he realized that they've cut down many of them to make charcoal. Why charcoal? Why do Haitian peasants cut down trees to make charcoal? Charcoal constitutes over 80% of burning source of energy in Haiti, and most of all, since most peasants in Haitian can't rely on cash crops when they don't have them either or any Creole pig*, so making charcoal appears to be a substitution for the two in order to survive. For those who have read my first novel, *Sezon sechrès Ayiti* (Season of drought in Haiti), would have a broader picture of this terrible ecological problem killing the Haitian environment.

With hunger that exists in Haiti from time to time, here we see that it's important in any reforestation program to include trees that bear fruits. I have a long list in my own research on the subject (re: “*Kèk plant Creole ak non yo an laten*”). The deforestation problem in Haiti is not something that started out in the 20th century, but rather back in the 19th century when France threatened to retake Haiti (as its colony) if the young Black Republic would not agree to pay an indemnity for the damages caused against France during the Haitian Revolution (see “Agriculture: the first target for Haiti's development”). As I've indicated in this text, Haiti did not have a choice under president Jean-Pierre Boyer; so, it had to start a huge deforestation

campaign of its great forests by cutting down mahogany trees to sell them (abroad) in order to start paying France.

Many of us would say, “hey, it’s important for Haiti to have a ministry of environment”. Well, we would not say some Haitians think wrong if they utter it. Yes, it is important and at the same time, if a minister of environment sits down like a monkey wearing a tie all day long doing nothing, we would have to ask: what on earth is going on? Shouldn’t he have to travel around the country to see its ecological problems, the destruction of the environment, give reports of what he sees, try to invite group of Haitians and foreigners who are trying to do some works (or who have done some works) related to the issue or that would be sensitive to this particular issue?

“In Port-au-Prince, the Minister of Education could make arrangement with the schools once a week where students can go and plant trees. Schools could take turn doing it. A commission would be put up in order to make students become sensitive to the issue, and also to teach them what distance to plant (from one tree to another). I know they would be motivated. Besides all of this, a whole organization would have to take part in this project (such as the police, former forest agents, the Red Cross, etc.”(2).

I even go further in my research and discussions (whether when attending conferences or taking part in on-line discussions) for the public schools in Haiti to take Fridays off in order to do activities with students to make them participate in some projects that would be undertaken by the government (such as: the construction of a school, a clinic, a hospital, visiting some construction sites across the country in order to expose them to Haiti’s reality the way it is, and tell the youngsters that they are responsible as young citizen to participate in the country’s reconstruction and let them know that they will be tomorrow’s leaders), and make them participate in reforestation projects by showing them also how to make nurseries (of plants and vegetables), teach them plants that reproduce through their roots and how our peasants use the moon when planting. All of this has to do with the country’s reality, something that has never been taught in school for real.

There are students born right in Port-au-Prince (the capital city) and have never seen a peanut plant, a yucca plant, and many other Creole plants that exist in Haiti. So, these students are, in a way, foreigners in their own land. All of this is part of Haiti’s schools problems, part of leadership problem,

problem of those who are at the head of something (in any domain) because if an individual is in a leadership position, we believe that he should try to do something positive to help his community, his country or his surrounding.

We think that the big ecological problem in Haiti should concern all Haitians (whether they think about it or not), and we, who are, in Diaspora who have the means (be it financial or the internet to communicate), can play our own part. But, we must work together. Group of people, in Diaspora, who are concerned should be met at least twice a year (in New York, Miami, Boston or Montreal) for conferences, not only to talk about this crucial problem, but also to look at all possible solutions. Among these solutions, we can raise the following questions: What is such and such group is trying to do in their native region in Haiti? Do they try to organize people in their native region in Haiti? How is their native region? Can they go to Haiti with other groups of people to do some work? For instance, I would pretty much like to participate in a team of people who would like to go to Haiti to plant bamboo trees. There are particular areas in Haiti where bamboo trees need to be planted in order to protect the cream of the land when there is big flooding.

**Aristide in past tense : homework to be corrected by Préval,
Haiti's new elected president**
(February 20, 2006)

First, I am not a supporter of any of the presidential candidates who participated in Haiti's recent and peaceful elections but rather a supporter of democracy. In my writings, I usually talk from my heart and from observations of the "Haitian Reality", a subject I've been working on the past four years.

Conscious critics who are familiar with Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Administration would say he has also contributed a great deal to his failure (e.g., if we can go way back to the "*grands mangeurs*"* time" (under Aristide II, the late 90's), and failure to take some good advice into consideration). He pretty much knew how much corruption was going on. "Critics accused Aristide of corruption and despotism during his second

term but he remains popular in the slums...” (Jim Loney and Joseph Guyler Delva).

Anyone who supports the budging of Haiti’s fragile democracy would certainly be against any type of “coup d’état”. But unfortunately, there is clear evidence of an attempt to do an electoral one recently by some members of the Haitian “CEP” (*Conseil Electoral Provisoire*, [The Electoral Council]), together with some invisible hands) by manipulating the votes. Manipulation of the elections results (if the problem wasn’t solved a week after the elections) would only continue to lead Haiti to total chaos, including the possibility of a civil war. The country has been already divided and it would be worse this time. Why did the CEP take so long to publish the final results of these elections when they could have done so in three days as were scheduled to and with the help of technology? People across the country knew about these manipulations that were going on and what was worse, even some presidential candidates running as René Prével’s rivals, recognized him as the winner.

“The people elected Prével. I respect their will,’ Dany Toussaint, a presidential candidate who won about 7,000 of more than 2 million votes cast, said on local radio. ‘I recognize they did not vote for me.’ ...

Other presidential candidates also conceded Prével had won, including Chavannes Jeune, who is running fourth, former Port-au-Prince Mayor Evans Paul, who won just over 2 percent of the vote, and ex-Prime Minister Marc Bazin, who took under 1 percent.

‘A runoff ... would not solve anything,’ Paul said. ‘Let us look for balance in parliament and forget about the second round. That will be proof of political intelligence.’” (Joseph Guyler Delva and Jim Loney, Feb 14 (Reuters))

People who have massively voted in favor of their favorite leader are not stupid when they have been waiting for these results since Friday (three days after the elections). Isn’t it a shame for an institution like the CEP when even presidential candidates, including those who are members of the recent coalition and who were Prével’s rivals were ready to concede his victory?

Going back to Aristide in past tense, too bad his political career ended up in chaos in early 2004 (precisely the end of February) when he was forced to leave power a second time without completing his term (pressured by rebel

groups which had a tremendous psychological impact on him and made him kneeling before the UN for help). But at the same time, we can ask this question: has Aristide ever taken good advice into consideration? If he has, certainly he would avoid the root of the whole problem; for instance, willingness to step down when he was overwhelmed with pressure from the “*Group 184*”^{*} and from the International Community to do so when things were getting real bad in Haiti, beginning of 2004. Insecurity, by the violent armed “*chimères*”^{*} who took the streets, threatened the life of the people. They also ransacked many people’s business and properties which were on top of the list of these chaos.

Also, part of Aristide’s failure has to do a great deal with the legislative elections of 2000 which, in a way, opened the door for his rivals to bombard Lavalas with critics for frauds. “Haiti has experienced a persistent period of political instability since the contested legislative and local elections of May 2000” (Canadian International Development Agency). The intensification of that crisis led to an armed uprising, forcing Aristide to go into exile on February 29, 2004.

Aristide spent so much money for his personal security (\$9 million a year for 60 or so bodyguards provided by an American security firm, The Steele Foundation. Something he did that for about 10 years. Over \$90 millions for a guy’s personal security even when he wasn’t in office (but he still remained in the capital). Millions and millions of dollars were also spent in lobbying some political folks in Washington.

“Haiti’s government while controlled by president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his party, spent \$7.3 million between 1997 and 2002 lobbying the U.S government as more than 80% of the country was impoverished... Haiti’s island neighbor, the Dominican Republic – with a population of 8.4 million – spent \$1.18 million on lobbying for the same period...”(3).

Only \$10 million invested in Agriculture would do so much to help Haitian peasants (since agriculture used to be the main source of income for over 80% of the Haitian population). Responding to an on-line comment where a Haitian educator sees “education” as the primary need for Haiti, I challenge that telling him: *education is an important issue in the development of Haiti, but it depends on how one approaches it*. Haiti is not going to move a step forward without a radical change in agriculture. Can we succeed with literacy while people in Haiti are dying of hunger? Would the mass (the

majority of the population) care about how to read and write when they can not eat, can not get a job, can not have any activity to provide them some cash? The answer is “no”. Now what happen when there is nothing done, trying to put agriculture on its real rails? The answer is: these poor, innocent people fled by thousands (illegally) to the neighboring country, the Dominican Republic, to other parts of the Caribbean, including the famous shores of Miami, taking risks traveling by “*kanntè*”* boats where sharks have devoured many thousands. Wasn’t Haiti one of the best producers of coffee in the Americas (under Estime’s Administration)? The incoming head of state must think about that, putting agriculture back on its rails. Can Haiti have again the flourishing tourist industry of the 50’s, a sector that brings billion of dollars to the neighboring Dominican Republic?

Some people always think that Aristide and Préval are “twin brothers” due to their political ties through the former “Lavalas government”, but at the same time Préval has never been a member of Aristide's Lavalas Family Party (Associated Press, Jan 17, 2006). They have certain things in common, but most Haitians who know about the two brothers will say that they are not real “identical twins”. Will Aristide go back soon to Haiti? The speculation has been circulating and some critics affirm that many of Aristide’s supporters cast their votes for Préval, hoping that he will bring him back from exile. “Some hard-core Aristide supporters in Haiti's slums dream that Préval would bring him back from exile in South Africa. But even many of Aristide's most fervent supporters say they have moved on, and want to start a new political chapter in Haiti's history with Préval, who built roads and schools when he served as president from 1996-2001.” (Susan Milligan, *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 10, 2006). When that question was directed to Préval, his answer was a diplomatic one, referring to the constitution that forbids exile of citizen and he also reported that it all depends on Aristide, not him. At the same time, we can see a sort of ambiguity when Aristide recently declared in an interview with International News Agencies that the date of his return will emerge from consultations among Préval, the United Nations, the Caribbean Community and his host, the South African government.

Préval is not the guy who talks or who likes talking, and there was that slogan when he was in power: “*Y ap pale, l ap travay*” (They are talking, he is working) [those who were talking, criticizing him], he is working). Préval would surprise people working in state jobs (to see if they were on time at work) with his surprised visits, and would sometimes patrol the streets of Port-au-Prince at night (along with the police), something Papa Doc also did

(re: in interview with a Swiss Press). Préval is also known as one of the very few presidents who stayed in Haiti after completing his full term in office (February 7, 1996 - February 7, 2001), and quietly went back to his native province Marmelade and worked with the people such as helping them with reforestation projects.

Certainly, those who supported Aristide (in the past) have cast their votes for Préval in the recent elections. No doubt about it! And “Father Jean-Juste, a close supporter of Aristide who was recently released from prison to travel to Miami for health issue, urged the population to vote for Préval. Since he got elected, the very first thing he must do is fixing the security machine and punish anyone who would try to break it (by setting examples). “Disarmament must go hand-in-hand with social programs” he affirms, in reference to DDR (Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration).

Security for every citizen should be on the slogans from now on to send a strong message to the incoming head of state. Now, in dealing with the security issue, he must disarm all gangs, and making it tough for unauthorized people to circulate freely with firearms. Bandits should hear that message the very first day of his inauguration. If that machine does not get fixed in less than 3 months, not only he new president will fail, but he will also have a pretty bad place in history. “After he is inaugurated on March 29, he will lead a nation where heavily armed street gangs wage gunfights with U.N. peacekeepers, where the rich and poor are divided by mistrust and hatred and where a rash of kidnappings is driving out business owners” (Andrew Selsky, Feb 17 (AP).

In the new administration, he must include credible and qualified people from other parties, and people from the business sector. He wasn't running as “independent” as we know, but at the same time, in order to succeed he must try to reach across party line, a whole rainbow, representing Haiti. The politic of exclusion is one of the things that makes Haiti going backward. It makes sense for someone to hold a high position based on qualification and honesty rather than militancy.

Haiti needs qualified and honest people (despite of their social class, genre, and political affiliation) to work together. We are pretty sure that the South African Nobel Laureate, Bishop Tutu, did not come to Haiti in vain but rather to grasp the opportunity to deliver a message of peace and unity, one

for Haiti's incoming leaders and for every Haitian and as a cure for the country's wounds (going back over two hundred years).

The country is divided (economically, politically and socially). There are so many wounds to be cured quickly and some have been already infected. So, those of us who expect real changes to occur in Haiti to see a head of state who should try to connect everyone to work together for a country and for the benefit of its citizen. I know it is not quite easy to do in a wink of time, but by trying hard as soon as possible can absolutely bring positive results.

Like it or not, the recent elections reflect 'the will of the Haitian people', witnessed by International Community; in other words, they have shown the whole world their determination to vote (for whoever the candidate of their choice) may be, hoping for the changes they expect would better their situation. This 'will', however, must be respected. Their massive participation in these elections clearly showed that they want to finish off with "dictatorships" in order for Haiti to go forward by walking in the path of democracy. A commentator on the well-known Haitian forums "Haitian Politics", Jean-Michel Voltaire (in the three paragraphs quoted below), sends quite a strong message about respecting that 'will', respect that everybody deserves and that everybody, including the president, shouldn't be above the law.

"... It's time that Haitian-political elites respect the will of the people. When the political and business leaders talk about democracy, it appears that they are talking about a government of the elites, for the elites, and by the elites. That's not democracy. That's tyranny. In a democracy, the leaders derive their power directly from the people. They are the representatives of the people and are subject to the will of the people. They are removable from office by the people. So, if someone will not respect the will of the people or think the people are too stupid to make their own decision, we are not talking about democracy.

I have said it before, and will say it again. The Haitian-elites are a minority and must understand that. So, in order for them to gain the presidency, they have to convince the people that they are worthy of their confidence. They cannot claim that they are entitled to lead just because of their wealth or status. Those days are over.

However, the rights of the Haitian-elites must be respected. They should not feel threatened in their own country and should not be harassed. Their property rights must be respected. They are Haitians and must be part of the solution. That's the reason we need to strengthen Haiti's institutions, particularly the judiciary and the police, to equitably enforce the laws. No one, including the President of Haiti, is above the law. If the President commits a crime, he must face justice like any other ordinary citizen. That's what we should advocate, instead of taking arms against one another.”
(Jean-Michel Voltaire, Esq.).

Diplomas and the Haitian graduates' mission

(December 13, 2004)

Well, it's a good idea to have diplomas and I would encourage anyone to go for them. We have been living in a society where the majority of people are illiterate. That has had so far a great impact on that country's development. The more educated people are, the better it would be supposedly for a country, and we can certainly understand why most French would agree with this phrase: “The French are the resources of France ”. But the big questions we may ask are the followings:

- a) What have most of those with many diplomas done for Haiti?
- b) What have most of those with many diplomas contributed to the building of a new Haitian society?

We could go on, and on asking a series of questions pertaining to the issue, an important one if we would like to get deeper and deeper in the mission of the “literate citizen”.

Today, it is not surprising to many of us to hear that “the literate Haitians have contributed mostly to the fall of Haiti”. We could certainly go into details with this issue by developing a whole “philosophy from the Haitian Reality”. A renown Haitian scholar (a man of letters and science), Dr. Jean Metellus, a retired professor of Medicine from the prestigious College de France in Paris and one of Haiti's renown writers, states in his book of

essays (*Haiti une nation pathétique*) that education in Haiti has always been “un cheval de bataille” used by elite to get to power (in the sense that once getting there, they would do great things about it – quite a nice promise to get votes and people's attention, but as soon as they get there they don't perform it).

When one starts reading The 1987 Haitian Constitution, oh Lord! It's so beautiful! And anyone who happens to know a little bit about The First Independent Black Country in the world would say “Gee! These people are quite advanced democratically ” particularly when reading these sections on education(4) (see *articles: 32, 32-1, 32-2, 32-3, 32-9, 32-10, 33* in “notes”).

Well, some Haitian critics may say that it's still early because this Constitution is not yet 100% observed because of the power of darkness that still reigns over the sacred land of Dessalines after the Duvalier's Dynasty. In other words, military dictatorships, internal warfare, civilian dictatorship, *caudillismo**, and a whole reign of terror within the concept of “power of darkness”.(5).

The questions in point “1” and “2” should be our focus, and they are also questions for any individual with diplomas to take a moment to reflect on them. Nothing wrong and absolutely wrong when you go to school, you work hard to get a diploma or diplomas in any discipline. But, what are you going to do vis-à-vis your community or your country in this sense after receiving them? Are you just going to hang them on your house, office walls to impress people? It's good that you have certain qualifications and it's also good for people to know about it, but what is your vision in the sense of changing your community /your country for the best with all the knowledge that you've acquired?

Our Haitian society has been quite a selfish one, and I should say with no doubt that our scholars have contributed a great deal to the underdevelopment of our country, and to all of its chaos. This is not something new to some of us who have been trying very hard to tell the truth, even if it is risky sometimes. If we go back in history, it has been the same old song, the same tango since after Haiti's independence where when most Haitian scholars after returning from Europe did nothing that would change our society or have a positive impact on it. They've have been a

“good-for-nothing elite” with neither a short-term nor a long-term vision for the country's development.

Scholars most take position or side when their country is in danger. Their voice must be heard when their countries are facing chaos. Haiti is in chaos today under “a third visual occupation” and the saddest part of it, the year of its bicentennial of independence when everyone should have united to celebrate with joy and love such an event. So far, nobody knows for sure how long it will last or what it will bring and what impact it will have on our future generations. At this moment we can only guess and keep on guessing.

If we are an occupied nation today, truly it is not of the U.S, Canada and France's fault but rather the fault of some of our scholars, some our brothers and of many of our politicians or the so-called “leaders” who have invited them to do so in the first place for their own interests. But at the same time, they (those who have invited them) are embarrassed in a way because of their prior expectations. Now if they are smart enough, they must reflect on the taste of an occupation. Quite a wrong bet! It is not the Haitian peasants' fault, the beggars, the little vendors, the illiterates, the innocent children who are sleeping in the streets of Port-au-Prince, the little *restavèk* or servant children who have been in-house slaves across the country all their lives or all of the underdogs who are also members of our corrupted society. It's not their fault at all for they can neither read nor write. They have never been to school. They can't go to Washington to lobby in English. They can't speak neither French nor English to be in touch with the International Community that pretends to help Haiti through the powerless U.N. But they are not blind. They've been experiencing on a daily basis the Haitian Reality. They see things with their naked eyes. They can only express themselves behind closed doors with some of their close friends or neighbors.

What do most of our scholars do today in the process of decolonizing Haiti as our forefathers have done two hundred years ago? The answer is nothing and a absolutely nothing. This is the reality right here in front of us, a mirror in which we are looking at ourselves, and a part of the Haitian Reality. Who can talk about the morgue's condition of Haiti's General Hospital (where hundred of bodies are in putrefaction; among them, bodies of many innocent citizen who have been gunned down this year, bodies of those who died because of lack of medical care)? If only that morgue could talk... if only these ravines with headless corpses around Port-au-Prince neighborhoods could talk... if only the skinny and hungry dogs that are strolling up and

down the streets days and night in search of some meat-less bone could talk... if only those silent witnesses could let us and the whole world hear their shocking voices of what they have perceived... If only God could talk directly to us, telling us the whole truth... Who can talk about violation of human right that has been going on since the beginning of March of 2004? Who can talk about innocent children who are sleeping in the streets that group of armed bandits kill for no reason in a clean-up process? Who can talk about the condition of the prisoners who've been there since March and have never seen a judge? Who can talk about the real mission of the U.N soldiers, parading the streets of Port-au-Prince and other parts of the country? Are they really doing something to help the people when Port-au-Prince has become a new Baghdad or are they just there for vacations, enjoying the good weather of the country and have all types of fun? What happen to all those people with many diplomas from big universities abroad? Those who also reside in Diaspora? Are they dead? Are they blind? Can they talk? Can they think? Can they really write? Merry occupation to those who have welcomed it! And Happy New Year 2005 to all those who are thinking about Haiti 's political labyrinth and the best way to get out of it.

***D.P.M-Kanntè* by Jan Mapou : a bridge between fiction and reality**

*D.P.M –Kanntè** is a beautiful piece of drama that Jan Mapou gives to the National Theatre, a whole new dimension. This work is a piece in the plight of the Haitian people who are going to look for better life abroad, but one that destroys their dream. *D.P.M.-Kanntè* is a tragicomedy; it is tragic and comic at the same time. Though what this play depicts has to do with general Raoul Sedras' coup (and the last one by the army), the artist, Jan Mapou traces indirectly a story that goes back to Papa Doc's (Duvalier) regime where the *macoutes** were persecuting the people. First, we see that philosophy in the captain, brother Matyas, a *macoute, zenglendo** himself pretending to be a newborn Christian but as the Haitian saying says, "A dog who used to eat eggs never breaks from his habit". Matyas' heart has been changed. He is a man with no heart for the poor, a hard hearted-man who only knows his pocket.

Mapou continues to show how the *zenglendos* of the army were persecuting these boat people throughout the story that each one is telling during the trip. It is truly a historical painting of the *September 30 Coup*(6). Mapou also shows a type of “union” that exists during the voyage: each person is telling their own story. Each one shows their religion and manifest their belief without any prejudice where one respects the other's; for instance, those who are invoking God, *Simbi**, *Mèt Agwe**... to come to their rescue when are between the road of death and life. We can retrace these beliefs through the songs, by Kiki Wainwright*, which play a significant role in this book. But despite of their beliefs, we are going to see in the sixth part of the book that nobody can stop destiny's horse when it's running. This horse's bridle is in God's hand.

It is in these parts that the tragedy is really found where everyone is going to perish, with the exception of a toddler whose mother has just given birth to. That is the central point of the play here where many critics may wonder: why does Jan Mapou create this miracle at the end of the play? I believe here, there are many interrogation marks a critic can put after the seventh part, the last scene. But, as I already said, we have no power over “destiny”.

D.P.M-Kanntè is a form of literature that I would like to see real writers, Haitian artists produce in the Creole language, a literature that has muscle, one that is strong and live and one that has good spices. This play, with no doubt, will become a classic. I would suggest that it is translated to English right away for a larger audience, including all critics about it. This, I guarantee it, is a book that can be used in courses related to “Caribbean Studies”, “Caribbean Literature”, “Haitian Studies”, “Black Studies”... I wish the author good luck and that I wish that he continues producing other beautiful plays in the Haitian language.

Is it Creole that is mistreating some Haitian women or some Haitian men who are mistreating them?

“Is the Creole language going to continue mistreating Haitian Women?”. This is the title of an article by Masyana Loko that appeared in the newspaper *Ayiti Fanm* (Vol. 6, #23, Sept. 1996). Immediately after I

finished reading this article, I saw that it was necessary to make some clarifications for readers who may misinterpret the Creole language in the way the author wrote it. She started the article this way:

“Many women in the country are working to support the Creole language, to make it respected as a full fledged language but Creole does not respect the women”.

From this phrase “but Creole does not respect the women”, the author creates a problem where some readers may interpret it like she was blaming the language. Further down, we are going to find some “contradictions” where the author is going to talk about the positive sides: “We find women who are directors, secretaries who are writing Creole in administration, organizations:

“We find women journalists who are writing in the [Ayiti Fanm](#), [Fanm Ouvriyèz](#) newspapers, as well as in other periodicals; we find women who are publishing poetry books. Many women who are working hard in all radio stations. There are others who are working in literacy programs or who are teaching daily. Women use the Creole language to change the society; they are saying important things in Creole. So here, it's clear in this situation to see the use of the Creole language (the positive sides that they are using)”.

But if we go on, we will see that Loko is going to criticize the language, by blaming or minimizing it (the way some critics may interpret it): “a violent language with women”, “A language that can give the right to mistreat women”. First, language is a means to communicate, and the Creole language is the native language of all Haitians. That is, it's in this language that Haitians feel more at ease to communicate a message. Even Dr. Jean Metellus, one of the greatest writers in Haitian literature (who writes in French) and also a well-known figure in medical science who has been living in France for over four decades, an individual who have received many literary prizes makes this statement:

“A language is simple instrument of inter human communication, a tool more or less effective, more or less adapted to such and such task. Often times, I notice myself either by talking or writing that I don't succeed in transmitting easily in French the essence or the juiciness of certain Haitian stories that I lived, that I know in Creole, and it would be enough that I tell these stories in Creole to a countryman so that they find again all their

flavor in my mouth and their charms to the ear of my confederate.” (*Haiti une nation pathétique*, pp. 235 – English translation: E. W. Védrine).

So, a language may be considered as a car but it depends on the driver driving it (whether he is a good or bad one). If he is a good driver, he will do his best to avoid accident, to avoid making all bad turns in order not to fall into holes or go down any cliff. Language, in general has nothing wrong, but it depends on how people may be using it. Loko continues:

“If a language serves to communicate, it also serves to forbid, for lie and bluff, to demolish, to destroy. With the exception of 2, 3 Creole poems some home writers who celebrate the beauty and the courage of the women, the Creole language is being scorn a lot; it offends them; it yells at them as if it hates them.”

Here again, Loko continues to blame the Creole language that is innocent instead of analyzing the problem of “education” within the Haitian society. What do I mean by ‘education’? Here, I am not referring to people who don't know how to read and write though that is part of the “education problem in Haiti”, but it's more about the behavior of some people in the society. There are people who have been to school, who have gotten degrees after degrees whereas they are not educated for the way in which they act with others or the way they are behaving in society. On the contrary, one can find poor men and women who are illiterate but educated in the way they speak to people (showing respect for them), in the way they act with others or through the wisdom that they show.

Many times, people who had the chance to attend school in Haiti feel that they are better than those who did not have the chance attending school, those who did not get far in school or who don't speak French. In the Haitian society, there are many negativities and what is worse is that its people who had the chance to attend school who behave the worst. When talking to a peasant (specially if he notices that you went to school, or you are from the urban areas, he would take his hat off to greet you, he would speak to you with such a wisdom and sweetness whereas it's would be rare for people from urban areas to behave in this way.

The negative critics by Masyana Loko on the Creole language in her article has a “colonial influence”. So, we must be careful when writing, when doing some critics in order not to influence or to fall into the colonial traps (or to

be careful so that the colonial current don't carry us away). First, it's has always been the colonizers who showed the slaves that all that is belonging to them is inferior (e.g., their language and culture). The Haitian bourgeoisie, an overly submissive one, bootlickers, a shameless and an irresponsible one worsens things where they show all that is good must come from Europe. We have been already victim in this sense, in what some Haitians are writing in books, what people are writing on Haiti, books that are being used in schools with no focus on the Haitian reality. The important thing is that we must become conscious of who we are, where we came from or we must go back in history to analyze again the philosophy of the "Indigenous Movement"* , what some writers, ethnologists such as Jacques Roumain* , Dr. Jean Price-Mars* , etc... were trying to do during the "First American Occupation" in terms of "decolonization" through their writings.

In the third part of Loko's article, she quickly takes a look at a Creole dictionary to see what they say about "women" where she says:

"Starting from the Creole dictionary you see it's 2 loads, 2 measures in the society. Let's take the example of *Diksyonè Kreyòl-Fransè* L. Peleman wrote and published in *Bon Nouvèl Éditions*: when you look up 'fanm' (woman), the first word you find is '*Bèl fanm, bèl malè!*...' (Beautiful woman, beautiful danger).

Here again, I believe there are some clarifications needed to be made. "*Bèl fanm, bèl malè*" is just a proverb. The proverbs have not been invented by a person or some people. We have been hearing them since birth. That's why they are also called "*pawòl granmoun*" or old people's idioms (proverbs). They don't have authors but have been developed in the way the society is developed. Some of them may also appear at an international level; for example, some of them came from Latin and may have gone through other languages and they remain there, but there are proverbs that exist only in a given culture. It's true in the Creole language there are some proverbs that appear to be negative about women or men such as the followings:

Lang fanm pa gen dimanch (Women's tongue has no Sunday) [They talk all the time with break]

Fanm se manje kwit (Women are cooked food)

Fanm se machann lèt (Women are milk vendors) [They talk a lot]

Krab di si se gason ki mare l li va sove, si se fanm li pral nan chodyè (The crab says if he tied by a man he can scape, if tied by a woman he's going to the pan)

Fè nèg byen, se Bondye ou bat (Doing good to the black man is beating God)

Nèg pa vle nèg fè byen (Negroes don't like negroes doing well)

Nèg te rayi nèg depi nan Ginen (Negroes hated negroes since in Africa)

But in reality, it's the colonizers who developed a series of negative things that were passed on from generations to generations in the Haitian culture because when take for instance Haitian peasants who are working together in “*konbit, eskwad, bout kadè*” (collective works in the field) one is helping another; this shows that since from Guinea people liked one another, that people used to work together. That also shows the idea of “collectivity” that Haitian peasants inherit from their African ancestors when analyzing their culture. But also we should not forget that if we, Haitians, hate one another today, if we can't work together, if we don't try to help another (who is) in need, we have been caught in the colonizer's trap. They are the one who have sowed the seeds of division among the slaves who were swat up in Saint-Domingue in the advantage of European countries. At that time if some slaves, a slave family would speak the same language, they would separate them, sending them to plod away on other plantations, sell them to other colonizers, a way to cut off all linguistic contact among them. The idea of “division” is clear here: a “divide to conquer” philosophy and it was not the slaves who created it. The colonizers did it because they've already foreseen what the slaves could do if they are united, plot they could put up against them if they could communicate in the same language. The proof is clear today in the last slave revolts that have become a success and that ended up in November 18, 1803* and gave birth to January 1, 1804*. As the Haitian saying says “*ou pa konn kote dlo soti li antre nan bwa joumou*” (miracles are hard to explain but they happen). Here, we must appreciate the Creole language, a language of revolt (for us who feel “Haitians”), a language of “liberation” (liberation that Dessalines gave us free of charge), and the native language of Haiti.

We must love this language the same way we love ourselves, a sweetheart that we are in love with, from time to time we feel that we would cherish that love one. In this sense, we must be careful when talking about the Creole language, when we are using it to try to get rid of “negative aspects” of the Haitian society, when we are analyzing the sources that have a very strong colonial influence.

Loko continues to write on the Creole language by saying:

“When we look up the qualificative adjectives found to describe women, it's something to must give us nausea: stupid women, greedy women, stingy women, trap women, crooked women, seductive women. Women are daggers, shards... so the way the saying says it: Women and dog are the same thing”.

But these qualificatives are used by some people. It does not mean that all men use them against women. Or we can say “*Ti pwason suiv kouran*” (The small fish follows the current). But we must not blame the Creole language. That's an innocent child. However, we must denounce things that are not good in the Haitian society, and critic all of its negative aspects in order to bring positive changes.

People can express anger in all languages and it's in the native language a person expresses it best when is in anger regardless of their nationality.

“We are not against the French language. In fact the more languages people can speak, the better it would be for them but the native language first. Do French, Dutch, Americans.. reject their language to adopt someone else's? The native language is something natural, and there are circumstances where it quickly appears first. Do we remember what happened to Caesar, the Roman emperor? When he saw Brutus among the assassins who attacked him, he was stun. They always pretend that he said it in Latin: “*Tu quoque filii*” (you are among them too, my son!). But according to another version, Caesar pronounced this phrase in Greek: “*Kai su teknon*”. Greek was his first language” (*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine*, pp. 32 - English translation by E. W. Védrine).

Mango Dyesifò says:

“There's an American journalist, Edith Efron who says 'when a Haitian is angry, he needs to roar, he is going to use Creole, even that's an educated person.’. (Gramè Kreyòl Védrine, pp. 32 - English translation by E. W. Védrine).

So, it's not a question some Haitian men use the Creole language to roar at women or the French language to court them because there are Haitian women who expect men to play would-be lady killers, and to approach them speaking French. If men don't court them in French, they may just walk away. They can even be labeled as “rude” even when you may be a very

educated person. So, some Haitian men take free rides on that because they know the reality of their culture. But the truth is oil, it will always remain on the water's surface. When real love is taking place as between two people, we can guess which language will be the dominant one. Creole, evidently! Not the voltairian language among native speakers of Creole.

Creole is not “a violent language with women” nor “a language that gives men the green light to mistreat women”. If we go further in Loko's article, we'll see indirectly that she wants to talk about a problem dealing with “communication” (more between women and men). This problem is something serious among some people in the Haitian society (in Haiti as well in the Diaspora) despite of their social class. When talking about “violence”, many people seem to lean more on its physical side where some Haitian men physically abuse women, where people would see more fistfight but we must also analyze it through the use of “harsh language” and when referring to ‘language’, it does not matter whether we are using Creole, English or French, but rather what is coming out from the conversation, how men or women are expressing their anger. Often when one starts to roar, the other person does not calm down and if it is a man who likes to physically abuse women, who has no respect for them, the first thing he sees that he has to do is raising his hand on them to show that he wears pants (specially in Haiti where some men abuse women in this case since there are no laws punishing them as it is the case in countries such as the United States, Canada etc... though there are some Haitians men who continue to cause “violence” in the Diaspora in this sense and there are already many registered cases where some women have been victims in places like Miami, New York, Boston, Canada, etc.

“The economic factor” comes to play an important role in the issue (both in Haiti and in the Diaspora). The problem appears to be worse for women in Haiti, where they are obliged to sleep with the boss or supervisor (many times) either to get a job or to assure their position. Here, it's not a question of “prostituting as a career” in order to blame women as if it were a vice or to satisfy their libido. Many women in Haiti (either married, lived with a man, have an affair somehow with a married man, have a man with whom they have sexual relations are living on the account of a man (who is working, who has a business, a financial activity somehow). This man sometimes realizes that the fact he is the one who is helping or taking care of this woman, he can do whatever he wants with her (such as beating her and disrespecting her for anything). In this case, “violence” can be worse where

a series of men can look at women as “sexual objects”. The man would continue abusing her and she would get stuck in an economic dead-end where if she would react, this man may no longer help her or just drop her.

The trace of this problem reappear in the Diaspora (among some men) if they are the one who are bringing home the bacon, when they are one who are paying the rent and other bills in the house and if they are the one who give the women her green or alien card, forget it! To be very precise, I say “some men” because; it's not all who do it and also when but don't forget when people go abroad they also takes their culture with them (be it the positive and negative aspects of it). Also, sometimes, by lack of “education” (which is not limited to only attending school), either the woman or the man sees that s/he has to express his/her anger. When both are angry, that may turn out to be “gas” and “fire” in the house and that can ignite all types of “violence”.

In the forth part of Loko's article, that's where she is going to touch on the nucleus of the “contradiction” that appears in her article where it seems that she would remove the load from the Creole language's shoulder when saying: “What causes it, who is responsible?”. It's here she is going to show the Creole language as a “tool” or we can say a “medium” where Loko says:

“The Creole language is a tool for people to communicate. It is not responsible for the dirty words that are being said about women”.

But here again, she should have said “dirty words that are being said about women”, a way to hold on to the language's “innocence”.

In this part, she focuses on the men who always have the power, who are leading, who are writing, who are to say a few words, who are making speech, who are saying whatever they want, that makes the languages says what they want but according to Loko, the feminist women inside the Women Movement say that things cannot go on like that, women must say their own words. But Loko continues to blame the Creole language (indirectly) instead of concentrating on how some people in the society use it where She says:

“Creole is a violent language because it's a sexist language, it's a language that speaks ill of women and that talks on love issue as if it were a fight that men lead against women. Creole says : 'peze yon fanm, kraze l, frape l,

koupe, taye l, plimen l, konyen l, deboudare l' (all these idioms have to do with “screwing the woman”).

Here again, we cannot make the Creole language responsible the way Loko presents it in her text. Little by little, a language develops, the words are having other meanings, new words are entering the language. Sometimes that takes place at one time. There are words that develop from a popular song, or some carnival songs that were popular...

For example, if we are looking at these words and phrases:

“Banbòch demokratik, Bourik Chaje, brasa wouj, dechoukay, dechouke, douchoukè, Dizyèm Depatman, eleksyon bidon, eleksyon fo mamit, eleksyon maskarad, eleksyon tèt chat, fo kòk, gouvènman lavalas, ipokrit yo sezi, ke makak, ke makak la kase, Kòk kalite, lavalas, magouy, magouyè, Manman poul la, Mistè Klin, pentad, Pèlebren, rache manyòk, rechouke, se pa pou lajan non, woulo konpresè, zenglendo”, “Leksik Creole: ekzanp devlopman kèk mo ak fraz a pati 1986 /Creole lexicon: example of some words and phrases developed from 1986”)*.

When looking at these new terms and the extension they have in the 80's and 90's that shows a linguistic phenomenon, a whole evolution that we Haitians who speak Creole as native speakers don't have any control over

The same way these verbs mean the same thing, that also how it exists in any other language. It's more a question of “vulgarism” and “euphemism”. But there are always ways in which people use the language: what type of “language” that is being used in some situations, where, with whom, and why. If we were to turn the pages of a French slang dictionary to look up synonyms for “to fuck”, we would find quite a bunch. We would be stunned at how many we would find.

In using a language with “softness”, ‘euphemism’ plays an important role to “neutralize” some words that some people would consider “vulgar”. But don't forget also, even a series of words that some people would consider vulgar are part of the language’s lexicon. Though some of these verbs (with sexual connotations that appear to be vulgar to certain people or to be used in a certain circle) would appear to be vulgar (to certain people or circle), we cannot say we must remove them from the Creole language or to reduce the

Creole language by banning their use). Again, it depends on who is talking to who and where.

The Creole language, as many Haitian researchers would agree, does not appear to be a “sexist language” the way Masyana Loko sees it, but the word “sexist” in her article seems to have another meaning for the author. It seems that she would see through it a series of words relating to “sex” instead of a “linguistic dominance” that can be at the same time “psychological”. If she would see it like so, it's not it (100%) because in all languages one will find words that are related to “sex” but what is important is analyzing the way people use the language (will in any circumstance, “dirty words”, “obscenities” come out in order to express “anger”, “violence”, “disrespect”?)

The Creole language has “equality” in it where we cannot say like the French: “*Le masculin emporte sur le féminin*” (the masculine pronoun takes over feminine's) and that has a “psychological impact” if we are getting into deep analysis: is it only grammatically speaking (in the French language or in the French culture)? When looking at the French grammar, even if there are “99 women, and a single man” it's always “*ils*” (masculine plural) that is always used as personal pronoun whereas when looking at the Creole grammar, “*li*” makes men and women equal, “*yo*” (the plural form of ‘*ils*’) mix both in order to show “*union*” between the masculine and the feminine sex. In this case, the Creole language cannot be considered as a “sexist language”. I must say also that the French grammar, when grammarians were writing the grammatical rules, women did not have their say. It was until later one is going to see some women who became members of the French Academy. If we are looking at the French language in Canada (the province of Quebec), well feminists ask that there be some changes done in the grammar because they see the French language as one that appears to be too “sexist”...

I believe that it would be better for Loko to analyze the Haitian society as a “sexist” one (in reference to the dominance of a particular sex), a society where men dominates instead of making the Creole language guilty). The important thing in her article is that she is trying to show how women are victims in the society within a linguistic context where some men take a free ride on that in order to nourish “violence against women” but, the style she chooses to send that message has contradictions in it where any real critic would concentrate more on the Creole language that she makes responsible.

Loko continues:

“The whole society is responsible when continues to accept discrimination against women that we find in the language, the same way we find in the work place, in education, in the house, and everywhere”.

Here, it's clear; we can see things that are needed to be done in the society in order to better the conditions, discuss this problem (through the media), criticize it, but we must go further again because the problem of “violence” can exist through the “language” that is being used whatever the country: developed, underdeveloped, rich or poor countries. Here again, we can go back to the word “education” to redefine it. “Can we take away from the violence done against women in the language?” is a last question that Loko raises where she comes up with some answers that show how since we've been a child we see a comparison between woman and man.

Finally, Loko see “traditional education in Haiti” as something very “sexist”. She continues to talk about how the leaders are responsible also to make the necessary change; for example, she emphasizes on a series of texts that would appear “sexist”, that would minimize women, that should have been revised and corrected before even publish them and finally, Loko puts emphasis on the government's signature in the “Beijing Platform” that requires the establishment of “non sexist society”.

**Strategies to solve some problems
in the advantage of Haiti's development
(Winter 2000)**

Talking about ‘solving some problems’, we have already a bunch of problems that Haiti has been facing. First, we can emphasize a lot on two in some ways the situations can be changed. We want to refer to “consciousness” and “organization”.

“Consciousness” would not be a difficult word for us to define; immediately, we see “becoming conscious” in it and we can be conscious of ourselves as Haitians. We have a flag to defend, to be conscious of all the country's problems and what we can do as citizen. What we can do as positive for the

development of Haiti? Can we create a model for others to follow? With all our experiences, shouldn't we “return to the community” to help others who are behind? Are Haiti's problems mine? Would others make a “positive stereotype” of me if Haiti had a “positive image”? – a whole bunch of questions to become conscious of who we are and what we can do to change our country's “negative image”.

In “organization”, all groups that are supposed to organize themselves and the question we may ask is: Can Haitians succeed in organizing themselves (in all domains) without any “silly fights”? The answer to this question lies within itself and in this answer, if they think of its positive side, they will realize that it is one of the important points to move Haiti forward.

In this idea also, it is the whole professional group that we aim at, where they can even register themselves under an organization's flag, but the central point in this sense should be a “vision for Haiti 's development”.

The term “organization” would appear global at all angles where we can think of students, doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, researchers, shoemakers, architects, nurses, truck drivers... professionals (in all domains), people who are practicing a trade somehow. Some problems that hinder the “organization”:

- a. *Lack of dynamism*
- b. *Selfishness*
- c. *Narrow minded*
- d. *Absence of a model*

In point “a”, *lack of dynamism*, the individual is living “from day to day” without a well organized plan in his mind of what he thinks of achieving in ten years, in what level he likes to be at within a specific period of time. Here, immediately, we can notice the “progress” aspect, where we see the individual does not have any idea of it in his mind or what he would like to achieve.

In point “b”, we can clearly see the notion of *selfishness*: “I attend that level in the society, I don't need anyone to reach at my level in order not to compete with me” or “I stay within my clan”. Here, some people or small groups who think like that separate themselves from other groups, in the

advantage of the country's underdevelopment. It's "me" who dominates instead of "we" that is the central point.

In point "c", 'narrow minded' or what is called *lespri koridò* in Creole, we know that 'koridò' is a very narrow alley. Therefore, the individual thinking is quite narrow; he doesn't have a vision to see further (positively) and this sometimes makes him selfish. His mind is quite limited or we can even call it "a small mind".

In the "absence of a model", we see that there is not a "model of leadership", or a path that was already designed to follow. And if by chance there was a model, a well-structured one, that way it disappears because it lacks the foundation of a real base to facilitate the transition. It's like seeds that are not germinated because they fell in bad areas.

What's the solution to all of these problems? —

To solve a problem, the first thing we ought to do is reading it, reflect on it to find the solution. It's like a doctor who is going to a surgery; he doesn't just examine the patient and says he is going to operate on that patient but he first does a diagnostic, and he has a series of procedures to follow in order to become familiar with the disease. That is, we, who are more or less at a level to understand Haiti's situation, first it would be crucial to become conscious (in each domain) and then look with what precision we can come.

If we are teachers, well we must try to group ourselves in a "teachers' association" and when we group ourselves, we become stronger because we will be meeting from time to time to discuss the problems that we are facing, problems that students are facing, problems that children who cannot go to school are facing, problem of school materials that students' parents don't have money to buy, teachers that need to be trained before they begin to teach, salary problem that needs to be adjusted, problem of transportation that students are facing, organizing fieldtrips for students to learn to travel throughout the country, production of teaching materials, organization of book fairs at least once a year in order to know what is available, which ones are being used in schools and also think about what we can call "a practical school", where after the student attended a level, he is able to help himself in the society in which he is living and what possible strategies to solve all of these problems.

These same ideas can be applicable to all other professionals but in all of them should exist a common point: “Haiti 's development at the maximum”. That way, some of the country's problems can be solved quickly when the engine of the “consciousness” car functions well.

**Doing research :
problem and solution for Haitian students
(both in Haiti and in the United States)**

Why do people do research? People can do research for many reasons: to write a book, an article, a dissertation, a thesis or to present on a subject related to a particular theme.

One of the problems that we have in schools in Haiti is that they don't train students in this domain. So, students are only studying by heart, repeating everything after the teacher without developing their brain in order to be able to criticize and to create. Most schools in Haiti don't have a “resource center” where they keep documents and books that would give access to students to do research. Some private schools that have small libraries, but the question is: do students who attend these schools really have access to them? Contrary to Haiti, in the United States each school has a library (regardless of that it's level: primary, secondary and college) that facilitates teachers and students to do research.

The type of documents found in these school libraries are books that are being used as textbooks within these schools, and all types of documents to do research. Some schools in the United States (primary and secondary level) have a particular schedule where students can spend time in the school library to investigate, to work on their homework or on a particular project.

Talking about “library”, each zone should have had a public one. For example, if we take the capital city “Republic of Port-au-Prince”, a student in Kafou would not need to go all the way down to *Bibliyotèk Nasyonal* (The National Library) to do research or go there to read a book. There could have been a public library in *Kafoufèy, Dèlma, Kafou, Petyonvil, Bapedchoz, Bèlè, Site Solèy, Tijo...* that has a central system connected to the central library the way it's done in the United States (within a city). For example, one could borrow a book in Kafoufèy and return it in Dèlma.

With the advancement of technology, it gives more access to students in the United States in the area of research. For instance, in these school libraries, one will find computers that classify materials (their location, who have borrowed what, who has what, etc...) even before a student looks for a book or document, he can check the computer to see whether someone has borrowed it or not. If they have borrowed this book, the student has an idea when it will be returned. Students also have access to a series of “active videos” that can be used for research.

Can schools in Haiti imitate the schools of the “developed countries”? The answer is “yes”. Many times when (they are) talking about ‘developed countries’, many Haitians think they would need many millions of green dollars in Haiti or they would have to be a “blan” in order to do a series of simple things. One of the problems that many Haitians who are so-called “literate” have is one that has to do with “mentality” which contributes a great deal to the underdevelopment of Haiti; they don't believe in themselves even if they have attended a university level; for any little thing, they believe that it has to be done by a “blan” (foreigner). This inferiority complex they have is clear in the country's underdevelopment. We must start out with another mentality, one to respond to challenges, and also one to make us able to create. At this time, they will say “Haitians are intelligent!”. Even what you do may appear to be mediocre (in the eyes of some people), but the essential point is that you are the one who did it in order to show others that you don't totally depend on them. As long Haitians cannot think that way, they are not yet full-fledged human being.

In the same absence of these things needed in schools in Haiti, we must not forget also the responsibility of the Haitian government. What is the role of the government in Haiti 's development? At the level of the public schools, it must be appropriate for the government to take that in charge to give the students access to what they need as we can read in a series of articles in the 1987 Constitution that are related to “education”. (re: *articles: 32, 32-1, 32-2, 32-3, 32-9, 32-10, 33*. See “notes” #4).

These articles are very beautiful; we could have framed them and put them on each classroom's wall in Haiti to remind us of the government responsibility, but the irony behind them is that they always remain at the theory level or they appear as an illusion to conscious Haitians who would like to see these words become a reality. They remain an illusion because

there is not yet a real “education policy” in Haiti, a budget to invest in the area of education and research. Other things that need to be done is that everyone who is working in the area of education should think of what type of change they want inside this system that has a cancer. That requires “organization” (between teachers, regular meetings to discuss the problem and how they are going to try to find a solution to it). Teachers must organize themselves, and continue to do so in order to claim their rights, cry out loud in the government's ears in order to hear their voice, and then let the government know its role in this issue, ask the government to come with changes because that is their duty, the way the constitution requires it.

Also, we must not forget that there exist a bunch of brains that are being wasted in Haiti; we can say that they are gold in the streets. What they need is just a help from the government to do simple mini-research that would contribute to Haiti’s development. We can take example of many thousands of students who have completed “*bakaloreya*” (last grades of secondary schools) and who are hanging out in the streets. Imagine that the government would have a series of technical institutes for them to conduct research. Young Haitians would not take long to compete with scientists of the so-called “developed countries”. Haitian negroes have already proven their competence in the schools of ‘developed countries’. What is only needed in Haiti to do the transition is “access” and the government's participation in this case is the key to start.

The real development of Haiti in all sense depends only on Haitians (in Haiti and those in Diaspora). In this case, whatever type of government that may be in power, they must have a politics to encourage the participation of Haitians in the Diaspora in order to contribute to the country's development. And there are Haitians in Diaspora who are ready to do that, but what hold them up is the call of a serious Haitian government for that to be a full success.

These types of change don't require many million of dollars the way many Haitians would put it, a way for the basic changes to never take place; there must be serious politicians, there must not be *gran manjè** or a *polisyen dyòl bòkyè* (a worthless politician). Haiti needs serious people in the government in order to advance things. Those who want changes must continue to claim their rights, revive the popular organizations to back them up in the objectives that they are trying to reach.

The other big problem that exists in the research issue is “finding documents” on Haiti. When I say 'documents', what kind? Books, journals, articles, reviews, videos, etc... All are documents that can be used to do research. For example, many of the Haitian newspapers are not registered in any library in order to find copies of them to read important articles for research on some particular themes. Many of them are not even on “micro fish” the way it's done with American newspapers. Micro fish is a device having a screen like a computer screen to read the newspapers. This newspaper is registered, taking the form of a camera film rolled on a spool. Once putting it in this device, one is able to read the newspaper without any problem.

Newspapers can be one of the easiest sources to be used in doing research. Why? There are daily, weekly and monthly newspapers. That way, they may cover an event, some articles on a particular even right away. An author would take more time to write a book on a particular event; if you subscribe to a newspaper, you'll, of course, read first about the event before a book is being published on it. That's the reason why it is important for us, who want to do research, to subscribe to newspapers and literary reviews. After reading them, it would not be a good idea to just throw them away; on the contrary, it would be better to pile them up in a place or cut some particular articles from them and put them away; maybe they can be helpful to a friend who is doing research.

When reading newspapers or when subscribing to a particular newspaper, it is always a good idea to try to read at least two different one. For instance, one can find some Haitian newspapers that report on something where they present it with a different point of view; however readers or researchers should be at the level to compare and contrast the source of information, the depth of the validity of the information. Sometimes, there are newspapers that can present something in the form of fiction (that is not real), and lies that can be included in that article. Here, it would appear to be more of a fantasy making people laugh instead of convincing the reader, specially if the latter knows part of the truth about it.

Doing research sometimes appears to be something extraordinary to some Haitians whereas it's something very simple. Many times, for some Haitians, once they hear about “research”, right away they think about “developed countries”, things are being done by white people. But in reality, it is just training students to do research, strategies and tools needed and

where to apply theories and practice at the same time. That, in a way, develops the student's mind in order to interpret, compare, criticize and then create. It is important for that to be done at all levels: elementary, middle, high school and college level. It is one of the intellectual exercises to help students progressing.

Another method we can also use in doing research is interview. We may have difficulties sometimes to find documents on the theme that we are researching, but the important thing is trying to know the specialists in this area and then interview them, learn from them and then report. An important tool to have is cassette recorder. After the interview, we can sit down to write the transcript.

Finally, the issue of doing research is important in all domains and at all levels. Because of someone who has done research on something somehow, we are able to benefit from it today. Doing research is a humanitarian task. Let's encourage, train young Haitians in Haiti as well as in the Diaspora to do research, research to let others know that we also have a brain, research to be proud of ourselves as the first independent black nation in the world and research for the development of Haiti, our mother country.

Working harder to bridge the generation gap
(March 2006)

This is quite an important question when thinking about The Haitian community in Diaspora: Who are going to be the tomorrow's leaders if nothing is being done now in trying to help young Haitian Americans and in trying to reach them out by all possible means?

Following the tireless works of Nekita Lamour*, a well-known essayist who has been publishing in different newspapers and scholarly journals, and one of the very few Haitian women theologians who has done so much for the Greater Haitian community of Massachusetts the past thirty years. To avoid singling out leaders in that sense, we can guess that Haitians who are members of other communities in the Diaspora can point out some other leaders of that caliber, who belong to the older generation, in helping doing that important job trying to reach out our youth to help preparing them to take over tomorrow.

In one recent post on Haitian online forum, Lamour wrote:

“I strongly believe this first generation who is fully being raised and schooled outside of Haiti has different ways of seeing things and we need to set an environment for them in the community. We need to learn how to relate with this new generation. I see this new generation as the Hope for a new vision for Haitians both in the Diaspora and in Haiti. The older generation needs to take advantage of the internet that allows communication between countries, generations and cultures and share what we have done or not done.”

Many conscious Haitians would certainly agree with us that this generation ‘has different ways of seeing things’. But at the same time, they are disconnected with Haiti, the mother country.

Now, who are going to connect them if they are disconnected? How are they going to be ‘the Hope for a new vision for Haitians both in the Diaspora and in Haiti’? Talking to some young Haitians-Americans who were born or raised here in the US, I’ve observed such a big gap between them and the older generation (also in Diaspora). Some (of these youngsters) knew few things about Haiti and about Haitians in the Diaspora (“The Greater Haiti” I would call it) and about the “Haitian Reality” because they don’t live or have really lived it like the younger generation in Haiti.

In order to reconnect the Haitians youth with Haiti, the older generation has some homework to do, e.g., try the very best to reach them out, tell them about the Haitian Reality, tell them about our history, give them the best advice in order to avoid the long paths that we (in the Diaspora) have walked.

I was so happy this week to talk to a group of young Haitian-Americans (university students, some of them born here). Gosh! They were so happy, thanking me for spending over an hour talking to them, where I also did some brain storming and gave them some advice: What’s next after your study? You are studying this, that... Why? What are you going to do with that major when you graduate from college? Have you done any internship in your particular field to start getting some experience? Have you done any volunteer work related to your field? Have you done any volunteer work in the Haitian community? Have you spent a year /a semester abroad while you

are in college (to observe, to learn from others, to learn about another culture and another language and to compare things to the country where you are living or to Haiti)? You are a French major, have you been to any French speaking country? You are Biology, Chemistry major, what's next after graduation (Are you going to medical school? Are you going to graduate school for further research in Biology, Chemistry)? Do you have a driving license? You are eighteen and don't have one! Do you have a credit card? You are a college student and you don't have one! Why are you taking loans? You can have scholarships. What happen? Is your "GPA" (Grade Point Average) below "B"?...

So the 'older' generation, that can help them, should do the very best to break the ice in order to understand their problems, to help them and give them the best advice needed since many of them can't get that from some friends and from their parents (since most of them had not been to college or have certain experience to help them at their level).

Haitian educators and professions must put some time aside, trying to reach them and most of all, try the very best to reconnect them with Haiti (in terms of going back there for a summer, a semester, a month to work with Haitian youth in Haiti where both can share their experience. This is part of human resources that can absolutely help Haiti and the Diaspora in the near future, and any government that ascends to power and not valorizing it won't succeed in helping Haiti to move forward.

**How much will Haiti benefit from a coalition
of presidential candidates the eve of its presidential elections?**

(Winter 2005)

Not long ago in November, nine different candidates (from different political parties, some independent) got together in an official agreement to form a coalition with the goal to win the 2006 presidential elections in the first or second round. Observers can ask a bunch of questions about such a strategy and why at this particular time.

The funny thing to take into consideration: is this coalition a strategy for the smart guys to get a piece of the cake? Here, nobody can deny that there is a sense of "unity", but it is really to save Haiti? Going back to colonial times

when blacks, mulattoes, and maroon military officers were fighting each other, Dessalines (truly in his heart) was trying his very best to show them that their common enemy was rather France and united them against that enemy. That “unity” the father of Haiti dreamed of, in a sense, had become Haiti’s motto “*L’union fait la force*” (Union is strength). At the same time, some of these high-ranking officers were also thinking of their own advantages (in the sense of what they would benefit after the Haitian Revolution).

Dessalines has quite a large social plan in mind that would also benefit everyone, and among his plan was to “pay back” the little soldiers who also fought fiercely in the *Bataille de Vertière* Battle (November 18, 1803). Well, some (of these high ranking military officers) did not like Dessalines’ plan (such as “land reform” which would somehow empower the laymen). It did not please these men for they would lose certain benefits) and this somehow, contributed a great deal to Dessalines’ assassination on October 17, 1806.

So, why do these candidates wait at the eve of the presidential elections to form such a coalition? Why not some months ago? That’s somehow, reminds us of the “Group 184” that rallied against Aristide in 2003, pressuring him to leave power (though the latter never wanted to) and then once Aristide was forced into exile (by the United States, France and Canada), the bond that existed among them for that sole purpose wasn’t there any longer, giving an idea that they were temporarily united for personnel advantages, but not to really solve Haiti’s problems since corrupted members of the elites (with economic power) never tried to help or to contribute to Haiti’s development were also part that that group. They, somehow, manipulated the mass to follow them, hoping that they would do something to better their economic situation.

Going back to the question related to these candidates, the answer is as clear as water: there is really no vision to save Haiti. Everyone feels that they are qualified to be president or this is the only post they can have to do something great in order to pull out Haiti from the cliff it has fallen. How long will this coalition last is quite an interesting question. The answer, without any doubt, would be “short” since the strategy is to have one of their candidates win the elections and then include members of their parties in the new government. Despite all, we can still see somehow this idea of “unity”, but will it be a real one (in case if one of the coalition member wins) for we can foresee fights among these same members for “x” and “y” posts that

they would love to have in the dreamed New Government even they are not qualified to fulfill their tasks.

The philosophy of ‘unity’ is seen across the board if there is going to be a run-off where one member of the coalition would be part of the second round. That member will, of course, get the support of the remaining “eight”. But what would happen if no member wins? Another important question to raise? If a member wins, will this Coalition Government really work together toward saving Haiti? Toward Haiti’s reconstruction (by sharing their “plan of government” of which most of them don’t have)? Will they be there just to put their friends, and members of their own parties in key positions (even if they are not qualified to do the job, something that we’ve seen before in the Lavalas Administration)? Will they be able to stick together for at least one year without fighting each other for their own interests? These are the key questions to be asked while the manipulated majority of the innocent poor people will be going to the poles to vote. But really, voting for whom? Voting for what? Who is going to really have power? Power to do what? Is it power to work together for a new Haiti? The Haitian people would have to wait and see since they have been really patient for over two hundred years.

So far, we’ve seen the formation of one coalition that implies somehow that these candidates, smell something. Hm! Quite a smart move! There’s a sort of “fear” that forced them to form a block, and there is also the possibility of a second coalition to be formed. Yet, we don’t know who would be in it, and there are still some candidates who are running as independent. And again, we can still question the purpose of that second one we have in mind. If it is formed, will their members really have a vision to work together to save Haiti or to save their own interest? Due to the political reality in Haiti, most Haitians have been forced to become “St. Thomas” (in the sense of the American saying, “I am from Missouri, show me”) or they would have to see first before they can believe. I was quite delighted to discuss some of these issues with Professor Marc Prou (University of Massachusetts-Boston) who keep tracks of what has been going on in Haiti’s politics.

Investing in Haiti’s development
(April 2004)

It's about time that “Haitians who can” (those with dollars, great ideas, those with a vision for the country's future) get together to do something to help the country moving forward. Haitians (most of them) concentrate too much on political craps instead of investing, finding ways to invest to help the country.

The recent International Political Theatre going on in Haiti (starting February 29, 2004) seems to paralyze most Haitians (“the never mind virus”). I would say “invest to help” because some investments have been sucking up the country's blood. We must learn how to invest, to work together (bourgeois, middle class, front class, back class, poor class, scholars, those who practice a trade, those with a particular profession, so on and so forth). They can get together and do something for the country.

There are times when we must put politics behind us and try to do something together for the benefit of the country. When we see some Haitians get together to do something in the advantage of the country, we should clap our hands and encourage them. “*Bat men ankouraje chen*” (Clapping hands encourages the dog) as the Haitian saying says.

It's about time that our elite tries to do something positive for the country. I am really tired when I read all the time that “Haiti is the poorest nation in this hemisphere”. Haitians alone can make the country looks like a little Switzerland, yes they can. I am pretty sure that there are hundreds other Haitians who don't like to read this phrase but what do they do? The answer is that we have the responsibility to do something positive no matter how little it may be, but the difference will be great. We are such a rich nation in terms of our human resources but we don't put things in practice most of the time, we don't believe in ourselves most of the time (in terms of our potential).

Imagine that every single Haitian would put a dollar aside for Haiti 's development every single week. We are more than 1 million in the Diaspora. So, at least in one year we'd have \$52 million. How about one of their weekly pay checks if we had a real structure managing that money? Wow! Investing that in agriculture, health care, education, in other basic infrastructures... doing it every year for at least 10 years, oh Lord! What a break would that be with World Bank, IMF, ... and all other “pèpè” or cheap aids or under developing ones that are put in place to condemn third world countries! If the ox knew its strength...

There is hope for Haiti in this new century, but every single Haitian must change their old way of thinking by killing 'the never mind virus' and say: it's about time that I do something for my country because Haiti is also my mother.

Last quarter grade report
(February 2006)

Here are some advice for the unfortunate Haitian presidential candidates who scored less than 1% of the votes.

Dear country men, don't get totally discouraged. As our saying says: As long the head is not cut off, there is still hope that it can wear a hat(7). This average given to you by the Haitian people is a way to go and think of the work you should have done in the society, work that have never done before because you forget if they were taking notes of that. It seems that it would have been better for you to take part in the elections for mayors of your native city or town, and then later you could participate in the elections as a representative of your city (if you can get elected mayor first).

Friends, I know how hard you've been hurt by the blow, this great fall causing you back pain. But this score you received does not mean it is a "terminal cancer". On the other hand, it should rather serve you as a lesson to start reflecting on the word "leadership", what it really is.

Thanks God that you are still alive! You still have the chance to make some positive works in the Haitian society. Think of this important note in your political career. The French saying says: "*Il n'est jamais trop tard pour bien faire*" (Better late than never). So, despite that you've been on the field for a long time doing nothing, talking trash to kill the time, talking a lot, you have the chance today to reflect on it so that the people can vote for you as mayor tomorrow (if you start doing some work to help them). Patriotically, E. W. Védrine

What's the future of the Haitian youth in Haiti?

This question is a the challenging of for the youth to the Haitian government. Whatever the government of any country, if that government does not care about the youth of that country, one can guess that they do not care about the future of that country either because it's the youth of a country who is its future. If we were to take time to make a little research on the youth issue and what they would like, well in this survey one would find that 100% would answer: “leave” the country. Then when looking at this answer, maybe one would say: “Hey! The youth don't like their country”. That's not true at all! Then when looking at this answer, maybe one would say: “Hey! The youth don't like their country”. That's not true at all! They love Haiti but there's not yet a Haitian government to show that they love them because true love does not work without sacrifice.

One of the central words that we are going to focus on this discussion is support. It's a word that we hear and in the “support” context, we can put all that is positive in it for the youth:

Good free schools for them, well-equipped ones with libraries to do research, to broader their knowledge, put program in these schools (many types – if we are looking at schools of the developing countries), organize fieldtrips for them so that they can travel to visit other parts of the country (so that they become conscious of the Haitian Reality), including sport programs in them.

I have already mentioned that children in Haiti should have registered in a school somehow (from the age of five to seventeenth. Though I have mentioned sports in #1, but we can go further to encourage and develop it in Haiti for the youth to participate in international tournament where they can even make a career of it in this area. We have sports like soccer, basketball, volleyball that could be developed in the whole country. But the question we can ask is: Is there really a “Youth and Sport Ministry” to think of all these?

Young Haitians are very creative and intelligent but too bad, a series of brains that are being wasted. We could even think of a museum to exhibit their creative and artistic works, create prizes so that to motivate other youth. Does the Haitian government think of that?

Why isn't there an Association of Haitian Youth (in Haiti, including the Diaspora)? Here, immediately, we touch on organization. That is, we can

think of organizing or reorganizing them (if there is some youth organization that already exist). If that you'd take place (where there would be some good organizations for young people: one in Haiti, one in the Diaspora) and then for Haitians to try to support them (financially, morally), create some atmosphere for them to meet at least once a year in conference (in order to talk about their situation, what they'd like, where they would like to get, what they would like to do for Haiti, what they would like to see in Haiti...), that would be a one of the great steps toward moving forward.

At the international level, the youth in Haiti are really behind because they don't have access to even travel to the Dominican Republic that is the closest to them to go and see what's there. So, they are completely isolated from the outside world. To succeed in making them functioning at the international level, first the Haitian government would have to start taking this into consideration: look at what exists for the youth in the developing countries, International Exchange Programs and then start putting a series of infrastructures at work in order to help them.

So, globally, there's nothing serious that can be done if the government close their eyes on them. It's one of the big problems that Haiti should have underlined in its notebook - to start solving. But alas! When will there be really a government who cares about them and who will give them the spot that they deserve in society?

What type of army does Haiti need? (Spring 2005)

If we do a survey and ask the Haitian people if they would like to see the army come back, more than 95% would say “no”.

The Haitian Army of the 20th century, is absolutely not the Indigenous Army that fought against colonial powers in the 19th century. Why would Haiti need an army for? to fight against the Dominicans? To protect the Haitian people? To make coups when necessary? To sit down cleaning their weapons in order to kill innocent Haitian people (as it was the case in the last bloody coup of September 30, 1991)? To put unpopular people in power (something that occurs frequently in the twentieth century)?... We could go

on and on, asking a bunch of questions related to the role of the army in Haiti.

More than 16% of the country's National Budget (in the 80's) went to the army, quite a big lost of many million of dollars! Money that could be used in education, agriculture to help with Haiti's development, and create jobs for the people. The army that Haiti needs is a group of people, including former members of the defunct army, volunteers to work in tree planting, help with construction of roads, help with developing agriculture and participate in other works that the country needs in order to go forward. Depending on the future budget of the country, they can give these guys (who only know how to shoot as skills) some dollars to do these types of works that the country needs right away.

Haiti just needs a professional police force (one that is well-trained also) and one that is well-equipped (that has the equipments needed to do their jobs). I am certain that many people on the on-line Haitian forums are familiar with the history of Costa Rica in this sense. Aren't they better off today without an army (since the late 60's)? Why supporting an institution that is not working toward the progress of a country? Truly, will an army finish up with all types of “gangs” that have been evolved in Haiti at the end of the 80's (due to the political vacuum)? This is something that I pretty much doubt of. It is certain that Haiti needs security for everyone, but let's be serious about it. Let's discuss the best way that can be done. Let's look at the problem of “laws” (governing it) in Haiti and laws that are necessary to be fixed, in the advantage of every citizen.

The issue of the Haitian Army (whether it should continue existing or not, does not depend on any Haitian government. First, when a country is occupied, it does not have a say in terms of making decision) and the boss who is leading the occupation does not need an army either in order to achieve his objectives. How many times have they repeated it (indirectly)? Have some of us ever said truly why the Haitian Army existed? What was the mission of that defunct Army? Would even 2% of the Haitian People have the audacity to say it was an important institution that contributed to the development of the country?

Most people in Haiti, when seeing a chief (be it a *macoute** in uniform or without), a military man, an *attaché**, a *chimè** chief, the first thing that would come to their mind is: “their enemy” (in a sense, they did not feel

protected by any chief). Chiefs never equal friends of people in Haiti. Let's learn to live in reality, and the reality of the times also; without that, we will always remain as People who are living with illusion, people who give beautiful speech in French with no grammatical errors (as Piram would put it) but that end up to nothing in helping Haiti.

I have a belly laugh when some funny people on some Haitian forums would talk about the “importance of an army in the development of Haiti” What army? An army of “racketeers”? Well, if it is so, then Haiti already has too many. What kind of security has the Haitian Army ever given the Haitian People for sure? Under the Duvalier's regime, the old dictator neutralized the army by creating an auxiliary force, the *tonton macoutes** and at the same time, many of the military men were Duvalier's spies and many of us also know that. Didn't that same army get rid of some of our relatives or friends in *Fò Dimanch**, “the Forth of Death”, as many people would nickname it)? Didn't that same army participate in the *vêpres de Jeremie* (The Jeremie slaughtering in 1963) and has committed so many big crimes where many innocent Haitians lost their lives? But there is always exception to all rules; it's true that there were “some” serious people in the Haitian Army (who have tried to overthrow the bloody dictatorship but with no success, and they've lost their lives) but they couldn't do anything to help in the development of the country.

In general, when talking about “army”, we should not only see some soldiers who are doing military exercises (they sweat a lot, skinny like bones – so, *Sòyèt** children or children of the poor having in their hand a short gun dated the time of Tonton Nò + a bayonet in it and for this short gun to shoot, the poor soldier would have to urinate on the bullet in order to heat it up (joke), but it's a whole institution that is divided into branches and that requires many millions of green dollars to keep it going. In the economic situation Haiti is in, does she really need to invest many millions in an unproductive institution? And we've seen what the Haitian Army has done after the collapse of the ferocious dictatorships of the Duvaliers in 1986. What happened? Since the Duvaliers' dynasty were civilian dictatorships, the army (as institution that should have not meddled in Politics) has created a military dictatorship from general Henri Namphy (when coups started out) up to general Prosper Avril (beginning of 1990) and the army retook the unconstitutional power (with the September 30th. 1991 coup) under the leadership of general Raoul Sedras (though they've put in power some puppet presidents and prime ministers – but deeply, it was the army that was

doing everything behind the scene under the order the “White Boss”) until October 1994.

During all these times, did the Haitian Army show its willingness to do something positive for the country for real? That is the important question for all Haitians to ask, particularly some scholars that people would think have a positive way of thinking) who are talking about the “return of the army” which won't end up in anything. So, the answer is rather total persecution against the people throughout the country. There is a big difference between “*mete lòd nan dezòd*” (by controlling bandits who are misbehaving, who are spreading out terrors) and “persecuting innocent people” for their opinion or for a particular candidate that they have voted for. The Haitian people, that some people think are illiterate, live the reality of the country on a daily basis and can explain to us quite well the political reality of the country for they graduated from University of Life. As the Haitian proverbs puts it, people who were sick are those who know medicine for their sickness.

The key needed to open Haiti's secret door of development

The key that is needed to open Haiti’s secret door of development is a consciousness raising (*une prise de conscience*). I see it as a strong pinch of snuff (*prise de tabac*). Yes! One that would make us sneeze out the colonial chill that has, for two hundred years, blocked our mind. It is also crucial, in this sense, that each Haitian takes a moment to reflect on:

Who they are (a people with a homeland inherited from the forefathers who fought the colonial powers in order to win their freedom from bondage, and at the same time created that land of the free called *Ayiti Cheri* (Haiti, my darling), a people with a cultural heritage, and one with a historical legacy) and what is their responsibility toward this mother land.

What can each of them do so far for their community – be it in the Diaspora (The Greater Haitian Community), where over million of Haitians live or in Haiti, the Mother land that needs the help of all of her children, spreading out in that Diaspora? If you are a writer, fine! But, have you sent any of your books to libraries in Haiti? Have you put any of your writings on-line or

even shared some of them with some forums so that some people can benefit from your ideas? Did you know that you can publish them free of charge on-line so that millions of people, including Haitians everywhere, can have access to them?

If you are a researcher, fine! But, have you contributed anything to the development of Haiti so far? Have you given any workshop with the intention to help Haitians and Haiti? Have you trained any Haitian in your area of specialty? Have you participated in any on-line forums, conferences dealing with Haiti? Have you put any of your research on-line so that people can have access to them? Have you mailed copies of any of your research to any Haitian libraries or centers (in Haiti and in the Diaspora)?

If you are a doctor, fine! But, have you ever organized any seminars to help, educate people in your community on health issues? Have you ever taken a trip to Haiti with some of your fellows, including nurses, nurses aids in order to help the people there? Have you ever presented any paper in *The Annual Haitian Studies Conference* that takes place in October.

If you are a teacher (in Canada, US, France...), fine! But, do you just get your weekly /bi-weekly /monthly pay check, to pay some of your bills, to have fun and that's it? Have you ever tried to share on-line your lesson plans with others? Have you put any of your research /articles on-line to help Haitian teachers and students in Haiti? Have you presented anything related to Haiti in any conference? Do you keep track of all of your works so that they can be helpful to teachers in Haiti? Have you ever planned to do a workshop for teachers in Haiti? What are the teaching materials have you developed so far for your students that can be used in Haiti also?

These questions above can be applied to anyone with a profession or skill to think deeply about Haiti. Each of us can be a leader, and we don't need to wait for someone in power to do all jobs that need to be done for Haiti's development. You can be a good activist (just means 'being active' here, believe in what you are doing and that so many people can benefit from it) in your own profession, with your own skills in order to help Haiti moving forward. I say "good activist" because I know many jokers, *fo kominis* (false communists) as they'd be called sometimes in Creole, who may appear to be 'activists' but just in talking (theory) not in action.

The real problem is within us and among us as I would interpret it from my verses below though, of course, there are some foreign grafters considered to be modern-day settlers, jacks-of-all trades master of none to help Haiti and who would not like to see good things for Haiti either for they benefit from its underdevelopment or from its chaos, but it is up to Haitians to keep on taking orders from them if they really know the key that is needed to open Haiti's secret door of development.

*When these settlers ask you to do a coup,
Why don't you just tell all of them go away.*

*When these settlers want you to kill your own brothers,
Why don't you tell them go away, go and kill theirs,*

*When these monsters tell you Haiti is a basket case,
Why don't you just tell all of them hey no, that is quite fake.*

*When these bastards want to give you order,
Why don't you tell them you're not a soldier.*

*These suckers are just finding new ways to exploit you,
You know what they are up to, so don't let them fool you.*

I started knowing Haiti when I left it in February 1976. One can imagine during that time, full-fledged of Baby Doc's dictatorship where one would not dare open his mouth, criticizing anything. It would be very risky, but when you live the problems every day (you see the misery of the people, human right violations, crimes by the *macoutes*, lack of schools throughout the country, no healthcare throughout the country...) you have a real idea about the country.

Traveling opens up people's eyes. I would urge those who can to travel in order to know what's going on in the world. It's also a free school (*University of The Air*) where one learns with the naked eyes the world's reality. I can guess why the Department of Education in Haiti would not even have a program to travel with students to the nearby Dominican Republic even for a very short period of time. By the way, very few of the “*grandes écoles*” (private schools with ‘a name’) took some of their students to Santo Domingo” (re: my conversation with a Haitian students who attended one of the ‘*grandes écoles*’).

A real minister of education in Haiti (if ever Haiti will be lucky to have one) would take Friday off in order to do programs with the students such as going to fieldtrips around the country with them, fieldtrips to the nearby Dominican Republic, engaging them in planting trees, participating in community projects and participating in governmental projects and have them write a report on each fieldtrip or activity. For me, this would be real Haitian civics.

In Haiti, they rather teach us to hate ourselves, our country, to hate our (Haitian) neighbors, and to hate what is part of us (all the ingredients that are part of our culture). So, there must be a type of new education in Haiti. We still have a colonial one that teaches us to appreciate the culture of the former masters, teaching us to be proud of the former masters' culture). We need an education with focus on: developing Haiti (in all sense), on cultural decolonization, creating and inventing our own things and also, a practical education putting in practice in our society what we have learned in schools; for instance, students can learn some trades while they are in school, in addition to the general education schools are aiming at).

**It's one to bring the snake to school and the other to make it seating
down**

(December 3, 2004)

"We are under extreme pressure from the international community to use violence, 'General Augusto Heleno Ribeiro told a congressional commission in Brazil. 'I command a peacekeeping force, not an occupation force...'

The general went on citing the United States, France and Canada among countries pressing for the use of force against armed groups. Brazil, in way, is backing up its early promise, having a mission to help rebuilding Haiti:

'...We are not there to carry out violence, this will not happen for as long as I'm in charge of the force... Brazil is demanding U.N. donor nations deliver \$1.2 billion in aid they have promised to rebuild Haiti .' (Brasilia, Brazil, Dec 2 (Reuters).

To summarize from the above quotes, Brazil, in a way, shows certain moral values as a peace keeping force that does not want to get caught in the middle of a civil war among Haitians.

Using violence against violence is not the best way to stop violence (as many of us with moral values may summarize it) and that's why U.S foreign policy, in many cases, has failed where they have created more hatred for themselves throughout the whole world (re: the use of force [instead of real diplomacy] as a means to solve some international crisis).

Most of the time, the United States relies on that Latin saying: “*Ci vis pacem, para bellum*” (He who wants peace prepares for war). Imagine Nelson Mandela would made use of that saying after ascending to power? How would South Africa look today? Would apartheid begin to disappear? Would there be hope for long-term peace there - a dream that Mandela and so many others had been cherished, a dream that so many had sacrificed their life for?

First, to disarm these bandits in Haiti (to whatever groups they belong to), would be to get information about them, then to look for them and put them behind bar (and create safe records of them to keep them on the watch constantly) in order for security to reign. Remember that the 1987 Constitution has abolished the death penalty, and by the way in certain countries where it still exists, it does not prevent some people from committing crimes.

I am pretty sure that the Haitian population knows who is causing disturbance in whatever neighborhood they are living. So, right there is a rich source of information for those who are currently leading the country. The next step for the government to be taken would be to create activities to keep everyone busy doing something. An interim government should not mean that administration is just there holding the seat for the next president elect. It should rather be an opportunity to demonstrate leadership that can have a positive impact on the next administration and those to come. Why do we have so many bandits in Haiti? The answer is simple: no activities to keep everyone busy in the country. Of course the absence of that will produce gangs of all sort.

Imagine that every young person in Haiti would have a school to attend, a place to learn a trade, would a have a job somehow ...! (I use “young”

because if we carry out a research, we will find out that most of these gangs are youngsters in their twenties or even younger though we'll also find those in their thirties and up).

One would not see these folks hanging out in the streets, meddling in gang activities, and those who are sleeping in the streets throughout Port-au-Prince (among them, many innocent ones). Truly, they did not invent their situation and the Haitian society should have a moral obligation to do something positive to help them since they are also members of the Haitian society at-large.

If you tell them (these trouble makers) don't hang out, don't commit crimes, don't do this and that... you must then create something for them in order to do away with it. One of my problems with Haitian leaders (which I call "losers" most of the time) is that most of them don't have a long term vision for Haiti. Their only dream is ascending to power and once they get there, they don't know what the hell to do; it's like their hands are tied up and they can not think of doing something positive to leave behind as legacy for those who will succeed them). It takes guts to become a good leader and to develop good leadership.

There should be a friendly atmosphere between the Haitian Police Force and the Haitian people. That was one of biggest problems of the late army (they were considered as the people's enemy instead of playing the role of their guardian angels - be it under the Duvalier or after the collapse of their brutal regime). Once that kind of trust is built between the Haitian Police and the Haitian people, there will be incredible success (in sharing information that will help a lot with the problem of security).

There should be also constant dialogue between the government and the people (tell them what is being done, what needs to be done, make them aware that their participation toward the country's development - something crucial and you who have the lead, are going to create channels for their participation to be fruitful (application of collective works for the global development of the country. A government must create an atmosphere to show the people that they are working for them and for the well-being of their country. No Haitian politician will succeed without putting that into practice.

People with weapons (be it police, former army members, gang members) tend to attack those with no weapons or innocent people. That's a coward act. Logically, those who carry legal firearms (such as the police force) may only use them in the case of self-defense, but for many years Haiti has been a cowboys country. So, educating the police and the Haitian population is something crucial in order to meet some key objectives toward peace.

**Electronic publications and its importance in the diffusion
of the Creole language**
(Spring 2002)

From time to time, more ideas come to my head when I finish working on a major Creole research though I always have the tendency not to think about what I have already published so that I won't say I will stop there. For me, the day when an artist would not produce anymore in his own area, it would be like he does not exist any longer; it's the same parallel that can be drawn between a writer: we always expect that he is publishing some new works even if that author has already received a Nobel prize.

After five intensive research to succeed in establishing one of the greatest documents on the Creole Language (*An Annotated Bibliography On Haitian Creole: A review of publications from colonial times to 2000*), I've learned a lot from this research, not only as its author and as a writer who cares a lot about the future of the native language, but also about the problem of documentation in general that Haiti has been facing since a long time and the methodology that Haitians have been using to do research.

We can go further in our critics without mentioning anything on “the problem of schools in Haiti” which is one of the sources of the problems (the way they teach us). There's a lot that we can say about that and as we know, there has not been yet a real school reform that took place in Haiti. I've mentioned that many times in my research for people who want to investigate more on that.

The diffusion of the Creole language is one of the most important points that I have mentioned in my comments and research on Haitian Creole, and without the participation of the government, without real investment in it, the changes we expect will not take place the way it is supposed to. But for

us who know the Haitian reality, it is impossible also to seat down and wait for the government to do all that the country needs. So, it is important for us to think about “alternatives” in this sense when talking about “development of Haiti” and concerning the diffusion of the Creole language, we believe that it is important for us to think seriously about electronic publications. Not only that creates extraordinary archives to document publications (for all references), but it also gives a lot of access (for instance, access to documents to be used in school, to help people who are doing research at all levels and on all subjects, the advantage for people who need to publish their works, and who don't have money but in the meantime, they can publish the electronic version of their works where they will attract more readers and create the possibility to find more critics on their works).

In this sense, it's important to encourage everyone who is producing in Creole to reconsider the power of the internet and how they can take advantage of it to help and encourage the diffusion of the Creole language faster in all areas. We are encouraging everyone who is producing web sites in order to include in them documents that will facilitate research on Haiti.

For another level of conversation in the advantage of Haiti

(February 26, 2006)

Well, many times, many Haitians refuse to accept the Haitian Reality the way it is. What is the reality before us today? It's clear and simple: the Haitian people want to walk in the path of democracy. What does that mean for them? A simple answer we can imagine: they say “down with dictatorship!”. So for someone to ascend to power today, well it's clear and simple: that person must go through the electoral process. Honest elections are like an exam where it's the people who grade the candidates based on their work in the field. That's how they decide to cast a vote for whoever the candidate of their choice may be. My friends, it is as simple as good morning, it is as clear as coconut juice, it is as clear as the day. That's what we see that just happened in Haiti despite of the attempt of a small sector that is against changes in order to take care of their own business the way they want, without respecting the majority's choice.

How many of us would like to see Haiti's advancement for sure? I am certain that most Haitians would answer yes. Well if you answer yes, that means

you support democracy, that means you respect the majority's choice (when they decide to choose a leader to lead them), that means you accept a certain level of tolerance (here it does not mean bad behavior, causing problems, showing lack of respect for one another, *chimè** who go wild / destroying people's properties). In a democracy, there suppose to be a certain level of tolerance (for instance, one should be free to give his opinion or to make his voice be heard; one should respect someone's opinion, respect someone's choice that can differ from your own).

Our focus now should rather be on Haiti's future. How is tomorrow going to be for Haiti? To answer this question, well it is each of us who is responsible of tomorrow's result. Yes, we are responsible for a better or for a worse tomorrow. If we would like to see a better tomorrow, well, we have the chance today to change our old way of thinking (for instance, putting one another down through our words and actions, functioning in our own small clans, talking a lot but never accomplish any serious thing in the advantage of Haitians and Haiti, wasting time talking nonsense or criticizing things of the past whereas there are important things to be done today, waiting for foreigners to come to do things for us, calling foreigners for anything because we cannot get along to work together.

We have the chance today to contribute to something that can help Haiti (even through some great ideas that we can write down for Haiti's development). As I've said before, whoever the leader or political party that would ascend to power today, it is impossible to expect that government to solve in five years all the problems that have existed before. It would be impossible! The important thing, we expect a government who can try to throw the essential bases, the infrastructural ones that many of us have been dreaming of. We need a government who can listen to constructive critics. We need a government who is open to listen to everybody's claims and to take them into consideration. We need a government who can chat from time to time about progress being made, about the problem that government is facing in order to function well, and how we, citizen can help. And one who can see the importance of human resources to put them in application in order to benefit Haiti's development.

Reflection on Creole Day 2000
(October 2000)

There are many ways we can interpret this Day or comment on its symbolism: Creole, the language of liberation, Creole the only language that connects every Haitian, Creole the *Legba** of the Haitian Culture, Creole the language of our ancestors, Creole is on the net once for all, Creole is the king on Dessalines' land. But as someone who is conscious of Haiti's problems and of the Haitian Reality, there is nothing that I am going to celebrate. People celebrate when they are really happy, when they say good things about their country wherever they go, when they say they are Haitians others have a happy face smiling at them. Think!

It's rather a day of reflection, not only on our native language but about all cultures that have "Creole" as their primary language. In all research that are being conducted on (Haitian) Creole, it's Haiti that most researchers mention on top of their list; nonetheless that's where they look down the most on the Creole culture and language. The so-called our intellectuals / linguists (as I've mentioned in an interview with SICRAD) don't produce anything in Creole, apart from Yves Dejean* who has made a big difference today. These guys sit down writing beautiful things on Creole in Voltaire's or Shakespeare's language in the search of the title of "great researchers" and, once they reach a high academic level, many of them categorically distance themselves from the Haitian Community. Think!

So, we must think about this mentality, criticize it in order to try to change it. And we can also ask: But what books, article, and manuals have they written in Creole to help this language moving forward? What documents have they produced or tried to publish to educate about the eradication of illiteracy in Haiti? What ideas have they given to help those who can't conduct research (showing a willingness in the advancement of the Creole language? What have they done with theses, dissertations, books after writing them? Do they even think of sending some copies to research centers that hold documents on Haiti? Think of sending some to the National Library in Haiti? Think!

Today, we are also going through a crisis of "documentation" where even the Creole documents (if one were in the need of conducting real research) you'd not even need to waste time going to Haiti (unless if that person were going to interview people in order to build an "oral corpus" but it has been already done, more by foreign researchers in many areas. One would have to take an airplane to go to France and to other European countries, then travel

to some good American Universities and go to “Library of Congress to find a series of documents (not only on Creole, but also on Haiti in general). Think!

For this special Day, I tell my countrymen (particularly those in the area of research on Creole, those who call themselves “creolists” in the sense of people who write in Creole (e.g, journalists, writers, those who are doing somehow something related to Creole) to think, analyze the problems, don’t focus on doing “bad politics” or politics of dogs eating dogs where one is putting down the other, but get into yourself (to think), be conscious of the reality of our country. The things that you can do, don’t expect any glory in return or money coming from some organizations somehow to help you but just do what you think if necessary (even if you have to spend your own money). That is another alternative also (in all domains) trying to change the face of Haiti where each Haitian does something in his own domain (without waiting and keep on waiting forever for promises to be performed by so-called leader “x” or “y”. Birds with feathers don’t sing (as the Creole saying puts it). So, that’s my hope and my own reflection for this special Day.

As researcher, linguist, creolist, educator, director of many research project, dean Albert Valdman will always remain in the mind of many people a “super hero”, not only for this excellent and tireless works on many Creole languages, his research on the variation of French (spoken everywhere in the world) but also for his forty years of research at Indiana University. The French government send his ambassador François Bujon de l’Estang to decorate him with the highest academic honor that France would give, "*Commandeur dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques*" (Oct. 26, 2000). He is one of the researchers who has changed completely the face of this university. So, even if you would finish writing one, two, three books, articles, or a thesis on Creole (which is also a contribution anyhow), don’t think the work should stop there and to wait for people to say bravo to you to give you a plaque; that can make you become as lazy as a pregnant bitch (as if we’ve accomplished our mission and then we stop there). We must continue the work until we are no longer alive and we should never take the chance to glorify the work we would do (that is the task of critics to say what they think). The work of researchers / artists is to “continue producing at the maximum level” in their domains and at the same time, review the works of others or investigate their works (come up with constructive critics, not critics to put down someone if that person is not part of the group / the same association that you are a member of). Think!

Finally, there are great works being done in the area of other Creole languages (e.g., in Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique, Seychelles, Saint Lucia...). Let's work together with them, and encourage them. We are one people with a common history. We can think about strategies to work together and participate in research for the development of the Creole language in these other places (the same French-based Creole) and in cultural exchange. Think!

Revolution in Haiti : benefit for whom?

(May 27, 2005)

Revolution is one of the complex themes to talk about in the case of Haiti and it's necessary to know the history of Haiti quite well.

To respond to an article by a countryman (Doumafis Lafontan. "*Inyon ou lanmò*" (Union or death), May 2005) that touches the theme "revolution", one of the themes I would choose to debate this subject is: understanding Haiti.

Certainly, we would have to go back to the revolutionary periods (though we are still in the colonial times, but we are not yet in 1803) that is, the point I want to make here has to do with all the fights back and forth that were taking place (before the Battle of Vertières on November 18, 1803) and the question we may ask is: how many of them were in the interest of the mass of people (also, notice that we were not a "nation" yet)? So, here we can enter the lowest classes (the untouchables), including all slaves in order to be able to suck at least a bone from the bowl of meat.

So after all of our analysis, we notice that most of the battles were based upon personal interests. Dessalines understood the complex game quite well and it wasn't an easy thing for him to try to unite the great indigenous chiefs (mulattoes, blacks, the *bossal** negroes) against France that had all the divide and conquer power in its hands at the time. Opportunists who are always present today were always present also in the past. They stood by Dessalines' side (in the "union" business that he was talking about) because they already saw their great future advantage (the creation of a new feudal system or neocolonial one if they succeeded in destroying the French army

that thought Haiti was a prairie upon which they would continue galloping their houses.

But what happened after the revolution? Some of these opportunists noticed that Dessalines would, in a way, change when the emperor would ask to pay back the little barefoot soldiers wearing torn pants who had brought their own contribution to the bloody battle with all their soul and strength for a change. Gee! Some of these big guys got very mad and that was one of the causes of the death of the homeland founder soon thereafter. And right after (his death), we see how the new country became divided like a pig that is being cut up in pieces after killing it.

Many Haitians would like to appear at the same time as “revolutionary”. That does not astonish me because we are looking at the development of Haiti 's history, but is it truly with the idea to help the masses who are in need? Is it with the idea to benefit their own class or their personal interests? So, that's where the confusion lies because the history pages of Haiti are open naked before us like a leaf we like to look at.

Don't forget also that the theme “revolution” in our history would appear more as a struggle to ascend to power only (with this label - with the promise that “things will be changed”, so hope makes one live, as the saying says). No problem ascending to power, but the question is: what do these leaders do after (so that the majority of the people who are in need) ascending to power? Everyone always remains divided: each one always remains in his clan (e.g., those who are in power put their friends in key positions and the basic changes never occur); the intellectuals always remain in their clan philosophizing, sitting down doing nothing even when they appear to be more red than the color of the Russian communist flag but, truly, they are not going through the masses to do a series of basic works (such as, planting trees with them, using the hoe to work with them, coming up with strategies to irrigate the land, strategies to plant better, ideas to preserve harvests so that they can fight against the dry season, ideas to protect the land, making nurseries of all types, coming up with the idea not to destroy the land but rather protecting it, etc.).

The 20th Century has just recently passed; it was a century of headaches, filled with currents of ideas of the “ISM” that were born or grew up (for example: *barbarism, existentialism, capitalism, communism, neofeudalism, neocolonialism, revolutionism, socialism...* just to cite a few). Some *petit*

intellectual bourgeois in Haiti (black or light skin) use them back and forth (their own way); they use them like kites people are flying on a Holy Friday in Port-au-Prince, but they always remain within their own class speaking sophisticated French; they are not even going to write a Creole manual trying to teach the masses who are completely illiterate how to read and write; so forget about rolling up their pants to go and plant with them, to hold a hoe, pickax, machete with them, weed the land with them (and many know that one of the secrets of Haiti's development lies in agriculture), go and show them how to read and write free of charge so that they can be at least at the basic reading the level, go and form groups to give out books, get together (with those who have money) to help one way or another and then show them how to organize themselves, how to work together for success. The compilation of all these revolutionary ideas in the case of Haiti, but with no concrete action, appears to be a sort of *lanmou makiye** (fake love).

So, we may ask two questions to conclude:

- 1) When will Haiti have a social revolution for sure?
- 2) What can we learn from the Cuban Revolution?

These answers are open-ended in order to widen this debate. Finally, the term “revolution” in Haiti’s history also adopts semantics, focusing more on revolutionary ideas than concrete actions.

(The author thanks to Marilyn Mason for her English review)

What to do with the Haitian army?

(November 2006)

It’s not a question of rushing to say “long live” or “down with” the Haitian army. One of our problems is that Haitians are very emotional. They act upon emotions for any little thing.

For a long time, I’ve been following the psychology of some (conservative) Haitians on the internet on how they would approach issues regarding the army. The worst is that those that I notice who so-called got far in school

don't even take time sometimes to do some logical analysis. Rather, let their emotion and fanaticism carry them away. Therefore, "*voye monte*" or just talking for talking, somehow, has always found a little spot.

If some of us would agree to see the army's return, I believe that we'd have to be very precise in terms of exactly what army we'd like to see:

Would most Haitians like to see the return of a "repressive army" again?

Would the Haitian people like to see a puppet army that's only waiting for orders from abroad to kill its own people?

Would the Haitian People like to see an army that would be doing coups back and forth in order to put people it wants in power?

Would the Haitian people like to see an army that is in favor of a small group, and one that is defending only the interest of foreigners? I don't believe in just talking for talking when we want to address, for sure, important issues concerning Haiti. It is quite clear that the few men enrolled in the Haitian Police, without having real or heavy weapons, won't be able to do an efficient work to provide security for the whole population, to disarm bandits, kidnapers who are still circulating in the country and who are terrorizing the population through their crimes. But, nevertheless, does it require the return of the old army that gave repugnance to the Haitian people after its disappearance? Here, we say "disappearance" because it's not really functioning since a long time and neither the Haitian parliament yet voted on its physical elimination.

Yes, Haiti needs an "armed forces" that does not need to be called "the army". Me, personally, I see a national guard corps that would be spread out throughout the country and to give at the same time, the reinforcement needed by the national police force. How to recruit these people? A crucial question for us to think about. Should they include in it former servicemen who already had records, those who have their hands dipped in all sort of crimes? Another question to think about it. Who is going to train them and to serve whom? And I don't believe the most important thing would be to teach them only how to shoot as skills.

In our discussion, I rather see a whole program focusing on civics. That is, it would be important for them to receive a formation that would define the

purpose of their works towards the motherland, a formation where they would not be seen as the people's enemy (the way the people see the old army), but rather friends who are protecting the people. It's not just writing long literature in the French language about this issue (as I've read some writings related to it) thinking that's going to solve Haiti's complex problems. But instead, it would be better to come around the table, participate in on-line forums in order to exchange ideas, and to think together about Haiti's all problems and see the possible solutions.

What does Haiti really need? Gosh, so many things that we would include in this answer. First, when analyzing the problems from the time of Duvalier's departure (February 7, 1986) up until now, we notice such a big gap, what some people would call "political vacuum". We see talking for talking in almost all great issues that should have been carefully discussed, we see more fanaticism, and some people who are labeling themselves as communists, Marxist-Lenists, liberalists, socialists, indeed all "ist" we could cite. But meanwhile, the real problem is never tackled on a basis to end up to anything concrete in the advantage of the mass who has been suffering for so many years.

It's clear that it is not such and such political party or a particular leader or such and such presidential candidate who is going to solve the country's problems. We need laws (not "lwa" or "native spirits inherited from Africa" or gods who are dumb since the word 'lwa' (in Creole) carries the meaning of laws and spirits in the Haitian language, but rather "real laws" voted by the parliament and principles for everyone to follow. Laws should have been one for all; in other word, observed by everyone without any distinction and those who violate them should have been punished. First of all, a president or a prime minister shouldn't have had any right to act the way they want to as supreme chief. A real parliament should have been there to question them about what's going on, why the abuse of power and bring them to justice. But, do we have yet such a parliament? What have been the work of group of individuals, the civil society, so on and so forth in issues like this, in watching to see if those who are leading are violating the laws or they aren't above the law, or if laws are being used as toilet tissues?

The answer to all of these questions remain to be a mystery for many of us who are still dreaming of changes in Haiti. Again, Haitians act with emotions in almost everything they are doing. Let's take our time, let's calm down in order to analyze together Haiti's problems. It's not only a single

leader, or political party which is the source of the problems, but rather a legacy for more than two hundred years and the mentality that need to be changed. So, let's go to the source of the problem to analyze it and then see what we can come up as prescription for Haiti. And most of all, by begin to change our way of thinking and acting.

Who is leading Haiti : the Haitian people or leaders?

(December 24, 2004)

Many times some of us, Haitians, tend to blame the people instead of our leaders for not doing their jobs. "The people" have no power anywhere in the world. Let's stay focus on "the problem of leadership in Haiti".

If any of us really want to see good things for Haiti, we must clearly state what is not good, we must have the guts to say the truth no matter what it will cost us.

At the same time, when we are criticizing our leaders for not doing their jobs, we must present ourselves as models (as individuals who are doing something positive). I don't know how much some of us have read about José Martí*, the super hero who inspired the Cuban Revolution in the 19th Century. I can understand how and why Cubans, everywhere today, are so proud of their national hero.

Most Haitians have been complaining about Haiti's situation for decades, but at the same time they are still functioning with the same colonial mentality, the same "banking system" as the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire*, or the Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea* would say today, knowing our past history and the impact of colonization on us.

In some of my writings and my participation on-line on some Haitian forums, I've put a lot of emphasis on organization. Some people did not understand me or probably have misinterpreted me since they did not know where I was coming from, and the work that I've been doing for the past 15 years dealing with "education" at all levels (in terms of my dreams for Haiti, my dream to see a Haiti where everyone can be happy, can go to school free, can have a job, can live with pride and dignity, can respect each other, can

eat every day, can be free to say what's in their mind). Isn't this real democracy? But for that to happen, we, individuals, must do our part; we must work very hard also.

Fine we can criticize our so-called Haitian leaders, but at the same time, we individuals, must set examples since anyone can develop leadership. We must engage ourselves in doing something positive for the benefit of our community and of our country.

Where are our agronomists, businessmen, computer scientists, doctors, educators, engineers, politicians, scholars, scientists, talented people, who subscribe to different forums related to Haiti today and who know that these forums are open to anyone with all kind of ideas? Can they talk? Have they shared their ideas with others? Are they organized somehow? Are they members of some organizations that have in mind to do something positive for Haiti? Do they try to support some organizations that are trying to do something positive for Haiti? Do they have in mind any plan for Haiti's future? Why did they spend over 20 years in school – Was it just to get a good job or to accumulate diplomas? Are they just praying for change to happen without their participation? We need a “radical speech” as a beautiful and brilliant woman on a Haitian forum has suggested. It is not a question we are on the left or right, we are progressist or liberal Haitians... these are all bulls and some of us who have been working hard for a new Haiti already know that also.

I see and hear some Haitians labeling themselves “conservative, communist, liberal, marxist, marxist-lenist...” what ever political adjectives they choose but when talking about the Haitian Reality, these are all bulls. If you label yourself as “conservative”, fine! If you are a communist, fine! If you are a liberal, fine! If you are Marxist or Marxist-Lenist that's also fine! But so far, what have you done for the advancement of Haiti? What have you contributed to the reconstruction of Haiti? Are you conscious of the Haitian Reality - what is it all about? Let people judge us (based on our work to change our society for the better) and let's be simple and humble humans who dream to see a Haiti like Japan, Switzerland or any country where everyone can be proud of themselves and of their native land also.

Leaders who pretended to be “right wing” or “left wing” or whatever name they want to choose for their wing have already fooled the Haitian people enough the past too hundred yeas of wasting history and it's really after

they've ascended to power that “the people” can really describe their wing. Once they get there, they call the people fools. And today, it is important to question someone who is going to run for any political position in Haiti. These candidates must be available to have dialogue with “the people” who are going to cast their votes for them (but too bad, knowing that the people know them well many of them won't do that, fearing to meet the challenge), they must be able to meet the press (though too bad we don't have yet an independent one in Haiti), they must be able to talk openly about their political agenda (but too bad none of them has one), they must be able to talk openly about what they have done in our society before (but too bad for many of them have done nothing so far). This is the kind of transparency we need in the leadership process for a new Haiti.

Are you a proud Haitian?

If we, Haitians, really want to help Haiti and to see a new Haiti, it's something that requires sacrifice. You must believe in it and try to do your best with all your heart and soul. We've already seen many leaders' and political parties' failure. It's not because they never had the resources needed to help our country, and sometimes you may wonder: what's going on? What's wrong with Haiti? Why does this nation fail?... A bunch of questions that can come to your mind. Well, the first thing to do is: looking at yourself in a mirror. I am pretty sure that nobody is perfect, we may try to be and that's why we are no angel otherwise we'd not be suffering on this planet. So it's a whole process to change the complex Haitian mentality, one that has been brainwashed for centuries.

I've been trying to develop an appreciation for Haiti from the model that my late loving parents left behind, a whole legacy (love, care, respect for everyone and wisdom). With 28 years of experience traveling abroad (to different continents and countries), I've learned a lot and it takes courage to say: “I am Haitian” (because of the negative ways in which they perceive Haitians around the globe - no matter of their social class or their educational background, they are all on the same boat).

But you know what? People do respect you when you are proud of who you are, when you are proud of your culture, when you know facts about your country, when you love your people (rich or poor), when you are proud of

your ethnic background, and many times you'll feel that you are an ambassador representing your country.

It's quite sad to see how the Haitian society has been divided since Haiti's independence and the same colonial mentality is still there in the twenty first century, but there's hope to change things around and the hope is within me and you only when we become conscious of our reality, only when we can accept the truth and only when we can put all of our differences behind to work together for a country, a mother that has given birth to all of us.

Bataille de Vertière's speech (November 1994)

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Haitian club at University of Massachusetts-Boston and as "alumnus" of the university, I am proud to be here for this great event reminding me of my people 190 years ago. For you who are not quite familiar with the history of Haiti, Bataille de Vertières means so much to me and it happened once in the history of my country.

On November 18, 1803, we had a common goal: liberating ourselves, breaking the chains of slavery, the chains that Toussaint, Dessalines and other Haitian heroes were trying to break long before. Today, I can still remember Toussaint' famous words when he was captured by the French: "*Vous avez arraché l'arbre de la liberté des Noirs. Il repoussera par des racines parcequ'elles sont profondes et nombreuses*" (You' have uprooted the tree of liberty of the Blacks; it will spring up again through its roots because they are enormous and deep in the ground).

These roots that General Toussaint had mentioned gave birth to November 18, 1803. Today, if someone ask me: "Are you happy? Are you happy celebrating *Bataille de Vertière*? Are you happy with the glory that Haitians have in history? Are you happy with the title that they give Haiti as the First Independent Black Nation in the world?" My answer is "yes" and "no". On one hand, yes when I remember these Haitian heroes who were ready to scarify themselves for the liberation of my people and my country. Yes, when I remember Dessalines saying: "We should live free or die". Yes, when I remember Toussaint's last words leaving his country to be imprisoned in Fort Dejoux in the Jura Mountains in France. On the other

hand, “no” because we Haitians still have a long way to go. After 190 years as a nation, we should have been an example of nation helping others. We shouldn’t have hunger at home, we shouldn’t have little Haitians begging and sleeping in the streets, we shouldn’t have an illiteracy rate of 85%, poor health care... We should have had free schools for all Haitians. We shouldn’t have Haitians killing their brothers and sisters for no reason.

Haiti today is not the Haiti of 1803. I see it more as a divided nation where the ruling class is oppressing the rest of the population. A country that has an army killing its own people every day just because they want to have a taste of democracy.

Today, I cannot be proud of my country when I see what my brothers have done on September 30, 1991. I cannot be proud when almost ten thousand Haitians have lost their lives in less than two years because they have voted a candidate of their choice. I cannot be proud when I know that my people are being persecuted by the army, the *attachés** and the *zenglendos**. I cannot be proud when I see them risking their lives in high seas, trying to reach Miami. I cannot be proud when sharks are celebrating because my people are leaving their country. I cannot be proud of the way they are being treated in Guantanamo.

I am not happy the way they are being treated abroad. I am not happy the way foreign the media portray us, choosing us as a escape goat in many circumstances. We Haitians have come from a long way and we still have a long way to go.

If Toussaint, Dessalines, Capois Lamort, Charlemagne Peralte were alive today, I don’t think they would be proud either of the Haiti today. We still have to work hard; we need to be educated; we need to struggle for a second independence, struggle to regain our pride in history.

In memory of these Haitian heroes who were ready to die for the freedom of their people, the liberation of their native land, for democracy and justice for all in the 18th, 19th and 20th century, I dedicate this poem:

Si m te... m ta...

If I were ... I would...

Si m te Dessalin,

If I were Dessalines,

E. W. Védrine - *A healing paradigm for a new Haiti*

<i>M ta libere Ayiti ankò</i>	I would liberate Haiti again,
<i>Si m te Touden,</i>	If I were Toussaint,
<i>M ta reekri</i>	I would rewrite
<i>Istwa d Ayiti</i>	The history
<i>Si m te wa Kristòf,</i>	If I were king Christophe,
<i>M ta rebati Ayiti</i>	I would rebuild Haiti.
<i>Si m te Kapwalamò</i>	If I were Capois Lamort,
<i>M ta (sot) tonbe (sou chwal</i>	I would fall from my horse,
<i>mwen) m leve</i>	and then get up
<i>Epi m kontinye ap galope</i>	And keep on riding it.
<i>Si m te Chalmayperal,</i>	If I were Charlemagne Péralte,
<i>M ta fyè</i>	I would be proud.
<i>M ta kontinye mache bwòdè</i>	I would keep on walking, looking very sharp
<i>M ta tankou yon zetwal</i>	I would be like a star
<i>K ap briye</i>	Shining
<i>Kote ki pa klere</i>	In the dark
<i>M ta mache chalmayperalteman</i>	I would walk with pride,
<i>Ak kè kontan</i>	With happiness
<i>San m pa pantan</i>	Without any fear
<i>Malgre tout touman</i>	Despite of all torment,
<i>Tout vye pikan.</i>	All thorns
<i>Si m te ka rekolonize Ayiti,</i>	If I could colonize Haiti again,
<i>M ta fè l tounen yon paradi.</i>	I would turn it into a paradise
<i>M ta simen plan lanmou</i>	I would sew the seeds of love
<i>Toupatou</i>	Everywhere
<i>M ta fè pepinyè lanmou</i>	I would make a nursery of love
<i>Pou al plante</i>	To be planted
<i>Lòt kote.</i>	In other places.
<i>Si m te ka rekolonize Ayiti,</i>	If I could colonize Haiti again,
<i>M ta regran fyète</i>	I would take back the pride
<i>Desalin ak Touden te pote</i>	That Dessalines and Toussaint have brought;
<i>Zòt t ap respekte me</i>	Other nations would respect me.
<i>Li pa ta meprize m.</i>	They wouldn't look down on me.
<i>Si m te chèfseksyon</i>	If I were a county sheriff
<i>Nan yon seksyon,</i>	In a county,
<i>M ta aji byen ak peyizan</i>	I would act well with peasants
<i>Epi tout t ap kontan.</i>	And they would be happy.
<i>Si m te militè,</i>	If I were a military man,
<i>M ta mache tèt anlè</i>	I would walk with pride
<i>Pèp la pa t ap wè m kòm ènmi</i>	The people wouldn't see me as enemy
<i>Men yon zanmi</i>	But, a friend,
<i>K ap pwoteje l</i>	Someone who is protecting them
<i>Ki p ap tire l.</i>	Who wouldn't shoot at them
<i>Si m te ka reekri</i>	If I could rewrite
<i>Istwa d Ayiti,</i>	The history
<i>Ala pawòl mwen ta di!</i>	I would have so much to say.

Haiti and self destruction

The challenge is now before us and before each of us: What can We do? What can each of us do to help cleaning Haiti's dirty face? These are the questions to be asked.

It's quite sad when hearing that there are over "20" political parties in Haiti. If these so-called Haitian politicians or leaders were really serious about moving the country forward, they would certainly get together and reduce that number to "3", try to organize elections the way they are organized here in the United States (first, the candidates go to primary presidential elections) and 2 parties go to final. "Nope: because I don't really see a country, but rather finding ways to get green dollars for my political party which is functioning as an NGO."

So, I can understand some people when they say they hate Haitian Politics. Well, I guess most people who really care for change in Haiti don't like the way things are. Once someone gets elected... wow !!! big deal !!! you hear: "There was 'fraud ... they stole ballots... fight here and there"... Then you wonder why on earth when someone is elected the other parties can't wait for that person to complete his term? Sure there can be "opposition" in a democratic society, but should it mean "destruction"?

What we have seen so far in the political history of Haiti is *dechoukay* or destabilization all the way from the country's independence to its bicentennial, and that happens at all levels - not just at the political level.

It is a whole mentality, one of destruction (people from the same class, field, group, institution, job, organization, religion are fighting each other). The rat race! We had quite a pretty good example four years ago here in the United States of what happened with their presidential elections. My quick interpretation of it is reflected within the poem below:

Koudeta nan peyi sivilize Coup in a civilized country

Koudeta nan peyi sivilize
Koudeta peyi sivilize, gwo koze!
Tout kote nan lemond nan branche pou obsève
Latwoublay blayi nan yon kokenn eleksyon
Ki pral potomitan anndan tout desizyon.

Coup in a civilized country
Coup in a civilized country, big deal!
Everyone in the world is connected to observe
Confusion spreads out in such a great election
That's going to be the center pole of all
decisions

E. W. Védrine - *A healing paradigm for a new Haiti*

*Yon siklòn politik balize Florida
Bilten Papiyon gentan vin pou gate sa
Batay legal pou rekontaj vot yo pete
Bagay yo mele kay Tonton Sam tout bon vre!*

A political hurricane has devastated Florida
Butterfly ballots appear to make a mess
Legal battles to recount the votes break out
Things get messed up at Uncle Sam's for real

*Gwo koze, koudeta peyi sivilize
Pèp ki pa te byen vote ap rele anmwe
Rezilta eleksyon sa a dire bon bout tan
Poudi pa ta gen magouy pou koupe devan?*

Big deal, cou in a civilized country
People who didn't vote well are crying out
This elections result lasts long
Wasn't there fraud to take the lead?

*Lobo pete devan grenn je lemonn antye
Leson tounèf pou ti peyi soudevlope
Kokenn batay ant kandida pou pran pouvwa.*

Brawls burst out before the whole world
Brain new lesson for third world countries
Great battle between candidates to ascend to
power.

Ala tray, demokrasi tonbe nan koma!

What a suffering! Democracy falls into a coma!

The two candidates, in a civilized way, took the case to court and all the way to the supreme court for a last decision. And finally, case closed! The two parties and the American people moved on. Sometimes one wonders: Is it a political culture in Haiti (when looking at the degradation of the state of things)? One thing that many people like from Mayor Tom Menino (of Boston) is when he says: "I am not a great talker, but I know how to get things done". In Haitian Politics, that is quite the reverse: "I am a great talker, but I don't know how to get things done."

Haitian youth and leadership

We believe that it is crucial to teach Haitian youth how to build leadership. It's a whole long-term program that needs to be done in Haiti and as well with Haitian youth in the Diaspora - showing them strategies to organize themselves (that they are not just there to go on strikes, destabilize anything to show their anger, burn tires...). Even when going on strike, there is a series of disciplines to follow (by respecting the authority or authorities representing the government are to be respected). The government should also respect the citizens' rights to gather peacefully according to the constitution.

Young Haitians need models to follow and support programs. They are looking for these models within us, adults. I would suggest an annual conference of Haitian youth (between those who are in Haiti and those in Diaspora). It's a conference that can last between 2-3 days to attend a series

of workshops designed for them so that they would have enough time to present their problems and to discuss someproposed solutions.

Youth are a country's future. If the government of a country does not care about his youth' problems, you can assure yourself that this government does not have anything in mind either for the future of that country. Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders; so if they are mediocre today and we don't prepare them, they will be also the mediocre leaders of tomorrow.

Some of the problems Haitian youth in Haiti have been facing

They are not sure of their future. There is no positive models to look at (most of the time). There is the absence of a series of programs in the media (newspapers, radio, TV to help them and to talk about their problems and then proposed solutions).

Frustration –

Many of them have been confronting many types of frustration where they even think of committing suicide. Issues that are taboo in the Haitian society and that have in influence on them. Let's take for instance about the “sexual problems”. Sex is an issue that is taboo for Haitian parents and they would do their best to avoid talking about it. In Haiti, this problem is even worse where the sexual education for the majority of parents was never done.

So, the society should be concerned about this particular issue and see how they could help the youth, establish centers where they could find counseling that they need. Here in the United States, in almost all schools, there are specialists, social workers who are there for that matter (to work with young people). We know that it's a phenomenon in the schools (middle, junior high and high school) where many girls get pregnant. The fact that there are programs that are already there to help them, they don't have too much frustration as young Haitian girls in Haiti would (at this age).

Many times in Haiti, these young girls have an abortion that further down the road can cause certain serious problems for them where they can have infections that cause them to die. They are under stress when that happens to

them because there are not centers dealing with these issues to help them out, to provide them with counseling needed.

These young school girls in Haiti, once getting pregnant they think that school is over for them; they think that society turns its back on them and what's worse is that they have become an escape goat for their parents. So, sexual education in this sense should have been a subject of discussion as part of the youth' problems. It would also make them aware of transmitted sexual diseases (TSD).

Many young people, who are fourteen, have already reached puberty level (particularly girls).

At this age, many of them start dating. There is a whole bunch of physiological transformations that take place within the youth at this age. Once we are talking about dating, our friend “sex” is not too far away. It is true there are programs that talk about abstinence. But we do know the reality in the case of sexual needs where it's not the majority of the youths who are going to put “abstinence” into practice. So, sexual education for the youth is a subject that should have been discussed openly (in the schools, on the radio, on television, in the newspapers... or in all possible media in order to reach young people.

Religion and exploitation of the underdogs

(August 9, 2005)

Five centuries ago, the Europeans used “religion” as a tool that went along with colonization and the slave trade.

Many of us, have nothing against any religion particularly if we are living in America where we have the “freedom of religion”. But some real critics would argue that it was used in a way to pacify the colonized people and the African slaves. Was it right then the way in which God’s name was used? When reading the book of Exodus (chapter 20, verse 7), it says: “Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain”.

Looking at that influence of Christianity during colonial times, we pretty much doubt that the Catholic Church has ever condemned the massive

atrocities committed against native Americans and African slaves. Will they ever face justice for these outrageous crimes against humanity? Only God knows.

When reading about a so-called religious figure such as father Las Casas (in Caribbean history), “Protector of the Indians”, he convinced Spain (during colonial times) to replace the forced labor inflicted upon the Indians with Blacks from Africa. In other words, Black people were considered to be animals, and did not have a soul. It is hard for non-Blacks to feel what we went through and how we feel when looking at the past. From there as readers of the Bible, we can raise this question: Is the Bible racist and ethnocentric or those exploiters who are using it (in the wrong way) to justify their means?

Many of us do read about the Inquisition(8) in Europe, what the Jews and Muslims went through (particularly in Spain) and the role that the Catholic Church has played in it. I have mentioned in some of my comments “racism” against the Jews in Spain where I’ve mentioned the Sephardics. Looking at the atrocities of the Catholic Church in America, there were cases where they burned native Americans who did not want to be converted into Catholicism, observing the cruel behavior of the conquistadores who said they were Catholics and who read the Bible and one of the ten commandments says “Thou shall not kill”(9).

There were and there is still a bunch of “fake missionaries” around the world (who want to impose a particular religion for some specific purposes). I don't want to point my finger at any, but it is quite clear when traveling to Europe that one will not see these people invading the European streets or neighborhoods as it is the case in third world countries. We pretty much doubt that we will find them in France or in any so-called “civilized country”.

Talking about “religion”, it's important to mention “spirituality”. The latter has to do with how zealous the individual behave in whatever s/he is doing, in other word the deepness of their belief in whatever they are doing (be it good or evil in our eyes). Some people who want to make fun of fake white missionaries say: “The Whites gave us the Bible and took away everything we had”. Well, no doubt that happened it in Africa and in many other places on this planet. At the same time, I am not saying that people should not believe in the word of God but they must be careful with devil disciples who

are blaspheming the Holy name of God, using the Holy scriptures to exploit the poor of third world countries or to keep them in bondage.

Many colonizers did use Christianity (in the wrong way) in order to “pacify” the colonized people and the African slaves. One of the books I would recommend to be read in this sense is *Viv Bondye, aba relijyon* (Praise God, down with Religion) by Jafrikayiti. In this book, the author wants to shake up the traditional take on spirituality and faith and reclaim a domain he says is dominated by those who use organized religion to divide.

In conclusion, we should not force people to be converted in a religion (if we are true disciples) but rather preach what we believe in, like sowing seeds everywhere and some will germinate. As a matter of fact, true disciples should have or show wisdom in their teachings and by that, they can draw followers. We have not read any records in the new Testament where Jesus beat up, burned, exploit people in his teachings. All we see through him is wisdom and love.

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Thirst for a Haitian society that is forming its citizen (September 13, 2005)

“Respect for one another” is another important issue in trying to make Haiti moving forward at all levels. We were raised in a society where “schools” don’t do a series of work to shape Haitian youngsters since they were little. If you want a tree to grow straight, you have to start taking care of it when it’s very young.

When we investigate on the issue, we see under the Duvalier’s Administration (and even before) a divided Haiti or one that is divided into two parts: The Republic of Haiti and the Republic of Port-au-Prince. It’s something we know that appeared clearly on the Haitian birth certificate where if a person wasn’t born in Port-au-Prince, that person was not

considered to be a “city dweller. They almost consider that person as a “second class citizen”. Right here, we see a sort of dividing barrier that is established and which gave rise to many types of “prejudices” in the Haitian society.

The problem that is worse, even when someone was born in a rural section of town, or a rural section pertaining to a *komin* (commune), well people who are living within the center of that *komin* (where City Hall is located together with all important activities of the *komin*) would consider that citizen who is born in the rural section as “someone who comes from the country side”, a “peasant”(10). In the country’s capital, forget it! Port-au-Princians would consider everyone who was not born in Port-au-Prince as “people from the provinces” (which seems to be a euphemism for “people from the countryside”) and many times, we already know what that implies (pejoratively).

So, when we look at Haiti’s problems, we can say that the problems come from top to bottom; that is, they have their roots from the people who are leading; they have their roots from schools. Why do we point our finger on those who are leading? That is another nice question some challenging people would ask, and the answer is simple: they have the power (like it or not). What’s important for us to look at under the label of this “power” is: the consequences or influences ahead; that is, there are traces of a model that was not good and that the offspring have inherited it.

When we say “people who are leading”, we don’t just see those who are only in Politics (as many people would notice), but people who have a type of power somehow, who are heading some institutions, associations, organizations, somehow though indirectly many of us would focus on the government and schools. No problem either if we were to think first that way.

The government is important in terms of their “control” on different branches that are under the state’s control and “school” is important also as being one of the key institutions that is there to form people. But, unfortunately, many times when we look at the problem as a whole, the problem that those who have been to school in Haiti cause (because it’s more those who have been to school who put the country in the dead-end where it is today, but not those who are illiterate) are a lot to enumerate. So,

as a result, we can say: the type of schools that exist in Haiti, most of them “deformed” the citizen instead of forming them.

Our discussion always remain focused on the development of the main subject. It is impossible in this discussion to leave out “home” (the heath) as one of the key institutions for the child’s upbringing. Globally when we say “school”, we point our finger on an institution where people are learning and receiving a formation. So we see “home”, where the child is brought up, to be the first school and school the key institution that should have had the responsibility of forming him as the “third entourage” or his “third school”.

In the first environment, ‘home’, we point out our finger on the term “model”. The Haitian saying says: *Joumou pa donnen kalbas* (Squash doesn’t yield gourd); *Ti rat pa fèt san ke* (Small rats usually born with tail). Biologically speaking, we enter the semantics (the meaning) of the proverb. We see a genetic code or we could say also, with another proverb, “*Ti kochon ti san*” (small pig, low blood) – always in the sense to see a model that the child copies from. For example, if the father is a drunken man who is beating his mother for anything, well the chance for him not to beat other woman later when he becomes an adult is quite low. Since he was a child, if his mother and father teach him to greet people who are older than him by saying good day uncle, good day aunt, well that remains a habit for him when he becomes an adult. If his parents teach him to take off his hat when greeting elders or when entering a house, well that becomes a custom for him when he becomes an adult and all the other customs that would have to do with respect for people and for elders (such as for instance: listen to elders when they are talking because their advice is gold, listen to them when talking [don’t cut them off], respect them, etc...). All of this enter the term wisdom that is good for the child when growing up.

We mention neighbor as the second entourage that can have an influence somehow on the child’s upbringing. Yes, it is important to make such remark where this influence can be positive or negative. In our research when reading a philosopher like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he tells us that man was born to be good but it’s society that corrupts him. He is not lying because here, we can put neighborhood, school... as some ingredients that compose a society where the child is raised (in other words, if the neighborhood where that child is living is filled with corruptions, the chance for him not to be corrupted when becoming adult is something quite low. If

this school the child is attending if illforming students, the chance for him not to be malformed later on is quite low).

Globally we point our finger on a word called “model” here, because it is a mirror in which people who are members of the society are looking at. Well, before, we point out the importance of the child’s home (whether it’s in good shape or not, and the repercussion or influence that can have upon his upbringing). In short, it’s all a social code we can notice that foresees the behavior of a person in the society he is living.

Wyclef jean in search of a peaceful solution for Haiti through dialogue
(November 4, 2004)

It's good that Wyclef is trying to do something as a well-known Haitian-American superstar by trying to talk to different groups and see how he can try to connect them. But he must know that every little group in Haiti (be it businessmen, coup leaders, drug dealers, former soldiers, gangs, politicians, scholars, and members of our corrupted elite) has their particular interest which is far from helping to solve Haiti’s problems.

For instance, when we look at all these political parties on the ground (over 20) and other groups that give themselves an identifying number, they did not have any agenda for Haiti (before and after February 29, 2004) other than the slogan: Aristide must go! And as we know, the former priest loves power and he feels like a king on his throne. So, it's up to Haitians to come up with solutions that benefit the country.

If we are frank, “occupation” (the 3rd. visual one so far) is not the solution that the Haitian people need and whoever was elected president of the United States on November 2, 2004 would not be the solution for Haiti's current problems either. It is clear from what I've read on different forums recently that there are Haitians who are pro-Bush, and Pro-Kerry (whether they live in Haiti or in Diaspora). Those who seem to be pro-Bush were hoping that Bush get re-elected in order to keep Aristide away, and among those who are pro-Kerry were hoping that the senator get elected and maybe (who knows?) he would play the role of a “second Bill Clinton”, send Aristide back to Haiti and then from there, come what may. But the \$60,000

question is: would that be a new beginning for Haiti (when she already had over 20)?

Also, Aristide had enough time to prove himself as leader because the Lavalas had full power from October 1994 - February 2004 - put it that way because the 1991 coup by the Army has disrupted everything; it also gave birth to the worst embargo in the history of the country (from 1991-1994). But Haitians (be it leaders or any simple citizen) can't continue to blame hers for their Haiti's fate; for instance, when they did not get full financial support After Preval came to power in 1996 or after Aristide came to power in 2001). Clearly, certain foreign countries did not want to help Haiti during these times, and particularly for problems in the 2000 legislative elections (which can be seen by some Haitians as a challenge to develop leadership) and these countries do benefit from Haiti's problems at the same time but we can't continue blaming them when we forget about our own responsibility toward the mother country.

Talking about “dialogue”, the question is: can dialogue among Haitians (with different interests) be fruitful? But There is always a way out if Haitians can sit down together at the table and put all their differences away in order to focus on the need of a country. To do that, every Haitian must be conscious of the Haitian reality and decide where they want to go (backward or forward).

There was dialogue (if we want to go back in history before February 2004) between Aristide and the so-called “opposition”, (better say “*kovèjans*” - whether they believe Aristide was serious or not). But the latter only wanted him to leave power. It is also important to mention that it's a whole issue that arose from the results of legislative elections of May 2000. Under pressure from top government officials, the 84 year old lawyer Leon Manus, the constitutional chairman of Haiti's electoral college had to go into exile quickly in order to protect his life. “The embassies in Port-au-Prince acted on these credible death threats against Manus by sending a helicopter to take him into exile.” (Christopher G. Fauntroy, 2000).

When the country was facing internal problems in the Winter of 2003 and pressure from the international community was mounting, Aristide could simply resign officially (as a gesture) and he would get credit for that. The truth is that he has become the most popular politician in Haiti (like it or not) and he trusts his popularity in order to hold on to power until the end of his

term. That, in a way, blocks the road for some many others who are also thirsty of power. They would do anything to bring him down because they fear that the Lavalas party would keep power forever (since a very high percentage of the population supports Aristide). Aristide on the other hand, would also do anything to keep his power until the completion of his term. So, clearly, the fight is one for power when analyzing the problems. But again, our questions are: power to do what? Power to work toward the changes that the country needs? Power to feed everyone? Power to throw the infrastructural bases that the country need? Power for the emergence of good leadership? Power to manage personal interest better? ... We could go on and on, asking so many questions dealing with the struggle for power in Haiti.

Every single Haitian is important in Haiti's development

One of the most beautiful things that the Haitian ex-soldiers and other illegally armed groups could do is: giving back their weapon with discussion and declare public ally that they are ready to give all possible help so that the country can move forward (even it would take some months of voluntary works while waiting to get paid some money).

The whole country needs peace. We all need a campaign of “peace” in order to move forward and we see clearly that killing each other for the benefit of “developed countries” won’t help Haiti moving a step forward; instead, it makes it go backward. Others are in a way, making more fun of us as if we were a bunch of wild people, a bunch of savages with no culture and people who don’t know what they want.

No problem if someone would have weapons at home for security (but, it’s something that would be law-governed) but walking with illegal weapons back and forth in the country creates more terror.

Security is one of the most important points for Haiti’s development. How are tourists going to bring capitals to the country without security? How are people going to invest in the country without security? How is the promotion of local tourists going to be done without security? How is the Diaspora going to come to Haiti the possible help to the country without security? It’s

people who are legally allowed to carry weapons only who should have been in the streets (when they are on duty). So, everyone is living in illegality in Haiti; law has become an utopia (it still remains a dream for those who really want to see changes).

It's about time that each Haitian tries to be realistic: if others are giving us money to get rid of our own brothers, just tell him "hey, get out of here! We are all brothers!". Try to be realistic also in what you can do (don't fart higher than your butt); before making a decision to do something, think about all the consequences that can have. Right away, what happened to those illegally armed men who were overly enthusiastic (beginning of 2004)? Answer: the Big White man fooled all of them together with the opportunist Uncle Tom's petit bourgeois who were perishing the country, who always want to be the servant of Mister Foreigner as if Mister Foreigner is coming to solve their problems. Others never give free ride; it's stupid people who does it and intelligent people takes advantage of it. Others just shows them as a bunch of people with small brains (who have nothing in their brain or people with no brains who don't know where they came from, what they want and where they are going). So, let, each Haitian, try to take a little time to think about our dear Haiti's future. Fighting each other won't lead us anywhere, showing haughtiness won't lead us anywhere, division won't lead us anywhere). Don't forget that our motto, *l'union fait la force* (union makes strength), on the national currency; it's so beautiful that other countries adopt it.

Once you travel abroad (whether you are a very dark skinned Haitian, a brown one, a mulatto with curly hair etc, *the sticks that beats the black dog is the one that beats the white dog also* (Haitian proverb). – They always treat as a Haitian). It is true that we should have liberty so that people hear our voice, so that we claim our rights but when doing that with weapon, well it's more problems that we create, it's more pain that we make our dear mother Haiti go that has already fallen apart go through.

There are people who talk about "pacific revolution" (through their writings); I try to decode their written messages; it's a form of struggle anyway (even some of us would not support some of their ideas) but anyhow we should show a form of "civility". Voltaire (the French writer) also says "The pen is mightier than the sword". So, when writing down our ideas, we leave things behind for many generations to come.

Every single Haitian in the society is important. Did you know that we are an intelligent people? Every single Haitian has potential. Did you know that? So, that saying says: "If the bull knew its strength, it would not let a five cent rope kill it". Each of us has an extraordinary potential but we don't value it. We don't take time reflecting on our wonders, our glory in history. We don't realize that others are jealous of that and that since long ago others have been trying all they can to erase our beautiful history. Also, if each Haitian knew what we worth and also Haiti, they would not continue taking orders from others to kill their own brothers in order to benefit him. Every single Haitian needs a bit of time to become conscious of their potential and their duty to contribute to Haiti's development.

Correspondences with teachers in Haiti

(February 3, 2006)

Some suggestions I would give concerning books, and materials in Haitian Creole. These things have not yet really existed within the schools in Haiti and if Haitians think it's the government they are waiting for to make these things work, well Haiti is not going to move forward.

There are sacrifices that teachers, authors and people who own schools must do. They should come up with models (that work). Each school in Haiti should have had a resource room. In a country like the United States (that I most know of), each school has a small library where students can sit down to read, to write their papers, to do their homework while classes are in session.

It would be a good idea for each school in Haiti to adopt this model: create their own resource room or library and equip it with materials in order to help their students. What students learn in the classroom is not enough. They must be able to go after other (re)sources, other materials to read and with the economic problems in Haiti, it's impossible if we educators would really want to come up with a change to expect all children to buy their own books when their parents can't even afford sending them to school.

So, those who don't have books, let's try all of our very best to help them (e.g., making copies of books / materials for them that are used in this school). Nowadays, the internet is an incredible source for everybody. As of now, there are volumes of materials in Haitian Creole that are available on-line free of charge. In my research, trying to help Haiti, from time to time I take some free time to organize what I can find and then put them in my website (*Haiti's Super Web Directory* or *E. W. Védrine's Complete Works*). Just click on it while you are in Haiti (in some cyber cafes) and then you'll see what's available to be used in the schools in Haiti with students. I also publish free of charge materials that are related to Haiti on this site. Invite students, teachers to visit it and print out these materials from time to time when possible.

Good luck to Haiti's next president

(December 2005)

If the coming elections happen with transparency, the Haitian people are not blind and stupid. As the saying says, "*Analfabèt pa bèt*" (Being illiterate does not mean that one is stupid). They will decide who to vote for in the sense of voting a candidate who has shown cares about Haiti's future, a candidate with strong records in the past, one who has done positive things in the society before, but not based on how many degrees that person has amassed from universities in Haiti or abroad.

It's about time to let democracy reign over Haiti! And Haitians shouldn't try to impede it in any possible way. They should, instead, pray that these elections happen peacefully and in transparency.

I doubt anyone expect the deadly surprises of *Ruelle Vaillant* (December 1987) where so many of our beloved country fellows were gunned down by the *macoute* sector just because they were voting someone they thought to be their favorite leader. Whoever gets elected will be the Haitian people's president and if no coup d'état or death happens afterward, will be governing for five years.

Once this person gets elected, we should congratulate him, wishing him the very best and start reminding him of the people's claims (for the country) in

order. There's nothing wrong with doing that as a citizen and his task should be to take them into consideration. It's about time that Haitians focus on "strategies to move Haiti forward" instead of focusing on particular parties with no agendas.

"Political stability" is also something crucial that the Haitian people need in order for Haiti to move forward. The children of Haiti are tired of coup d'états back and forth. There have been over thirty so far and every time there's one the country goes backward for many years. Of course we can always criticize some leaders in a democratic system (whether they are in power or not). That's fine! It's only dictators who don't like critiques but praises all the time because they don't want to do everything with transparency. The new president of Haiti should certainly include people from all parties and background and genres in his government (as long they have a clear record and have shown that they really care for the country's future).

One of the key reason why Haitian politics fail is that the party in power always takes power as a private garden, as "*chwal papa*" (a daddy's horse – that they can run the way they want to) and exclude those who are not members of their party or their entourage. So, the whole cake is for members of the party, nor for outsiders.

The new formula for success is that Haitian politicians should see "power" with some new eyes: a whole *konbit* or collective work where everyone is working together to achieve one goal and here, that goal would be "Haiti's development" and at the same time, there will be advantages for those who take part in that great 'konbit'.

Many fans who support "a party" just want, most of time, "a job", or "favors" if their candidate ascends to power but, nothing else in the sense of seeing a country's needs and how they can bring their own contribution. This lack of vision and unity tells it all in order to understand where Haiti is where she is.

But, a real Haitian who dreams of changes for Haiti at all levels shouldn't be a fan of any particular party, but instead encourage them to work together, to have a vision for their country and how to develop strategies to reach that goal. Certainly, inside us, we sometimes know who we would vote for, based on certain criteria dealing with the candidate's record but again, as the

Haitian saying says “*sekrè pa pouri trip chen*” (secrets do not spoil a dog’s intestine), therefore we keep them to ourselves. Long live Haiti! And good luck to Haiti’s next president.

Haiti : goodbye to a repressive army
(June 28, 2005)

In interpreting some comments related to the Haitian National Police (“*Police Nationale d’Haïti*”, PNH), to certain critics, it would not be 100% better since both share certain DNA. No doubt that there is certain truth here (since many members of the defunct army have been recruited in the new police force) but to many of us, at least Haiti will not waste millions and millions of green dollars in a-nothing-to-do institution that has so far contributed nothing and absolutely nothing to the country's development.

Knowing its history, that would not be the right choice for Haiti to keep on feeding such a repressive army whose sole enemies are the Haitian people. Doing that would be like keeping on eating a food that makes one throwing up all the time. Also, it would cause Haiti more problems of political instability with coups back and forth. So, why should Haiti repeat the very same errors of the past? Any lesson to learn from that for a brighter future?

If we carefully read the Haitian Constitution of 1987 (article 265), I pretty much doubt that it says somewhere that the army has to meddle in Politics: “*The Armed Forces are apolitical. Their members may not be art of any political group or party, and they must observe the strictest neutrality*”. The army had at least a last chance under Aristide (back before September 30, 1991) to “start to improving itself” in the sense of trying to change its mentality of keeping on acting as *restavèk blan* (servant of foreign powers) institution and being a repressive one at the same time, therefore this “negative” image has also influenced “few” good guys that were part of that institution.

Haiti never had “a real army” in the 20th century that was defending its interests (such as for instance, defending the country in the event of war; Protecting the country against threats from abroad; seeing to surveillance of the land, sea and air boundaries; At the well-founded request of the Executive, they may land assistance to the police when the latter are unable

to handle a situation; Assisting the Nation in the event of a natural disaster; In addition to their regular duties, the Armed Forces may be assigned to development work (as clearly stipulated in article 266 of Constitution), but rather the interests of some foreign super powers - acting as a “watch dog” for them and at the same time, an army that would somehow protected a corrupted elite's interests. Clearly during the September 1991 coup, some of the elite members even made their vehicles available to the death squads of the army to patrol Port-au-Prince and persecute people in its poor neighborhoods just because of one sin committed: voted for candidate of their choice, Jean-Bertrand Aristide – besides financing one of the bloodiest coup d'états in the country's history that happened right before the “fiscal year” when paying taxes to the government would be due. “Paying taxes” was also crucial for the first democratic government at the time since all aids promised from abroad were blocked, which can be interpreted at the same time as a “challenge” for Haiti to learn how to grow up and not depending 100% on others, but alas a lesson that is never learned.

Haiti was certainly in a political dead-end. Any illiterate Haitian knows quite well these true stories about the army and one that was “neutralized” by Duvalier (in the early 60's when became a dictator). I use the term 'neutralized' because he did not get rid of it, but instead had full control over it with the creation of the paramilitary, *tonton macoutes** (also secret police under that brutal regime) and “spies” within the same army. That way, the Duvaliers had control over the intelligentsia and theories, of course, some people who are against any real change to take place in Haiti would keep on talking bla bla bla... and trash talk to have these scary bloody boots back on the scene (for one reason or another) and at the same time, we don't forget that elections are not too far away and it's a way to avoid discussing some of the “real issues” concerning Haiti's future and development (e.g., strategies for a political stability in order for the country's development to start taking place, decentralization, developing agriculture, health care problem, education, justice and laws, creating jobs, solving the electricity problem, building real roads ... and other doing other things pertaining to the country's infrastructure).

These guys (members of the defunct army) have only “one skill”: knowing how to shoot and I would say “at Haitians only” because if someone pulls out a real slingshot at them, they would certainly drop their M-16 or run at full speed if hearing the noise of a some firework. Some important question

that we may ask from this issue are the followings: Can Haiti learn anything from Costa Rica in the history of the army of the two nations?

What is to be done (in the sense of having a secured Haiti where everyone can live freely)? The answer is: “not just one thing” since there are too many. First the “army” issue out of the question; the next legislature should only vote for its total disappearance and have some amendments made in the 1987 constitution for the benefit of Haiti’s development.

In the near future, it would not be a good idea to recruit “former members of the army” to become members of the police force (though that been done and it's quite a mistake). As our Creole proverb teaches us, a dog that used to eat eggs never breaks away from that old habit. A strong and professional police force (with more members and all equipments needed to do their jobs) is really needed.

The new government (if for sure real and free elections will take place in Haiti at the end of 2005) can have a particular “trade school” for members of the defunct army to learn some skills “free of charge” so that they will be able to work in the society and may be, contribute to the country's development and see the possibility of paying back those they owned some paychecks.

**Some important comments on the use of Haitian Creole in Haiti,
an excerpt from an interview with André Vilaire Chéry***

Reference: an excerpt from a presentation by E. W. Védrine in French Guyana (May 2003): “The use of *An annotated bibliography on Haitian Creole* of E. W. Védrine as one of the important tools in the standardization of Haitian Creole”.

Point #1. *Creole in the schools* —

Yes, it's mandatory for students of the 3 cycles of “*Ekòl Fondamantal*” (Fundamental school), that is, from “first year” to “ninth year”) to learn to read and write Creole. This is the theory. In reality, there are many situations presented according to the school (what are the social clients who attend it? Is it located in a rural milieu? etc...).

Theoretically speaking, Creole is “the teaching language” for the first three years, with the exception to teach French (for instance, French oral communication is done in French since the first year). Beginning the fourth year, the teaching language is French; that is: all the subjects are being taught in French. They continue to teach Creole but as any other subject (*langue d'apprentissage* / learning language).

It does not happen the same way in all schools. In what they call “*grandes écoles*” (great schools, great private schools), the teaching language is French (due to the clients who attend them). They continue with the teaching of Creole through the fourth – fifth or sixth year. Why? Because at the end of the sixth year (equivalent to the old “*sètifika*” level), all students without exception are going to take the “official exam” entitled *Examens d'Etat* (State Exam) in all subject areas, that also include “Creole”. At this time, these schools have one or two hours of teaching Creole weekly (practicing the orthography, reading and grammar). Not too much writing to do in Creole.

There are many other schools, specially those hosting students from underprivileged milieus, and that don't have teachers who are really fluent in French, so “the teaching language” is in Creole, from the first to the sixth year. All the subjects are presented in Creole by the teacher, and the students study their lessons in French because most of the schools' manuals are written in that language. But I must tell you that there is a great volume of manuals written in Creole also, specially for the primary grades. I got this information from a reliable source. At *Editions Deschamps*, we have a team specializing only in the formation of teachers; they travel around the country to form teachers, whether it's in Port-au-Prince, the provinces or in the rural remote areas.

There is another particular case that we call *cas mixte* (mix case). That is the case of the underprivileged state schools a religious congregation (catholic) is in charge of. The clients of these schools are children who are “Creole monolinguals”. Teaching is done in Creole; the teacher repeats what was just said in French in order to give them some notions of French.

There are other schools where from the beginning of the third year, the teaching language is French; it's the students who should try their best to

become adapted to it even if they don't have a sufficient mastery of the language.

Point #2. *In what language do teachers speak in the classrooms?* —

This question has been answered. One thing that can be added is: this demarcation is not between private and public schools. Currently in Haiti, almost 85% of the scholarly education is given by the private sector. And when saying “private sector”, it’s not something as a block. There is what is called *les grandes écoles* (in general, Catholic congregational institutions); there exist *les bonnes petites écoles* (the good small schools); there are those that have one or two level lower; there is what is called *les écoles borlettes* (schools that appear to be as crazy business with no qualification). In the *écoles borlettes*, there also exists a bunch of under-categories, ‘til we find categories of schools that are functioning under an arbor or a tree. So, it’s not an opposition *private* vs. *public*. It's rather important to know in what category such and such school is located, who are its social clients, what's the qualification level of the teachers (in particular in those that have to deal with the mastery of the French language, etc.). As Chéry mentions, there are schools where all the courses are taught in Creole, even French courses.

A special case: at the university (level), there are many teachers who choose to teach their course in Creole.

Point #3. *The official Creole orthography* —

“We follow what's called the ‘official orthography’ in all that it requires. All books or documents published by Editions Deschamps respect this orthography to the letter. Maybe only one exception is the issue or ‘apostrophe’ that we don't use after groups such as <*m ap*> (*m'ap* / I'm in the process of); <*sa k ap fèt ?*> (*sa k'ap fèt?* /What's going on, what's happening), etc. Naturally, we observe a space to mark the elision or contraction. As of now in Haiti, I believe that most people who are using the official orthography observe that. They don’t really use hyphen (-) either (e.g., <*chèz la*> instead of <*chèz-la*> (the chair)...”. (André V. Chéry).

Point #4. *Creole and the Bernard Educational Reform* —

In the beginning of the 80's, there have been many visible efforts that the government has done. That coincided with the creation of *Institut*

Pédagogique National (IPN) and the launching of the “Bernard Educational Reform”. As we know know, the integration of Creole in the schools as teaching language and as subject is one of the week points of this reform.

At this time, many efforts that were taking place in the area of preparing teachers, working on teaching manuals and other pedagogical and teaching documents and its promotion in the media, etc. IPN started elaborating books (in Creole) in many areas (e.g., pre-apprenticeship, awakening, reading, grammar, math, etc). IPN no longer exists since ten years. Chéry, in his comments, doesn't see a great effort to support Creole really in the schools or in the media, apart from some punctual or symbolic efforts he notices: “For example, this year, in the *Baccalaureate Exam**, students will take their exam in Creole in “certain subjects”. It's also true that there are many schools having a course in Creole even in the highest secondary grades” (André V. Chéry).

In the media, the radios mostly, since 1989 “Creole is king”, particularly for what is related to Politics (news, free antenna emissions). Jean-Claude Bajoux writes in his *Anthologie / Mosochwazi: “Le créole devient la langue de la politique, c'est l'une des révélations de l'après-7 février 1986”* (Creole has become the language of Politics, that's one of the revelations post February 7, 1986). That is quite right. It does prevent many Creole specialists to launch from time to time some alarming cries for the way they mistreat this language in the media (particularly on the radio). Pierre Vernet is one of the people who let his voice be heard from time to time against that. According to these people's point of view, it's mostly the “syntax” of the language that is being threatened. What happen is that there are no efforts being done by the people who are using the language to respect the principles of its “internal structures”. Since many of these people are also speakers of French, they have a tendency of plugging purely and only the French structure on the Creole one. It's true that gives sometimes funny things (as a result). For example: “*poze l kesyon pou konnen sa l panse, li reponn...*” . (cf. French: *Questionne / Interrogé sur le point de savoir ce qu'il en pense, il a repondu...*> [ask him / her the question to know what he / she thinks, he / she answers) or “*Li frape pa yon polisye*”, (French: *il a été frappé par un policier* / He was hurt by a policeman). In short, in relation to “quantity”, Creole is certainly present in the media – the radios, but in relation to “quality”, that's something else.

This allows me to do another discussion on the issue of “standardization”. In the public administrations, it seems that the official orthography is still not being respected. During a talk that was held 3 or 4 weeks ago in Port-au-Prince at *Université Quisqueya*, there was a Haitian participant who witnessed what I was going to say. In a short text having 6 or 7 lines that he read in a public office, he underlined twenty mistakes.

Outside of the government, either in banners for ads, signs, billboard, advertising..., people still don't respect the official orthography.

André Vilaire Chéry. Author of *Dictionnaire De L'évolution Du Vocabulaire Français En Haïti dans le discours politique, économique et social du 7 février 1986 à nos jours* (Tome I & II).

What can we do to help the Minister of Education in Haiti?

Well, it's a question to which many of us can give a particular answer. But, truly, as long as we, Haitians, don't decide to work for Haiti for real with their soul, strength, resources, and goodwill, the generation of 2000 will always have one thing in mind: “leave Haiti”.

So, in this sense, one of the things that Haitian educators in the Diaspora can think of is emphasizing on “strategies to collaborate with the Minister of National Education in Haiti and with real Haitian educators (in Haiti & in the Diaspora)” to see what can be done, particularly those of us who have some resources and the knowledge. We can outline these propositions in this way:

- a) Create a web site or web links to put all the documents that we think schools in Haiti would need.
- b) Put a list of websites that have documents on Haiti or just add them to my on-line directory (*Haiti's Super Web Directory*) that I've already created to facilitate research on Haiti.
- c) Conduct a campaign to collect research papers and research documents that are related to Haiti from students and research documents in general to

give to students and teachers in Haiti (at all levels) access to research to help them.

To realize that, it is something easy (as long as you believe in these ideas and that you would like to help Haiti moving forward) in the area of Education and Research without begging for foreigners' money to realize a series of easy mini-projects that we can do ourselves) for the well-being of our country. In this sense, the "technology" issue cannot be left behind. Many Haitians would scratch their head when mentioning "technology".

Haiti is one of the countries in the world that produce "brains" but our problem is that we don't believe in our potential or take a little time to reflect on how we have to learn to use our resources. It is a conscious collective work where everyone is needed, all professionals (Haitians as well as non-Haitians), not only to help us but also to exchange great ideas for Haiti' development. So, think how you can make educators and Haitian professionals become conscious (in all areas to learn how to put their knowledge at the service of Haiti), and all other people who would like to help us.

One of nuclei of the issue is "the creation of well-equipped real research center in Haiti" (where first of all there should be computers in order to build a computerized system to document and print these materials). That would allow us to make a series of workshops for teachers and students so that they give better results in school (in the area of development and strategies to use teaching materials).

Let's not talk a lot or make useless discussions with that but rather see what ideas you have, who care about Haiti's development, what you can give, what you can produce for Haiti to benefit from it (within a short period of time); you who have all type of degrees hanging on your wall: how can Haitians benefit from them? Think about it, make these ideas a dream come true.

To get our pride back from history and to change the negative image of Haiti, it depends on me, on you, on all of us and today it's a challenge before us in the road of progress for our country. Education is one of Haiti's doors of which we will need to change its lock in order for the success' key to work in it. I hope that you will think about these ideas and share them with your friends to help in this huge collective work.

Labor Day in Haiti

Why should Haiti celebrate “Labor Day” when since a very long time ago more than 80% of the people are jobless, when more than 80% of our peasants don't have land to work, no plantation, zero agriculture? The Haitian People, if they really could see the truth, would protest against such a holiday till things begin to change (if ever they'll be changed).

Feedback

“Camarade Emmanuel Védrine, des Associations professionnelles et des syndicats Haitiens consciencieux peuvent convier la population d’Haïti à fêter le travail pour magnifier la vertu et le besoin du travail pour tous et toutes en Haïti” (Lemane Vaillant)

“Dear Emmanuel Védrine, some professional associations and some conscientious Haitian unions can invite the Haitian population to celebrate work to glorify virtue and the need of work for all in Haiti” (Lemane Vaillant)

“Mwen komprann pozisyon Emmanuel Védrine lan sou zafè fete Fèt Travay, men mwen dakò ak Lemane Vaillant pou fete Fèt Travay la, konsa se va yon chans pou sendika, chomè, legliz, e lòt gwoupman mete tèt ansamm pou mande dekiprevien zafè 80% moun nan peyi a pa sa jwenn travay pou yo fè” (Harry Fouche)

“I understand Emmanuel Védrine’s position on the issue of celebrating Labor Day but I agree with Lemane Vaillant for the Labor Day celebration, that way it will be a chance for unions, unemployed people, the church, and other groups to get together to ask what’s going on in the issue of 80% of people in the country can’t find works to do” (Harry Fouche)

“They celebrate just to celebrate, it's a hang out, a custom, a program, there's money to be made activities to keep them busy that's all. People are so depressed, stressed out with the same daily craps; lack of everything, police brutality, corruption, black out, crimes, insecurity, kidnapping, rapes, violence, murder, abuse, injustice, discrimination of all sorts....

We wonder who cares if people have jobs or not, who cares about working conditions for the 20% who happen to have a “job”. They celebrate Labor Day just as they enjoy rara, band on foot and carnival. Comedians like Jessifra, Tonton Bicha, Pè Thoma, Pastè Blaze are their best therapists aided by old recordings of Alcibiade, Maurice Sixto and other less known comedians. I guess the government sees the need to keep these ceremonials as a way for them and the people to keep their sanity.

On Labor Day, those who can afford it go to Jacmel to party, a local tourists and popular bands occupy the town. Traditional holidays, moral, dignity, integrity, sovereignty, values, nothing has meaning anymore, nothing works in the country. Bluff is an integral part of our folks back home. Bluff every where in private in public circles. We refuse to engage in constructive discussions, debates or any kind of exchange of ideas. Only the occupiers and the international community words count. The people, politicians or the average citizen none has a voice in the country's affairs. We refuse to face reality, we're full of it...” (Daniel Ulysse)

On the native language of Haiti and francophonie

“Le développement d'Haïti passe par une prise de conscience de l'importance de la langue maternelle; ce n'est pas qu'on aille mettre de côté le français; on peut faire en sorte que les deux langues puissent cohabiter sans que l'une ne soit pas plus valorisée que l'autre”. (Constel Charles)

The development of Haiti will happen by becoming aware of the importance of the native language. It's not a matter of putting French away; we can manage somehow the use of the two languages to exist side by side without having one be more valorized than the other. (Constel Charles)

I hope that all Haitians who are native speakers of French carefully read this comment by Constel Charles. France has been doing a campaign in the 90's, trying to save Voltaire's language or because of its fear of losing the linguistic battle to English. This is what “La francophonie” bla bla... is all about. Nothing else!

When one raises the question: What has France done so far for the “French speaking countries” in Africa and other underdeveloped French speaking

countries around the world? - We doubt Jacques Chirac would give a clear answer to that. At the same time, I am not doing a campaign to advocate for the English language either or for any other languages of the former colonial powers, but I do believe the mastery of some languages is important to put people in contact.

In fact, we the victims of colonization and of the slaves trade (over 500 years ago), have to master some of them but just as a means of communication because we do need to know some of the main languages of the world today (e.g., English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Swahili, Chinese... just to name a few) to communicate with more people and each language that we are able to speak is a culture that we represent and we will be able to communicate with billion of people who speak them also.

The big problem is: how we use language in general (to impose power, to communicate with one another, to show off, to hurt, to promote superiority). And to answer that question, we have seen that most of the so-called intellectuals and the well-to-do Haitians had used French in the past (some of them still continue to do so) more as a linguistic weapon to distance themselves from the rest of the population (who are the underdogs in many ways, the poor who are monolingual Creole speakers). Right there, we can analyze all the prejudices (if we want to get deeper in sociolinguistics issues that have been created in our society) that these new masters (replacing the formers who were white) have invented, but we know that the majority takes over in all its sense and in that way, the Creole language survives in Haiti and will survive (since most Haitians would voice for change at all level), a country where this native language has been mistreated for over two centuries. Also, the change must be a top-to-bottom one, that is it is about time that Haitian intellectuals and the those well-to-do start changing their colonial mind and think of a country, a flag, a people, a language, a culture.

As Constel Charles suggests, we need a "*prise de conscience*" (a consciousness awareness) for that change to occur. It is not just about "language use" in our society, but also to start valorizing what is ours, a whole cultural legacy. This, in a way, has inspired me to translate (to Haitian Creole and English) an interview that a Mauritian radio (in the Indian Ocean) has recently with Diane Guillemain (<http://potomitan.info/vedrine/guillemain.php#a>) where she also touches on Haiti on that issue.

“*Tous les hommes sont frères*” (All men are brothers) as I quote it from the title of the book by the great Hindu non-violence leader, Gandhi. I always underline that mistake “Haiti is a French speaking country” with my pen when reading it anywhere; it's like saying in a sense, Canada is a French speaking country also though there's no possible comparison between Haiti and Canada (even if we were to debate on the linguistic phenomenon of diglossia, the one that best describes the linguistic situation of Haiti).

Note for distributors and publishers of Creole books
(Winter 2000)

A little note for distributors and publishers of Haitian books who are concerned - how distributors and publishers of Creole books can help in solving some problems in documenting publication of books and written documents or those that are being written.

It's a question that everyone can answer if they don't have experience yet in researching in the domain of bibliography (of any type). Bibliography research is one that is very important (in all areas) to facilitate people who are doing research find references quickly and localize the publication or the main sources. With the internet today, many distributors and publishers can communicate with one another quickly to exchange information.

But, can all these happen in the greater Haitian community (in Haiti and the Diaspora)? – The answer is no. And why it does not happen? Many people in the greater Haitian community realize the power that the internet has and the super advantage it gives everyone who is doing business worldwide. Though we know it would be a luxury in Haiti, but there are ciber cafés there (they not many) where people can subscribe to the internet, check their e-mails, send messages around the world (despite of the electricity problem) that exists in the country.

Distributors of Creole books and Haitian books in the Diaspora have e-mails but the problem is: do they use them to circulate messages, information quickly that can be useful for research and even advertising for their business? That would be quite bad if you were to ask a Haitian distributor to give an information a quickly information on an author or on his book that is being distributed. In order to solve this bibliography problem, it is important

for the distributors, Haitian publishers to the power that the internet has and the access they have to organize themselves better in the new century. It would be important for them to construct a good web site to include the titles of the books they publish (including year, author, number of pages, a summary of the book) and then catalog them by subject , include information about the author (such as his bibliography, critics on his works that can appear in periodicals (journals and reviews)).

All these works can be done quickly where they can be available on-line for the whole world and the importance to summarize or make a description of these books (in the Creole, French) and then translate them into English (when possible) for the international market.

We hope that bit of information can be circulated in order to help people who are producing Creole works and who are thinking of the strategies to make available publications known in the market in order for these works to be sold quickly.

To add something more on publication of Creole works, this text is very important and we would like that all readers take it seriously, circulate it and then take advantage of asking questions they want on the issue. There are many little problems that we would like to mention in the Creole works that are being published where these manuscripts don't go through some competent hands before the final print.

The more the work is being taking care of before going to the press, the more success the author would have with it but the fact that most Creole texts are self-published and some of them don't ask information on some important issues before publication take place, that way the careless work continues to take place and something that would make some people have no respect for the publication of Creole texts. So, a work of long term consciousness should be done for people who are publishing to be conscious (check with people who appear to be competent in the domain to hear their comments of the manuscripts).

Professionally speaking, that's how that should have done. I would encourage people who are writing in Creole (if they had never attended any seminar on Creole) for them to try to do that (with competent people, people who already have a linguistic background) and try to have some good books, dictionaries on Creole (as reference tools). When a dictionary is published,

the author always has the intention of publishing a new edition, try to find out if such and such dictionary would have a second, third edition. The most recent edition would be the best (where the author would make certain corrections and then add up new words to it).

Review of Senou's article, 'a call for a coalition and a unity gove' and some issues pertaining to Haiti's development

(February 23, 2006)

Yes, everyone knows that the presidential elections are now over and that René Préval is the president-elect. Haitians, most of them, don't see things in the American way - in terms of the elections are over, let's congratulate the winner! Even president George W. Bush picked up his phone calling Preval to congratulate him and wishing him good luck. Have all politicians in Haiti done that so far and publicly?

It is terrible when reading about Manigat's reaction about Preval's winning. Manigat, who came in second position, does not even get 13% of over 90% of the votes counted and he's been complaining about an "electoral coup" against him. He's been patiently waiting for a make-believe runoff. But he would still be the loser when looking at his low scores, making it impossible to catch up Preval who was way ahead. Even if he were to get the scores of votes from the so-called coalition, he would not make it either and the coalition is already splitting by conceding Preval's victory. But Manigat has been even thinking of all possible ways for a legal fight. I don't know how many of us have read one of the funniest fables by La Fontaine, *La grenouille et le boeuf** (The frog and the cow).

Senou, in his article suggests that the "Diaspora or the mainland" must work together. The thing is that we, Haitians in the Diaspora – precisely those who really want to help Haiti, need the proper channels to do so and of course, we focus on any serious government who ascends to power in order to create or open these channels that some of us have been desperately waiting for. In other words, we need structures as models to help us or to follow.

I talk about the importance of human resources in some of my latest articles, and how Haiti can benefit from that. But unfortunately, it is an area that has

never been exploited to help Haiti as far as I know. Shouldn't that, genuine idea, be part of the Minister of the Diaspora's agenda (to create these crucial channels in order to exploit human resources) for the benefit of Haiti's development?

I guess this should be among the most important agendas of the incoming government. Yes, there are many Haitian brothers and sisters in the Diaspora who would love to help Haiti with all their heart! There is also a dynamic population of young college Haitians abroad (particularly living in the United States) who would love to help and to work with Haitian youth back home but, they need proper channels, or institutions in order to do so and something that following governments can build upon to help the country moving forward.

At the same time, we should encourage groups of people who are trying to do anything to help (without waiting for these proper channels to be created). Among these groups, we can mention the "regional groups" (e.g., some people who are from certain regions in Haiti decide to get together to do something to help their native provinces such as building a clinic, a school, a hospital, creating a business, an activity for the youth, whatever that would benefit their local regions).

This is an excellent idea that is seen as part of "an alternative development" because at the same time, the country has too many problems to be solved at once and really, if we are conscious, it would be impossible to wait for any government who ascends to power to solve all of Haiti's problems within five years. But at the same time, these projects must be encouraged by the Haitian government because, in a way, they will make the burden lighter for the latter when citizens can get together to help themselves.

Therefore, they must try to back up these groups. For instance, these organized groups can be helped by facilitating them certain authorizations from the government (if needed) in order to proceed with what they are doing. They can be helped if they need certain help to ship some materials to Haiti since we know about the headache they can have through the customs service. Confronting these problems can discourage interested groups from helping their own provinces which are parts of Haiti and in a way, developing some parts of the country because the government can't help doing all this right away.

Blaming each other and taking revenges are among the important points mentioned by Senou in his article. Yes, Haitians are very good at that and I would also add, blaming former colonizers all the time for our fate instead of taking responsibility for our own mess by correcting our mistakes made in the past. It's a whole mentality that needs to be changed here as many critics would agree. In a way, Haitians need to grow up. Though changing that mentality is not something that can be done over night for one that has been colonized for over five hundred years, but preaching constantly about what's good to be done will certainly have, in the long run, a positive effect at least on the younger generation who will be the tomorrow's leaders.

In Senou's suggestion 'to follow Mandela footsteps' we first see forgiveness here and be able to work with rivals. But can that really happen in Haiti? Shouldn't there be first a justice system (to tell "x" or "y" of their wrong doings before forgiveness can be granted (if we really want to follow the Mandela model)? Look how many people who have been thrown in jail since Latortue came to power in March 2004, and these prisoners have never seen a judge. Isn't that something against the constitution when they must appear before a judge in two days? Many of them don't even know why they are behind bars in the first place.

So, I guess Senou is going to think of that - how to grant forgiveness after justice is done. Yes, we can forgive but not forget. Haitians are not easy to forgive and we know that. Is it really part of the Haitian Culture or part of a Political Culture (back home)? We wonder because it's something that we've been observing for more than two centuries.

In calling to 'establish a bridge between those 'who have' and those 'who have not', as Senou mentions, our question is: How solid can that bridge be? Here, he leaves out the word "to create". How about that, create also to empower the 'who have not', to teach them how to create to possess (not just "give" them)? If you show me how to fish, it would be absolutely better than giving me a fish daily for I can be on my own catching many every day in the nearby water and at any time. In other words, there should be a focus on teaching how to be independent.

Reference

Senou. "A Call for a Coalition and a Unity gove". (Posted on "Haiti Mailing List" Forum, Feb. 2006)

**What are the presidential candidates'
credentials in Haitian society?**
(October 2005)

Looking at a question raised by someone recently about the Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the presidential candidates, I would say the most important question is rather 'What have they done yet for the country so that Haitian people can trust them by casting a vote for them in November? If that question is being answered in their CVs, that's fine!

It's about time that we don't let our naked eyes fool us any longer by reading long CV's with nothing exciting in terms of what the person has done as positive for his society. Most Haitians are impressed by the number of diplomas someone has on his wall instead of going through what that person has accomplished for his community / country within a specific time frame (whether he has diplomas or not). What university have Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, Petion, Charlemagne Peralte attended? Can anyone answer that question? Is it possible to make a list of positive things they have accomplished for Haiti?

CV's can be *trompe l'oeuil*. It's good to reach a high level of education if possible, but the real questions are: What do you do with it afterward? Do you just hang your diplomas on the wall at home or in your office? It seems that the more diplomas Haitians get from universities, the less intelligent they become in the sense of not knowing how to do things the right way, not knowing how to do the right thing, not knowing how to produce, knowing how to do positive things to help their society.

Let's try to make a list of positive things that these long list of presidential candidates have accomplished for Haiti so far. There goes challenge! Second, I observe that some people start clapping their hands for some candidates who have entered the race, projecting them as "new saviors" for Haiti. This is one of the worst things that someone can do. Dating and marriage are two different things.

If someone is not yet in power, how on earth do we know that this person will be a good leader, especially if he did not prove himself beforehand? It

would be better to review a politician's work after he leaves power rather than before he ascends to power.

Let's be wise in dealing with "Haitian Politics" for it's a very fragile issue. I like the American saying that says: "I am from Missouri, show me".

Will a multilingual program solve Haiti's schools real problems?

I would say it's one to say and the other to perform, paraphrasing from an English saying. We must, first, solve problems related to "diglossia" and bilingualism issues in Haiti and use on-line Haitian forums as a means to discuss these issues. In order to do that, a strong linguistic policy is needed to be drafted by the government (when ever a real one would ascend to power).

What language do we think school children in Japan learn (to read and write) before reaching 8th grade? The answer is of course, Japanese. They start English from 8th grade (same as schools in the Scandinavian countries though most students in these northern European countries have a better command of the English language (comparing to Japanese students, due to their applied linguistic methodology).

I started learning Spanish by myself when I was ten years old in Haiti (by using the *Assimil Sans Peine* methods); that means, it would be quite a good idea for parents to expose their children to other languages at a very young age, and to travel to other countries with them (if possible or when is possible). My interest in the Cervantes language was stronger than that of the Shakespearian one, but after almost three decades living in USA and traveling to Europe, English is likely to be my second language though I still have a fluency in Spanish.

Anyone who has a chance reading my book entitled *Yon koudèy sou pwoblèm lekòl Ayiti* ("A look at the problem of schools in Haiti") will see that my focus on these essays are not on "language use" in Haiti's schools as some funny Haitians authors or scholars under the Duvalier's regime have put it, making Creole and French responsible for the high illiteracy rate instead of tackling the real issue which has always been "Politics" by, trying

to divorce themselves from the Haitian Reality instead of focusing on opportunities that Haitian children have to attend schools. These children are quite smart (by looking at some of their performance), whatever language they want to have in schools in Haiti, that won't be a big deal for them as long as they have the opportunity to attend school.

What we do really need to fight for (not with guns) is voicing for free schools (including school materials) and lunch. Research shows that most children in Haiti who are attending school would drop out before even completing the middle school cycle due to the country's economic situation: no free schools, those students whose parents are making ends meet to send them to schools can't afford buying them books and food for them despite of their sacrifices buying them at least one uniform, be it a “*lavanm metanm wetanm*” (cloth worn daily). Free schools should not be regarded as a “gift” that the Haitian government would give these kids, but rather as a provision covered under the 1987 Constitution. These things (legal rights) must be talk on radios and TV's in Haiti to educate the population and in a way, will help eradicating the disease called “illiteracy”.

If these children, in Haiti today, are hanging out in the streets, joining gangs, becoming vagabonds, drug dealers, drug addicts and beggars, it is not their fault but rather the government's for not doing their constitutional job. This is real Civics (to be taught), and we Haitians must do something about it, one way or another (let's try to do our jobs also as citizen, let's be active in helping moving Haiti forward, let's be an activist for a better Haiti, loving Haiti should not only be a word that comes out of Haitians' mouth but rather, let our actions talk).

Going back to Japan (which should be one of the sources of inspiration for Haitians who would like to see real developments taking place in Haiti), we may ask this question: How many countries in the world speak Japanese? The answer is “one”. I have been reading funny comments about Creole as an “isolated language” for over 30 years, real silly things uttered by so-called “Haitians scholars” who went far in school. It's so funny to see to what extent their brain has been colonized. Some even went further saying that “Creole is not a language”; if so, then they are not humans because every single human being speaks a native language; in a way, they put themselves in the classification of lower primates by reasoning that way. So, education must be done at all levels to reshape the colonial mind or to revitalize the zombified brains with salt. Therefore, the native language

should play a great role in schools. Also, in the developing countries around the world (e.g., USA, Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland...) and in some third world countries (e.g., Cuba, Mexico, Brazil...), the native language is also the official language used in school.

The language situation in Haiti is different from the one in some African countries where for instance in Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal ... (just to name a few) more than 50 spoken languages (representing different ethnic groups), therefore a national language is needed (be it French or English) which is at the same time is used to connect everyone, and is also used as “official language”.

In French Guyana (where I've been), there are about 11 languages spoken there; as a “department d'outre-mer” (over-seas department), French is used as the national language. In the case of Haiti, all Haitians speak Creole as their native language (no problem at all in terms of communication, a homogeneous ethnic group), therefore it should also play a great role in education (as the primary language) before mastering any other and by showing respect for the Haitian culture since language, in general, is a very sensitive issue and an important cultural ingredient that must be handled with care.

The Haitian Government must start valorizing the native language of all Haitians, and use it both in speaking and writing signs must be in both French and Creole. I would not have any problem at all helping with these translations free of charge if any group of Haitians would like to do some works that would help in this sense or embarking on doing something positive that could help in that sense.

For those who have been living in Canada, there is a law in Quebec entitled “*La Loi 101*” (Law 101), making it mandatory to post in French. In the late 70's when I was visiting Quebec for the very first time, everything was bilingual (in French and English), now all the posts are in French.

There should be a whole campaign pushing ‘bilingualism’ in Haiti. You can't just jump from one language, two languages to a third and to a fourth one without mastering any of the primary ones (that are officially recognized in the country's constitution); this is just an advice for schools in general but at home, it would be quite a good idea if parents want to expose their children to more than one, and in Haiti we already know that it's only parents who

can who will have the opportunity to do that unless the government thinks of national radio and television programs, putting TVs in the streets so that kids who don't have access to them at home will have a chance to watch some programs for kids and I pretty much doubt it's something that will be done because of its cost, and we may wonder how long it will take the Haitian government to solve the simple electricity problem when Haiti can use Solar Energy (on a 24 hour basis) which would be quite cheap and also advantageous to the whole country. Until then, let's keep on living in illusion (in terms of dreaming of a better Haiti) but do share your great ideas with others.

Haitians and the myth about 'blacks don't read'

(October 13, 2005)

Not long ago, some writings have been circulating on the internet about 'Blacks don't read'. Some people have even done extensive research on the theme. But for us, Haitian educators living in the U.S, how can we talk about this problem? What can we do in order to get deeper and deeper in this matter and see what can be done to help breaking the ice, knowing that to read and write is quite a powerful weapon that an individual can have in his hand?

Most of the times, these pieces of writing circulating on the net tend to blame Blacks instead of finding out the cause and effect. As a minority within a larger one, should we - as educators, just blame them and never finding out the real reason? As new black immigrants, we (or our offspring) will soon be integrated in that larger Black Diaspora. When Haitians leave Haiti, they don't leave their traditions behind. Those who are living in Diaspora always represent a sample of those who remain behind in the main land.

In the Haitian Culture, most things are still at the oral level since most Haitians in Haiti never had access to school. That means most of Haiti's oral traditions have not been written down. As research shows, 85% of the population is illiterate. No joke about it! And yet, we don't have any government who really cares about that big problem to do something about it. Their sole purpose is getting to power by any means possible, stealing as

much money as possible, put their friends in some key positions and then go into exile later.

It's only after the Civil Right Movement that Blacks in the United States had a real chance to go attend "some schools". It was not easy for them beforehand. Those who were lucky to go to school before, had to seat in the back of the class or gave up their seat to white students (most of the time). And after graduation, one of the jobs available to most black graduates in the U.S (late 19th century & beginning of the 20th) was being a waiter in some restaurants or hotels.

Haitians who arrived in the United States after the Civil Right Movement were quite lucky, and many of them never realized that Dr. Martin Luther King had also sacrificed his life for them. So, in a way, some would buy the negative stereotypes about Afro-Americans without trying to know their true history and their struggle to survive in a country what was build upon their own sweats.

Second, some Blacks in the U.S look straight where opportunity opens its doors to them, and many of the young men in this sense are dreaming to make it in music, sports and the arts. So, to them, why bother working hard going to college and cannot get a good job later when they can make million of dollars in music and sports? Is this a silly thought for survival?

Back in Haiti, education opens doors to the *Sòyèt's* children (low class children) and it's the only path that can help them climbing the social ladder. Let's not blaming something funny here (as it appears to be in some writings), but rather let's try to understand the reality of the world, and as educators, see to what extent we can help changing the old order of things for the better.

If a kid grew up seeing his parents are reading and writing - they have a library at home, it's natural that this kid will become a reader at a very young age.

By the age of five, Jean-Paul Sartre was already a great reader. Why? He grew up in the midst of his Grandpa's library. Simone De Beauvoir (his sweetheart for 52 years) published her first novel before the age of ten.

When I went to Paris (for the first time in 1982), I would feel uncomfortable if I did not have anything in my hand to read while riding the metro. That's the culture there (everyone reads). "*Andere Lande, andere Zitten*" (Other country, other culture) as the German saying puts it.

Sometimes, some of us may put the same blame on Haitians without going deeper into The Haitian Reality back home (where in this case, people care more about the meal that they are going to find for the day and as we know, over 90% of Haitians don't have access to a good meal on a daily basis). So, are we going to blame them for not being able to read and write when they don't have access to free schools? And even if any real government (in the future) opens up free schools throughout Haiti, I don't think that will be a total success without free meals in order to keep the kids in school because most parents cannot feed them.

Not being able to eat at least one meal every day in Haiti is one of the reasons why the country has many dropouts where most students never had a chance to even complete the elementary cycle. And again, schools are not 100% free there (as it is the case in the U.S up to high school). Let's discuss what can be done to help solving these problems (be it in Haiti or in the Black Diaspora), in order to try to break the ice.

Re-structuring schools in Haiti

(Fall 1999)

Re-structuring schools in Haiti is an issue that would appear a bit vague to be discussed because the area of schools in Haiti has so many problems and I believe if we, educators, Haitian researchers living in Diaspora do not think seriously about that, Haitian education can collapse in the 21st century.

First, we can focus on the problem from top to bottom:

1. *The government*
2. *School monopoly*
3. *Teachers*
4. *Students*

In the first category, it is impossible for us to talk about the government, the most important ingredient in the issue and the one who has power to do everything. Here, we can first take a look at the 1987 Constitution as a guide (what it says about education) and from there, we can question the responsibility of the government (is he working in the respect of the constitution in order to guarantee a free education for everybody?). But within the same question, we must not rush to blame the current government without going back in history to see what other governments left behind and at the same time, go back to the present to take a look at the parliament, who in majority is not doing anything serious; they are more interested in boycotting bills that the executive branch would propose in the developing process of Haiti (if we are looking at their behavior for more than a year, blocking the government completely).

In the second category, “school monopoly”, the first question to be asked before opening discussion would be: who has the school monopoly in Haiti (the government or the private sector)? That's an easy question to answer when we know that most schools in Haiti are private. Within the same “private classification”, we have the “*lekòl bòlèt*” (schools that appear to be as crazy business with no qualification), private colleges (1), and the religious colleges. For the ‘*lekòl bòlèt*’, they are a series of schools where we will find an unqualified person heading them. It's a quick business to open a school in Haiti to make money and once the individual has connection and some money, that won't take long to rent a place, close it with some large wicker screen and put a sign that says “private college of so and so”.

Within the same “private” classification, more or less, there are some teachers who do have a pedagogical formation who can found a school where more or less we'll find some qualified teachers who are teaching there. For the “religious schools” (protestants or catholic), they seem to be more organized and if we go in the history of schools in Haiti, from *Le Concordat de 1860* (The 1860 Accord with Vatican), we can notice the dominance of the catholic schools from that time to the end of this century. The government knows their existence and the same people who work for the government think they would offer the best education; so, many times that's where their children go to school. It is true they have a sort of organization, they develop their own teaching materials, but the question we may ask is: what percentage of the Haitian students population can benefit from these schools? To answer this question, we fall into the “economic

aspect” of the country where most children in Haiti don't have access to receive an education in these religious schools because they cost money.

But whether it's students who attend the '*lekòl bòlèt*', the private schools, the religious schools, they use the teaching materials developed by religious schools (e.g., when looking at most of teaching materials that the Brothers of *Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne* (F.I.C) have developed or published). We can look at that as a monopoly also in the process of developing teaching materials for schools. Here, there are some parentheses for critics to open.

In the third category, teachers, what can we say? The answer is: many things! The first question we may ask is: what sort of preparation (formation) do they have? To answer this question, we can analyze all the levels (elementary, middle, secondary, superior or college). Most teachers don't receive a pedagogical preparation before going into the classroom (in this phase, we can include those at elementary or middle and secondary which are more important in the big educational nursery before attacking the superior level). Here again, we must not rush to blame them but rather the laws and the government.

Nothing serious can be accomplished without some laws that are established. If we'd decide to do a research to check how many teachers at the secondary level who don't even have a high school diploma, not to even mention a bachelor's degree (four years of studies) and then to recommend them to go back to school, all the schools in Haiti (elementary, middle, secondary levels would be closed the same day). However should a real reform in Haiti take place, they would have to review the teachers' credentials where they would have to go back to school anyhow.

Again, for that to be done, we end up in the “legal aspect” where it should have been mandatory before a teacher start teaching at the secondary level to have a bachelor's degree and then to attend pedagogical seminars. And to teach at elementary or middle school level, a teacher should have his high school diploma and then to attend a series of pedagogical seminars. But again, the question we may ask is: who has the school monopoly in Haiti (the government or the private sector)? That is, in order to succeed in taking certain measures that would better the system of education in Haiti, there would have to have a series of laws to be respected and it's the Haitian government who has the power to accelerate the process.

These propositions should have been submitted to the parliament in order to have a majority vote on them. But the question is: what parliament? What preparation do these elected officials have? Do they really care about the problem of education in Haiti or are they at a level to understand the in and out of this problem? It's all a bunch of questions that need to be reflected upon with many strategies and alternatives for Haitian who are conscious of the problem (how, by what means can go through to help?).

So roughly, it's a problem that should have concerned Haitians in Haiti as well as those in Diaspora. Some alternatives to try to solve part of this complex problem would be: organizing or re-organizing the communities (cities, town) where these community leaders would have to sit together to analyze the school problem in the areas and what they could do for their community. Here, we fall into the Creole philosophy "*grès kochon an kwit kochon an*" (the pig grease cooks the pig). In this philosophy, first we can have the absence of the government (in a sense) where it's the community who is rethinking in order to re-structure itself, to provide for itself what it needs without the government funds for this purpose.

On the other hand, we can't ignore the government either. Why? Whatever is going on in the community, the authorities representing the government in the areas should be invited; their presence should be noticed even if they are a figure-head, but deep in the hear, they know that they have a certain authority somehow. Here, we focus on the mayors of the cities or towns. They must be there; they must know about the projects and they must be approached with wisdom in order to encourage initiatives. And further down the road (if possible), the government can contribute because it's a way to alleviate the problem for them; so the government must appreciate the developmental works in the process at the community level because they, themselves, have too many loads on their shoulder to do everything at the same time.

In the last category, we see the students. That reminds me of the babies, the innocent ones right away. Whatever is given to a child, he will put it in his mouth. Then here, there's a certain parallel between students and children; that is: the group at the top of the hierarchy is responsible for the children's education.

Notice that I don't include parents and some critics may say: parents should have included in these categories. Yes, parents are understood here, but I

want to focus more on the category that should have been more responsible. Parents always play an important role in the children's education in Haiti. There are children's mothers that sell roasted peanuts, who walk with sandals but who say that they are working hard so that their kids become doctors and these dreams, many times, become a reality. There are fathers who are snow cone vendors but who share the shame dream and many other parents who did not have the chance to attend school, who are at the same socio-economic ladder but, who have a vision for their children to get far in school. So, we must congratulate many Haitian parents who think in this way because education is a luxury in Haiti.

One thing that has touched me a lot, not long ago, was when I was reading the autobiography of Manno Sanon (popular Haitian soccer player) who is talking about his mother, what she did to help him; it's a story that makes tears come out of one's eyes. So, parents are very important in the education of the children, whatever the social class they may belong to. And it's important for schools in Haiti to emphasize on parent's appreciation where when kids receive their report cards there would be open-house (where the students' parents would be present to meet the teachers and to know about their child's progress in the schools).

How can students help in the development of Haiti?

It's one of the great errors that the Haitian government could have committed when neglecting this aspect. Don't forget that student are nurseries representing a country's future in all sense. They must be engaged at an early age in a series of works for the welfare of Haiti and there are special ways in which that can be done. It would be good for the government make it mandatory for the students at the "baccalaureate" level to spend a year in the countryside doing some community works somehow (e.g., helping with the building a state school, a hospital, participating in literacy campaign, in a project somehow that the government would have that is functioning in the advantage of the community. Here, the government would be in charge to be responsible for these students during their working period (that is, giving them some money, be responsible for their room and board also) and then that would guarantee them when applying for a job, but all these should be governed by laws.

So, globally speaking, we can lay out many points that would touch what is in relation with the development of Haiti and particularly, the education sector we are focusing on; it would have to be governed by laws so that the government would make the basic necessary changes (if he succeed in controlling this monopoly) and maybe in our good understanding as critics, observers or conscious Haitians, we can think of other alternatives when the government's car is broken down or when the government does not do his job any longer.

Feedback (from Dunois Erick Cantave)

Védrine, I've read with enthusiasm your text you wrote on 're-structuring schools in Haiti'. I congratulate you for this reflection. Education is the pillar of a country's development. It's the base of the development of the country that you raise here. I see many beautiful ideas in your text, but I don't see that you pose the problem of education in a well-defined way. What I mean is: what education? For what country? With what development?

There must be a clear choice of development in order to be able to know what type of education you are going to give to the population and what strategy you are going to put in place in order to attend the objectives that you've laid out.

I would also say that, first, we ought to be clear on a first choice: literacy or education? or both? Will our means allow us to do both? If it were for me, I would choose education as priority in order to me to dry up the spring furnishing the illiterates. I would also say: what school? in what language?

I would have the tendency to choose a republican school where all children would share the same values. But I would say one school for everyone. Many people believe it would be in the Creole language to educate the Haitian people. They say that their mother's language is easier to understand what the teacher is teaching. I don't agree with this approach. In many countries where they speak Creole French or Creole and English, they succeed in educating most people, if not all, in French or English. I am referring to the other islands around us and some African countries. In the African countries, you may say that it's more complicated because there are times when they speak some 20 different dialects within the same country. They, anyhow, succeed in doing that. I could cite Senegal for instance.

This point of view, people would have the tendency to say it's one that is elitist, but I believe it's not true. We could debate it for hours and hours. I also believe that we would ought to have an education that would allow us to be more open on the world. I don't agree with any demagoguery. We can make some little teaching materials in Creole but we do not have the means to have access to all scientific and technical ones in the Creole language. Our country's economy does not allow us. Even if we would put together the whole country's economy that speaks Creole, we would not be able to attend this objective. We are already isolated in Haiti with the French language because all of our surroundings speak Spanish and English. It does not matter that we speak them also. But the goat says what's in your belly is yours. Let's start with the language that history left us and that can give us more opening on the world.

This question may lead us to others. For example, the issue related to teachers. We most say without demagoguery, we don't have real teachers anymore in Haiti. We would have to prepare many others while have others coming from other places such as Guadalupe, Martinique, Guyana, France, Canada, Senegal etc... No doubt about it. There can not be demagoguery in this fundamental issue. Canada has done that; many African countries have done it. We, Haitians, have helped many others in this sense.

I am not going to go on with the debate today. I believe I have said a lot already but I don't pretend to say everything. I believe I say things that can shock people and that can raise many discussions. I prefer waiting for some reactions before I go on with the debate. I am not a teacher, but I do know that this issue is one that is fundamental. If we take it the wrong way, we will not get anywhere.

A panorama of Haitian natives civilization (Spring 1990)

If we trace the root of Haitian Indians according to the tradition of the natives, we find that the island was populated by Indians from Florida and the Yucatan, and by two large groups migrating from South America.

Historians always have chosen to focus on the two main native tribes: the Arawaks and the Caribs. The Arawaks were also called Arahacos. In the

Marcorix language, once a predominant language of Haiti, the word Arawaks means eater of the yucca flour.

The Arawaks' ancestors, the Galibis, had inhabited the regions of Guyana and the Amazon. The Arawaks, Kaketies, Lucayos, and the Tainos were all descended from the Galibis who had migrated to the Greater and Lesser Antilles.

The national literature consisted of poetry and an oral tradition called "Areyto". The latter was the more popular form. The Sambas or Troubadours of the island sang their joys and their grief. They sang the beauty of the women, the bravery of their chiefs, the power of the gods, and of war.

Using these types of literature as their media, particular individuals transmitted these traditions from generation to generation. "Bovites" legends are included in this literature. Among them are: "Nonum" (moon), a story of the moon's jealousy of the sun's brightness, and its preference to shine at night. Other legends deal with paradise after death, the creation of the sea, how the woodpecker sculpted the female gender, and why the nightingales sing.

Upon the arrival of Columbus in 1492, the island was divided into six *cacicats* or "territories" governed by an Indian chief, or a *cacique*. The *cacicats* were: Higüey, Ciguay, Marien, Xaragua, Magua and Maguana. The Caribs populated the first two territories. The Marien and the Xaragua were inhabited by Tainos. The last two were under the control of the famous Caonabo, a man who was the husband of the beautiful Anacaona, queen of the Xaragua.

Though the Haitian Indians were wiped out by Spaniards, traces of their civilization remain in the history and literature of the country. The following text is a translation of an epic poem composed by a famous *cacique* named Henri. This poem describes his resistance against Spanish forces.

I-

Les Butios ont promis la victoire!
O Zémès* soyez-nous favorable!
Nos visages sont passés aux xagua*
Nous portons la terreur sur nos faces!
Le lambi* résonne dans les airs!*

The Butios have promised victory
Oh, Zémès! Be on our side.
Our face are colored with xagua
We carry the sign of terror on our faces
The Lambi sounds in the air!

E. W. Védrine - *A healing paradigm for a new Haiti*

*Nul ne peut nous résister
Tuons! Exterminons! Brûlons!
Leur peau sera de hamac
Où nos enfants dormiront
Aya bombé! Aya bombé!**

Nothing can stop us.
Let's kill! Exterminate! Let's burn!
Their skin will serve as a hammock
In which our children will sleep
Aya bombé! Aya bombé!

II-

*Nos pères, nos frères, nos parents
Furent naguère aussi nombreux
Que sur nos têtes, les étoiles
Avant l'arrivée, en notre île
Des monstres vomis par la mer!
Où sont-ils maintenant?
L'Urucane* a soufflé sur eux!
Les Chemis* seuls savant à present
Dans quelles pays ils voyagent
Mais le sang appelle le sang
Aya bombé! Aya bombé!*

Our Fathers, our brothers, our parents
Were recently as many
As the stars above our heads
Before the arrival, on our island
The sea has vomited monsters on our island!
Where are they now?
The Urucane has been blowing on them!
The god Chemis are the only ones who know
To what country they have gone to
But blood is called blood
Aya bombé! Aya bombé!

III-

*Nous mourrons plus en lâches!
Ne vivons plus pour creuser les monts!
Non plus pour fouiller les rivières
A la recherche de l'or!
Nous haïssons la poudre jaune!
Le xagua qui tient nos mains
En rouge pour la bataille,
Le xagua qui crache le sang
Dans son vif écarlate
Est mille fois plus beau
Ne perçons plus la terre.
Aya bombé! Aya bombé!*

We'll no longer die not as cowards!
Live not to pierce the mountains!
Neither to dig the rivers
In search of gold!
We hate the yellow powder
The xagua that holds our red hands
For fighting
The xagua that spits blood
In its red mouth
Is thousand times more beautiful.
Dig not the land anymore.
Aya bombé! Aya bombé!

IV-

*Pour mourir libres, il faut monter
Très haut, plus haut encore, toujours
Où ils ne peuvent grimper!
Leurs pieds ne sont pas sûrs et lestes!
La plaine nous trahit et nous livre
Bahoruco* nous reçoit et nous garde
Ô mère sacrée, ô montagne sainte
Ô Mamona*, refuge suprême!
Prends nos os, ô fidèle
Qui osera nous chercher dans tes bras?
Et dans la chevelure de tes lianes?
Aya bombé! Aya bombé!*

To die free, one has to climb up
Very high, higher again and always
Where they cannot climb.
Their feet are not secured and are agile!
The plain betrays us and leaves us.
Bahoruco receives us and guards us
Oh, sacred Mother! Oh, sacred Mountain!
Oh, Mamona, supreme refuge!
Take our bones, oh faithful
Who would dare look for us in your hands?
And in your wild vine hair?
Aya bombé! Aya bombé!

Reference

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My country is Haiti: a summary of Haiti's history from colonial times to 1994

The word “Haiti” came from the native language (of its first inhabitants) who were inhabiting the land pre-colonial times. This word means: “highlands, and beautiful lands. The Arawaks and the Caribs were the first inhabitants of Haiti.

The Spaniards were the first European who lived in Haiti. They seized that land and claimed it theirs. Christopher Columbus was one of the first Europeans who set foot in Haiti. Columbus was born in Italy in a city called Genoa. He landed in Haiti on October 5, 1493. Sometimes when reading the history of Haiti, we are told that it was this man who “discovered” Haiti. Today, there are many clarifications needed to be made in what people are writing, specially on issues related to history.

Columbus landed in Haiti by accident in search of the best routes to India. He got lost and ended up there. Haiti soon became a Spanish colony. Columbus and the other Spanish teams that accompanied him, soon claimed that land for Spain.

A colony is a land or a place that a country claims as its own. Very often, this is done by force. Sometimes it can happen after a war between two countries: one of the two lost it and the winning one can claim the territory (territories) of the losing country as its own after a peace treaty is being signed.

Usually when a country colonized a territory or another country, or a place, the colonizers commit many crimes; they kill the native children of that land, rape the women and do many other crimes. The Spaniards had also committed these crimes when Haiti was a colony of Spain.

At the beginning, the Indians warmly received the Spaniards. They thought they were a series of people coming from heaven. The Indian helped them, fed them, gave them places to sleep and care. The Indians appeared to be not only innocent or naïve to the Spaniards, but also the latter thought they were

stupid; they thought they were superior to them; that way, they started exploit them from “a” to “z”. The Spaniards started fighting them, killing them where they succeeded in destroying almost the whole Indian race in Haiti. Those who were still alive had to go into hiding. They went into hiding far away in the mountains. *Kasik Anri** was on the Indian chiefs who resisted against the Spaniard.

The history of Haiti mentions one of the most beautiful Indian queens. This queen was called Anakawona*. She was the wife of *Kasik Kawonabo**. Fox Tree, one of the Native American painters living in Massachusetts, painted a beautiful painting of the history of Indians. One of his masterpiece is a painting of Queen Anakawona.

The Spaniards succeeded in setting an ambush for queen Anakawona. Usually, the Indians would organize a series of cultural festivities for the Spaniards. The Spaniards also took the same ride to organize a festivity for queen Anakawona. It was in that celebration she was betrayed. They arrested her and hanged her. They also killed many other Indian officials who accompanied her.

The Spanish domination in Haiti continued until the 1600's. The French were going to do their part also. The French colonization started out with two small groups of people who were adventurers. They were not only adventurers, but also they were trying to better their living condition by leaving the European continent. The two small groups were the buccaneers* and the filibusters*. History reports that the filibusters were pirates, a series of armed thieves who lived on people's wealth. Their task was to wait for boat transporting valuables (such as goods and other valuables and capture them). They knew the in and out of the sea to capture their victims.

The buccaneers used to chase wild animals such as wild pigs. The word 'buccaneers' is related to 'boucan' (a big fire bond to smoke meat). After killing the animals, they would light up a boucan to smoke the meat, a way to protect it for a long period of time. They would conserve their skins and made arrangement for them to be sold in Europe.

The Creole saying says: *“Two bulls don't run in the same prairie”*(11). When two countries establish their colonies on a territory, there will always be quarrels, and hatred. From time to time, there were fights between the Spaniards and the French. The last war between these two colonial powers

resulted in the *Ryswick Treaty**. It was a treaty signed between them in 1697. According to this treaty, the West part of island of *Hispaniola** had felt under the control of France and the East one under the control of Spain.

While all these times, *donkeys were working hard for horses to run freely* (12); in other word, negroes were not only working like dogs for the Spaniards (from 1503), but also from time to time the whites colonizers imported more slaves from Africa. The hardships that the Spaniards and the French made Black People went through in Haiti is too much to talk about. But, things would be changed some day.

The colonizers did all that they could to create disaccord between black people; for example, if a group of slaves spoke the same language, they would separate them and send them to slave away in different areas or on different plantations so that they would cut off all possible communication among them. The colonizers noticed the importance of communication among them. They were afraid that they would not plot against them. But, we can't explain how miracles happen. From time to time, the Creole language was developing; it developed till it became a full fledged language. This language was one of the tools that united the slaves to start revolting against their masters.

The Haitian slaves made a lot of efforts to liberate themselves. One of the great meetings they organized was the *Bwa Kayiman** gathering. There are many documents written on this event. One of the people who was leading it was a man named *Bookman**. History reports that bookman was a voodoo priest from Jamaica. In that ceremony, Bookman had them bled a pig; each slave drank some blood. This symbolism represents a sort of *Aya Bombé** or “live free or die” swearing. This meeting did not bring a total success, but it marked an important step in order to concretize the slaves' dream to make 1804 became a reality.

When they are talking about history of Haiti, there are some heroes mentioned on top of the list. Toussaint Louverture* is one of them, one of the great Haitian heroes that Haiti could have produced. He fought a lot to liberate the slaves. His bravery made him reached the rank of “governor general”. Many of these V.I.Ps who represented France did not like him; they saw him as a danger. Finally, they captured him in an ambush. They put him on a boat and he was sent to prison in France in a prison called *Fort-de-Joux** in the Jura Mountains. Before Toussaint left Haiti, he said: “*In*

overthrowing me, you have cut down in San Domingo only the trunk of the tree of black liberty. It will spring up again by the roots for they are numerous and deep.”(13). Things happened as were expected: Jean-Jacques Dessalines, one of the old members of the Indigenous Army took the lead. He continued organizing the slaves till they got revolted (against the French) on November 18, 1803*. This date is one of the great dates in the history of Haiti. It was the last revolt that took place, which not only liberated all slaves but also the slaves happen to create a homeland.

After Haiti's first independence, there were many dark moments the country went to. There were many fights to control power, but not to work together for the pride of every Haitian. In that way, there is a record of dictators who controlled power. The last great dictatorships established in Haiti were the Duvaliers. Francois Duvalier (alias “*Papa Doc*”) was a medical doctor in Haiti. Many people who knew him reported that he had participated in the campaign against yaws. He made his way to take part in the presidential elections of 1957 where he was elected president (with the help of the army general(14) at the time). A few years where his term was over and there supposed to have elections (where he could try to get re-elected for a second term) instead, he was converted into a dictator. That way, the got rid of many people he taught were his enemies. Many Haitian intellectuals have lost their lives. Those who were lucky to be alive went in exile in countries like the United States, France, Canada, some countries in Africa and in many other places.

In order to strengthen the dictatorship, he has created a paramilitary called the *tonton macoutes** or *macoutes*. These guys did whatever they wanted to during his whole reign. They killed many people and among them, many innocent ones. They raped peoples' wives, stole people's belongings (wealth), stole people's land, etc.

Many uprisings took place, trying to overthrow Papa Doc but in vain. These rebels were called *kamoken**. Usually, when a *macoute* captured a kamoken, he does not let him lives; he would chop his head. The *macoutes* have killed many of them. The *macoutes* always gave the impression that the *kamoken* were not good people, they were communists. All that is negative was attributed to them.

One of the last up rivals against Papa Doc was an attack by colonel Octave Cayard*. Cayard was a high rank military in the Haitian Army who was the

commander of the Coast Guard. In 1970, he asked the coast guards who were on duty to go for a stroll at sea. That's how he started attacking with heavy weapons, firing in the direction of the white house. One of his main targets was the National Palace. The heavy bullets hit many trees near the palace. After spending a full day attacking, he left Haiti and went to the US. Papa Doc survived the attack; he continued ruling Haiti for another year.

In the beginning of 1971, Papa Doc felt that he was not going to live long. In one of his speeches, he presented Jean-Claude Duvalier (alias "Baby Doc") as the young leader who would succeed him. In April 1971, Papa Doc died. As the old man has mentioned before, the young son succeeded him. Each of them spent 14 years in power.

With the development of the political situation in Haiti of the mid 80's, there were many riots that began taking place against Jean-Claude's dictatorship. One of the drop of oil on the flame was the murder of three schoolboys in the city of Gonaïves(15). There were protests from time to time against the dictatorship in many parts of the country. Finally, the whole country rose against Jean-Claude, asking him to resign.

From the end of 1985 to the beginning of 1986, Jean-Claude saw that the people were very mad. The macoutes were getting enraged, committing many crimes everywhere. But the people did not give up. Before Jean-Claude left Haiti (on February 7, 1986), he paid a last visit to downtown Port-au-Prince with the first lady, Michele Bennet*. The people run after them. In order to try to fool the people (making them believe that they would not leave power), they said: "*nou la pi rèd pase yon ke makak*" (we here are as firm as a monkey tail – in the the sense that we are budging a step). The Monkey's tail was so hard that it did not take long to break up; Jean-Claude left the country (aboard a US Air Force plane) and landed in France.

During the whole Duvalier's dynasty (1957-1986), the people were thirsty of justice and there was no one to guarantee them that. In the process of getting rid of the macoutes after Jean-Claude's departure. This sort of mob justice called *dechoukay** took on different forms (e.g., burning many macoutes alive, beating them, torturing them before killing them, burning or ransacking their houses). Many people taught it was (going to be) Haiti's Second Independence*. There was a military junta that secured power together with general Henri Namphy*. A new constitution was published in 1987. Though that constitution has beautiful articles in it, the sector that

vowed against changes did not respect it. Free elections were scheduled to be held on November 29, 1987. A group of corrupted military men, together with the anti-change sector blew it where many people who went voting got killed. Many people felt in *Ruelle Vaillant**, lying down in their blood after being gun down. Though the people started breathing after all those hardships under the dynasty, there was not really a relief in the political situation of Haiti. The military had also created another dictatorship. Many crimes were committed in the county. The *zenglendos**, gangs of armed thieves, were born. They were stealing, killing people, raping women throughout the country. With the *cancellation of the 1987 presidential elections**, it was sent off for a runoff in January 1988 where Leslie F. Manigat* was elected president (with the help of the army). He remained in power until June of 1988 where a coup made him left the country (he seek refuge in the nearby Dominican Republic). General Namphy took back the power and after some months, general Prosper Avril* made his coup also from the end of Summer 1988. On April 1, 1989, some army officers(17) were plotting a coup against general Avril. This coup failed. It appeared to be more an April fool that these military men were playing with the general. There were many crimes and political persecutions when general Avril was in power. One of the persecutions was the accusation brought against three people: K-Plim (Evans Paul), Mezye, and Marino Etienne. They were accused of plotting a coup against general Avril. They spent a long period of time in Jail where they were tortured. History talks more of these three figures as *prizonye latousen** (All Saints' Day prisoners). Under the people's pressure again, the presidential seat started getting to be very hot; thus, general Avril started packing his bags, getting ready to leave power.

Finally, in the beginning of March 1990, Ms. Ertha Pascal Trouillot* ascended to power. This is the first woman in the history of Haiti to become head of state. She was one of the forefront judges (in terms of seniority) to become president in case of presidential vacancy. She was finally chosen for the post temporarily to prepare presidential elections the same year. In her speech, she made it clear that she was not going to be there for long. She was just going to be there temporarily. Things began heating up during the summer of 1990; the macoutes sector started coming back in order to participate in these elections. Many well-known candidates such as Marc L. Bazin*, Rene Theodore*, Sylvio C. Claude*... were campaigning. Roger Lafontant* (representing the *macoute* sector) suddenly appeared on the scene also as candidate who started campaigning. The popular organizations started discussing the issue of his appearance. They realized that they

should send a bull (someone with muscle) to challenge Lafontant and how they were going to deal with these macoutes. Finally, the popular leftist priest, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was chosen as a candidate for the presidency.

Brawls spread out at the same time of this news. Aristide's campaign started in October 1990. Upon launching his campaign, it echoed a lot in all the media (national as well as international). Aristide also traveled in the Diaspora where he got an overwhelming support.

The elections were scheduled for December 16, 1990. Aristide was elected president with more than 70% of the votes. He was the first democratically elected president of Haiti. A month before swearing in as president of the republic (on January 7, 1991), Roger Lafontant attempted a coup in order to block Aristide's ascending to power. But under the pressure of the people, this coup failed. Lafontant was arrested and was thrown in jail. On February 7, 1991, Aristide sworn in as president of the Republic of Haiti. Under his administration, many changes began to take place. But unfortunately after only seven month in power, general Raoul Sedras*, together with a small group of military men and some members of the anti-change sector plotted a coup against Aristide. The September 30, 1991 Coup* was one of the bloodiest ones and one with a lot of terrors in Haiti. The army, together with some gangs of terror killed over 6.000 people. Many people went into hiding; many left the country, including president Aristide under pressure of the repressive army. Despite of Aristide's living in exile, he always remained active for democracy to be able to come back in Haiti. He traveled widely in order to undertake a series of diplomatic missions, trying to find a solution in the crisis that the country was going through. Two years after the coup, there was an accord signed between president Aristide and General Sedras. According to this accord, the president was supposed to go back to power within a fixed date and that the general would have to resign from his post. This accord was called *The Governor Island Accord*(18). It was called so because it was on that island where they signed it in the state of New York. But despite all, the general did not keep his promise. He violated this accord and president Aristide did not return to Haiti on the due date. The exiled president continued his diplomatic efforts where he finally found the support of the American president, Bill Clinton. Few days before president Aristide touched the land of Dessalines again, the American troops had already been landed in the country for more security. Finally, on October 15, 1994, president Aristide returned to Haiti. This date turned out to be a great one in the history of Haiti, not only the people started waking up from the

tree years of comma they were in, but also it was the first time in the history of Haiti that a president left the country under pressure of a coup and then went back to power. Despite of Aristide's return to power, he still had many works to do because during the reign of general Sedras, he cut off all the branches of the popular organizations and insecurity spread out for the worst. The *zenglendos* and *FRAPs** still remained armed despite of the multinational forces that were present in the country. Today, we Haitians who are living in Haiti and in the Diaspora, must remain firm, mobilize in order to be able to have a change from which all Haitians can benefit from. Let's not keep on counting on some foreign countries that are making fun of us, that are making temptation (inaccessible) to us such as they are coming to help us for real. As the Haitian saying says, *The person who wears the shoe is the one who knows where it's being ripped off*(19). We Haitians, who want changes, are the ones who really know what we want and in order to get to where we want, we must work together for the honor and respect of Haiti.

What can I do to help Haiti?

(February 17, 2006)

What can I do now to help Haiti is a question that every single Haitian must ask themselves. Many Haitians focus too much on politics instead of focusing on trying to solve some of Haiti's problems. Social class, the level of education one reaches, political affiliation are some of the ingredients that divide Haitians at all levels and in turn, put Haiti where it is today.

What can I do now to help Haiti is also a question that has to do with consciousness, to be conscious of all of Haiti's Problems and think of all possible ways to help solving them. This question is also a wake-up call for each individual to think of how they can contribute to the development of their country. We can't expect any government who ascends to power to solve all of Haiti's problems in five years (it would not be possible even if they have a magical stick). There are too many that have never been solved by past leaders who were not interested in solving them either. There is no way on earth that can be done, however we do expect one who would throw the basic infrastructural bases as models for his successors to follow.

What can I do now to help Haiti is a question that Maybe for some critics would suggest that people work in group instead of working individually. That would not be bad at all if they think that way (and many times I talk about why Japan succeeds after the Second World War and also the philosophy by which Asians are influenced), but at the same time even if you are working in group don't forget that you must contribute something. You can have for instance a group of 20 people working and its only five of them who are doing most of the work while the remaining fifteen is waiting to get the same credit as those five. Should it be this way? So, even if you are part of a group, you must also bring your own contribution.

What can I do now to help Haiti is a question where some people may say that they don't have "money" or they would need that "x" or "y" amount of money to do this and that. human resources however is the key thing to keep in mind. Many billions of green dollars have been already spent in Haiti and still, we keep on reading this phrase in books and periodicals: "Haiti is the poorest country in the "western hemisphere". Something does not work here for many of us, right? Are we really 'the poorest' in term of 'human resources' in term of our potential? Sure Haiti needs money and governments everywhere in the world do need money for all projects they have in mind that would benefit their country! Of course we know about all the mismanagement of money, corruptions, in Haiti because it got into the hands of the wrong people who have also contributed to Haiti's level of degradation. At the same time, any real government who wants to see Haiti moving forward must take Human Resources into consideration. A lot can be done to change Haiti's face in ten years if 'human resources' is really exploited. Now, how can that be done? This a question to think about, and to be debated by all of us and by any serious government who really wants to move the country forward.

What can I do now to help Haiti? I have mentioned "working in group". I see many things here, and at all levels and school is one of the most important places for us to focus as target. I have mentioned earlier (in some of my reflections) the need for a new Haitian school. We need a "new school" in Haiti to vehicle new thoughts, to teach real Civics, to inject dozes of consciousness in the mind of Haitian youngsters, to teach them to be responsible and to become good citizen tomorrow. If Haiti is confronting all types of problems today, that means some works were not done before to prepare many of today's irresponsible and corrupted leaders, bad scholars (who don't produce anything to leave behind a legacy for tomorrow),

careless professionals (who don't use their skills to help Haiti in any way), citizen that we have today.

What can I do now to help Haiti is a question that we must think every minute if each of us really wants to see a new Haiti. Think of what you, as individual, have contributed in that sense (the little it may be), and if you have not contributed anything yet, well you have the chance to do so today after reading these reflections. Think of all the time you've wasted criticizing leaders, individuals (you have personal problems with), talking about Haiti's problems all the time but never try to come up with some ways to solve them, philosophizing all the time but have not made any decision to do anything. Think of this question and try to be conscious in terms of your crucial participation to bring at least a stone to the reconstruction of our nation.

Dying for Haiti's liberation

(February 28, 2004)

Once upon a time, Haiti was facing a great political crisis. Different political parties and organizations got together to think about the best way to get out of the crisis. They have met for several days, discussing the issue.

Finally, someone came up with an answer that pleased everyone: "I am willing to die for Haiti's liberation and we won't have anymore problem!"

When the whole country heard the good news, gee! Everyone wanted to see that Haitian fellow who was not afraid of dying for Haiti's liberation. He appeared on television, had interviews with journalists, they heard him on the radio... telling his willingness to die to liberate Haiti. He decided to die on Friday (around 3:00 p.m) and told reporters how he would commit suicide. He would start running from Portail Saint-Josesph to Carrefour. There, he would jump in a deep part of the sea infested with sharks. So since he couldn't swim, you'd think that was real. No joke, hm!

The whole Port-au-Prince city came down to Boulevard Jean-Jacques Dessalines to watch that Haitian hero-to-be. Everyone was clapping their hands: yeah! Go! Go! Go for Haiti's liberation! Go for it! We are proud of you, son of Dessalines, Toussaint, Christophe!"

He was like someone running in an international marathon, representing Haiti and he was wearing the colors of the flag (blue and red), symbolizing “hope and victory”. Upon arrival in Carrefour where he was supposed to jump, the crowd got intensified, ‘cause everyone of course, was curious to see that hero. Before hitting the finish line, he said: “I am too hot to jump in the water; I may catch a chill”.

While I was in Carrefour watching the whole scene, someone kicked me and I landed here to share this story with you.

Brain drain and its impact on Haiti’s underdevelopment

In this discussion, first, it is important to see what causes the brains to leave the country. In this sense, we can focus on two main causes: politics and economics.

Haiti has been suffering a political and economical rushing down under the Duvalier’s dictatorship (father and son), and continues to do so until today. The Duvaliers were more interested in holding on to power for life. Professionals and scholars would not interest the dictators. If they did not seem to support the dictatorship, they would have to leave the country. That way, the cream of the country disappeared.

Yes, the cream of the country was obliged to go abroad when noticing their life was in danger, when noticing foreign countries would offer them a better life. On one hand, the wave of this problem started out precisely in the 60’s when the dictatorship started to be consolidated. On the other hand, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was recruiting professionals to go and help some African countries that just became independent. It was a great advantage for many of them (who were not doing anything in Haiti) to go there (and also those who started to have problems under the dictatorship, those who remained quiet and who were thinking of all possible ways to escape without any disturbance).

Upon their arrival in Africa, many of them were doing fine, particularly those in the French speaking countries since they already spoke the French language. So they did not have problem to function linguistically. Some of

them remained in Africa; some, while in Africa, went to Canada, to the United States and Europe still in search of a better life. What does that mean for us? The answer is that we don't see a possible return in this issue. Yes, we don't see a returning door when they are already adapted to the new environment in which they are living. Don't forget that the big brain drain started out the beginning of the 60's and up to when the Duvalier's dictatorship was going to collapse beginning of 1986. These Haitians did not see the possibility of going back to Haiti because when François Duvalier (Papa Doc) died in 1971, Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) seized the rein of power until 1986. That is, the brains who left Haiti under Papa Doc did not see any possible return to Haiti under Baby Doc. There is no difference between tomcat and pussycat; they are all "cats".

Despite the taking over of power by the army (as Jean-Claude wanted it to before departing Haiti), we can talk with no problem about 30 years of dictatorship (where we'd add two extra years of the Haitian army in power to the twenty eight years of the Duvaliers). Some critics would call these extra years "*le duvaliérisme sans Duvalier*" (duvalierism without Duvalier) or a duvalierist's philosophy calls "*apre nou se nou*" (after us is us), in reference to his immediate successors (high ranking members of the army), who in a way, had the rein of power from the time of Jean-Claude Duvalier's departure until 1988 when Leslie F. Manigat ascended to power with the help of some big shots within the same army that supported the dictatorship.

So, the generation who started living Haiti in the 60's, remained abroad where they had children born abroad. Though this new generation would be the Haitians descents, but down deep, they have never really lived the Haitian reality, or the naked reality that Haiti has been living since a very long time. There is no possible connection for them to understand the in and out of Haiti's problem the fact that they have never lived it. It is all the absence of a transcendental experience (one must live it in order to understand it). It is true that some of them can have certain admiration for Haiti (depending on how their parents would present Haiti to them, depending on the influence of foreign media that always portray only the negative sides of Haiti or also, the enthusiasm they would have to fetch the history of this country called "Haiti" in order to know it well). However, this generation itself, got adapted with no problem to the new environment (whether they are in Canada, the United States, France, the West Indies, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, in the Bahamas, or everywhere that would be part of the Diaspora).

As of now, we can talk about “third generation of Haitian” (in the Diaspora) where they get integrated with no problem in the environment in which they are living. So, clearly, we don’t see a non-returning door that is brightly opened in going back to Haiti for good to live (whether we refer to the generation of the 60’s, who, themselves, almost died out abroad or getting old and who don’t see the support that Haiti would give them if they go back, whether we would refer to their offspring born abroad.

What worsen the problem is that there does not exist a solid Diaspora, one that is really organized. If there existed a well organized one, certainly Haiti would have the hope to expect a return of Haitian brains with no doubt, the same way it happens for Israel because the existence of the Jewish state relies 100% on the support that it has been getting from the its Diaspora since its existence after the Second World War. So, it is impossible for us to speak of a long-term return to Haiti of Haitian brains and then to leave behind the importance for the Haitian Diaspora not to organize itself in the first place.

Now if the Diaspora could get to organize itself for sure, that is where it would be really ready to help Haiti (in all sense) though it is this Diaspora that, since a long time, has been functioning as its economic backbone. It is also important for Haiti to look at that in terms of future economic development: through what means it can encourage the Haitian Diaspora to organize itself for sure? So here, globally speaking, we see that it would be necessary for the Haitian government to have a long-term vision for Haiti’s development, to start thinking about it because Haiti would never be able to have real economic changes with the absence of the Diaspora’s participation (in all sense) when we know that the cream of Haiti is in the Diaspora, and when we know that Haiti and the Diaspora are the two real wings of the bird to enable it to fly.

So here, it is clear in the discussion for us to focus on the work of the Minister of the Diaspora should have in its plan to create possible bridges right away (between the mother country and its Diaspora). Yes, it is possible to create a durable bridge between the two great communities if Haiti would start in putting out good structures for that to happen. That is, it is important for the Haitian government to start creating a series of channels in order to facilitate good relations between Haiti and the Diaspora. It is quite clear that the Haitian generation who can help in this sense is not going to go back to

Haiti for good, but there are possibilities to travel back and forth between Haiti and the Diaspora. Why is this generation not going back to Haiti for sure? It is clear that first, they are already adapted to the reality of their new environment (whether they were born there or grew up there, it has become their own environment). Second, economically speaking, it is this new environment that can give them a better assurance, a ground to deal with new economic realities.

As a whole, we see the participation of this generation in Haiti's development. It does not necessarily mean that they must go back to Haiti for good in order to do positive works, something that would yield success (because we have already seen an economic blockade for them further down the road where Haiti will not offer them a better life, but instead they would be the ones to help Haiti, the ones who would share their knowledge with Haiti). So, for the help they can give Haiti, we must be very precise on which form it may take and we can say yes, there are long-term possibilities for that to happen. But here again, we must be precise in the discussion; in reference to "long-term", we always see that there should be a solid relation between Haiti and its Diaspora where there must be anyhow in and out from time to time; that is, a foot inside Haiti, the other one outside. There must be a foot outside from time to time in order to assure some economic means to help Haiti and at the same time, for the individual to help himself.

But as a whole, it is always "the pig's grease cooks the pig" (as our Creole saying puts it). In other words, it is still Haiti's children who are helping Haiti. That is, it is not begging that Haiti is going to beg foreigners here but rather a consciousness that her own children in the Diaspora would have to help her out by trying their very best for that to happen.

Here again, we are obliged to go back to the importance for the Diaspora to start learning to organize itself on all possible forms towards a long-term development for Haiti. In this case, there must be good communication between many groups of people and organizations (in the two great communities). The two groups of people, and organizations must focus on a country: Haiti. That is, there is no place for arrogance to spread out (such as I am from the Diaspora, I am the only one who can help Haiti in all sense or, I am a Haitian who is living in Haiti, someone who knows the reality of the country; I don't need to function with people from the Diaspora; I know what I want and what to do). No! There suppose to have a meeting point where exchanging of ideas can find the spot it deserves and in mutual

respect for Haiti's welfare and for every Haitian. Yes, focusing on Haiti first! We must not focus on ourselves as group or as organizations (if we can do something positive for Haiti). It would be better to focus on how many Haitians in Haiti can benefit from what we can do, how many of them can also use it as a model to help more Haitians, in deed the whole country.

In the group of people who should be organized themselves in the Diaspora, we can see it by profession: teachers (of elementary, middle, high school, university), lawyers, businessmen, brokers, researchers, writers, engineers, students (high school, and college level), medical group (doctors, nurses, nurses' aids, medical technicians), constructors, regional organizations, NGO's, religious groups, technicians (all types) and also for them to remain connected with these same groups in Haiti in order to do a solid work. After organizing themselves in group, they can meet from time to time to not only discuss Haiti's problems, but also to come up with some concrete solutions in order to really show their participation not only in launching ideas (theory), but also in helping (practice). Among these solutions, we see the importance for these groups to go to Haiti from time to time to bring their knowledge, such as: giving conferences, organizing workshops to help those in Haiti so that they themselves can be at a level to prepare more Haitians in return; but still, in a vision that remains within the philosophy "the pig's grease cooks the pig".

Which language will win the battle in Haiti: Creole, French or English?

As the title indicates, there are many of us who have already guessed the answer with lots of intelligence. Bravo to them who are intelligent! Creole is Haiti's first language (that is, the mother tongue of all Haitians even those who are bluffing, telling foreigners that French is their native language when they have left Haiti as adults). Creole should also be the first language in all that is taking place, in all decision that the government and leaders are taking (if they are really working for the Haitian people).

Despite the effort of a small group of people to write in Creole (minus the effort of most Haitian scholars), we believe that there is a reality for the cultural watch groups should be debating, such as on issues concerning "second language" in the country: French vs. English (which is not official). French appears in the country's constitution (the fact that they've chosen to

the constitution in that language) since quite a long time as the “de facto” official language until it was declared as Haiti’s official language in the 1918 Constitution (under the American occupation), a constitution that is influenced by Washington and the 1987 Constitution finally recognized Creole as another official language in Haiti on par of French. So, the Creole language have found a small official spot, a bone to suck though it has not yet found a big spot in order to enjoy all the privileges that the French language has been enjoying.

We have English in the country, a second “*lawon*” or challenger (as some critics would call it), that is there secretly. And, if we want to go back to history, we could have start with the American occupation (1915-1934). For quite a long time, the English language not only left an influence on Creole (if we want to analyze carefully Pradel Pompulus’ doctoral dissertation presented at *Université Sorbonne, “La langue française en Haïti”* (The French language in Haiti), 1961) but with the American influence (in the political, commercial and cultural domains), the English language pass for the second lawon.

If we carefully watch, in almost all job ads in Haiti, English is one of the foreign languages they would require the candidate o know well. Many business school use textbooks written in English and – that happen in France and in some other countries in some “great schools” (that have a program in the domain of Business Administration). The new Haitian generation in Haiti, any times, would show an interest in the English language, and we can say that happen many times, would show an interest in the English language to communicate with abroad and nowadays with the internet, English passes as a *de facto* official languages with the “globalization” phenomenon or as a second languages in the world.

The other reality behind English language in Haiti is that it diminishes the French language’s prestige (would have in the past) because in many case, it’s the language that represents the “the green dollar language”, and when we mention dollar, categorically we see “the big Haitian Diaspora” which is Haiti’s backbone, this located (mostly) in the United States and English language is the language that connect all Haitians in the Diaspora (directly and indirectly in a sense and all Haitian generations born abroad, even they’ve never denied their “Haitianess” or “haitianity”).

So, when observing the weight and importance of the English language in the national scale. There are also people, who would think, rush to say: “if English were an official in Haiti, the country would not be poor” but we can reverse this (invalid) argument also: “there are a bunch of countries in the world that have adopted English as their official language and they are poor” (the same thing for countries that adopt French, Spanish, Portuguese as their official language).

Also in the same line of ideas, there are Haitians who’ve gotten far in school but who don’t who think right who say: “English should have become an official language in Haiti” as if that would change the mountain of problems that Haiti has been facing since two hundred years, as if all children in Haiti would find good and free schools including free lunch, free books (when most of them don’t have money to buy them), as if all the problems of infrastructure Haiti has been confronting since a long time would be solved, as if trash in Port-au-Prince would not get to a level where many would prefer to them to be privatized since local elected officials can’t manage it, as if kidnapers and *zenglendos** would give up committing any more crimes, as if the state hospital’s morgue would no longer smell... the readers will add up on the mountain of these problems Haiti has been confronting because as the Creole saying say, “*dèyè mòn gen mòn*” (behind a mountain, there are more mountains), and it’s true because all of this include in the definition of the name “Haiti” itself (mountainous lands). Leaders who are doing absolutely nothing are quite happy when hearing these crooked taught uttered by people who said they spent many years in school because people who talk that way don’t touch on the “Haitian reality” and the “work” these leaders are supposed to do. So, these types of people can’t reason for sure, their brain is gone (they are mentally ill).

The influence of the American culture is very strong (e.g., through the diffusion of films, publications and music throughout the world). It’s a reality that panics France (in terms of reducing the French language’s prestige), but there is a threat also against the French language in the France’s former colonies (that France observes and the control over a people’s culture is an important factor for another one that is imposing its dominance). As a result France, since quite a long time, has been advocating a “francophonie campaign” which is a strategy to save Voltaire’s language in its former colonies. But how much economic aid does it provide to these countries for sure, if we take Haiti for instance which by mistake is being classified in the rank of “French speaking countries”?

Many of us remember the Creole “*Ayiti dwe Lafrans*” ” (Haiti owes France). Well, it’s about time Haitians reverse it: France owes Haiti. Yes, France owes Haiti because it acted in an abusive way to make Haiti pay for her independence (where France threatened to colonize it again ever after its independence that wasn’t recognized by France) when Jean-Pierre Boyer was in power. Haiti has to start an intensive deforestation campaign cutting down the best mahogany trees in its forest in order to start paying France back, and France also had great advantages on Haitian customs.

Going back to Creole, the reality is that in Haiti, the Creole language breaks the chains some time ago and as the Haitian proverb says, *when a zombie taste salt his eyes open up*. The Dessalines’s language made its way till it took all its freedom to become the only language that connects all Haitians (as the 1987 Constitution declares it), this language that enters the media; it’s another official language in which they discuss the political reality (if a politician wants the people to listen to him), the floodgate tool of the people’s words and the language of all Haitians to say what they want in it without hesitating.

What remains to be done in the Creole language has to do a lot with the government’s will (that has the mighty power) for its strong use in schools, not only for it to continue at the oral level, but also to appear at the written level (e.g., translation of teaching materials in Creole to use in classrooms, and to find all it deserve in the state’s institution – more at the written level also), for the street signs to be written in good English in order to communicate directly with the people. We can also add: the will of all scholars (in all areas) that would be sensitive to all that concerns the nation also. And, everyone’s will and organization that say they are working to help the Haitian people or Haiti’s welfare. It is impossible for us to talk about development of any country and then to leave behind the language the people of that country speak. So, no matter what, Creole is already Haiti’s main language. That way, we will sing:

KREYÒL SE LANG KI TOWO A

1.

Ki lang ki vrè towò a?

Nou di: se kreyòl

Se li ki te libere n, pa twouve sa dwòl

Menm jan chak pèp ki sou latè gen pwòp lang yo,

CREOLE IS THE POWERFUL LANGUAGE

1.

Which language is the real powerful language ?

We say it’s Creole

It’s the same one that liberated us, don’t think that’s strange

In the same way each nation has their own language,

E. W. Védrine - *A healing paradigm for a new Haiti*

Pèp Ayisyen pale kreyòl kòm vrè lang yo

Se an kreyòl Zanzèt yo te kominike
Pou yo te ka montre nou chemen libète

Refren:

O, ki lang Ayiti ki towò a?
Wi, se kreyòl ki vrè lang towò a
M mande kilès ki lang towò a?
Wi, se kreyòl ki vrè lang towò a
(bis 4 liy yo)

2.

Lè m ap pale an kreyòl, lang sa a rele m pa m
Lè m ap pale an kreyòl, lang sa a rele m pa m
Lè m ap pale franse, se yon lang etranje
Lè m ap pale angle, se yon lang mwen twoke
Men lè m ap pale kreyòl, se li k rele m pa m
Lang Zanzèt yo te kite,
lang ki gen tout cham

3.

Van kolonizasyon te fè kreyòl pliye
Men li se yon lang wozo, li p ap janm kase
Ak plis pase dis milyon Ayisyen k pale l
Tout moun wè klè ke kreyòl fin pran libète l

De jou an jou lang nou an ap vale teren,
Lang devlopman
pou Ayiti Cheri demen

The Haitian People speak Creole as their true language

It was in Creole our Ancestors communicated
In order to show us the way to liberty

Chorus:

Oh, which language is the powerful one?
Yes, Creole is the real powerful language
I ask which language is the powerful one?
Yes, Creole is the real powerful one
(repeat chorus)

2.

When I speak Creole, this language is my own
When I speak Creole, this language is my own
When I speak French, it's a foreign language
When I speak English, It's a language I've adopted
But when I speak Creole, I feel it's my own
The language inherited from the Ancestors,
a language full of charm

3.

Colonization's wind made Creole bend
But this language is like a weed, it will never break
With more than ten million Haitians who speak it
Everyone sees clearly that Creole has completely
taken hold of its freedom
From day to day, our language is permeating society
The language of development
for our beloved Haiti's tomorrow

Chávez historical visit to Haiti, one of hope

(March 2007)

The Venezuelan leader's visit, Hugo Chávez in Haiti on March 12, 2007, was a historical one by the progressist leaders of our America continent and one that brought joy to the Haitian people.

Chávez arrived at Toussaint Louverture's airport around 4:00 p.m, local time. He was welcomed at the airport by his homologue, president René Préval. Getting off the airplane, he was greeted by a musical group from the white house, playing the national anthem of the two countries. Chávez was wearing a red shirt, symbol of "victory" and Préval, a blue one, symbol of "hope", a word connected to his political party "Lespwa" (hope).

The two colors are also parts of the Haitian flag. But, we don't know if there was beforehand some kind of contact between the two presidents to choose these national colors during this great meeting. Anyway, March 12 is a

symbolical date for the two countries, a well-chosen one by Chávez to commemorate Miranda's visit, also a south American leader who fought against the colonial forces of the time, to Haiti in the 19th century.

According to *Alter Presse*, the two heads of state paid a visit to the work site of a project financed by Venezuela in the area of the old Port-au-Prince airport. They talked to the Venezuelan soldiers working with this project before they headed for the white house. Thousands of people gathered in order to receive warmly the Venezuelan leader from the airport, raising the flags of the both countries. Chávez took advantage of this historical opportunity to drop some flowers at the feet of Simón Bolívar's statue, Venezuelan leader of the 19th century who fought for Venezuela's independence, including the great Colombia.

The height of this historical visit had to do with tripartite agreement of the three republics (Haiti, Venezuela and Cuba), an accord signed by Chávez, Préval and Luzo (Cuba's second vice president). This accord is twofold: strengthening the collaboration in the area of health with technical inputs from Cuba, financed by Venezuela. As of now, there are about 500 members of Cuban medical personal in Haiti, and a total of 125 Haitian students who are about to graduate from Cuban medical schools. There are more Haitian students who are studying in Cuban universities in other areas; they are all on scholarships paid by the Cuban government. It will be a great hope for Haiti's development to see these students helping the country later on.

In terms of Haiti's infrastructure, a very important theme for many Haitians who are dreaming of a new country, it will be an advantage to work together with these neighboring countries that have something in common historically speaking. They want to help the old Black Republic which has helped many countries of this hemisphere obtaining their independence, almost two centuries ago. But, the most important for Haiti now should be for all Haitian leaders to think of the future of this opportunity offered by these neighboring countries for Haiti's future. The time has arrived to work together for the country's welfare instead of continue to create division among themselves and to take advantage of all the help they can, with respect to the Haitian people. It's also the time to put behind all the negatives in Haiti's political history in order to embark on a collective work from which all children of Haiti can benefit. Long live the fraternity between these people! Long live the solidarity between the Latino brothers!

Whose fault if the occupation wind blows hard on Haiti today?

(February 15, 2006)

With the new wave of scandal in the counting of votes of the February 7 elections, we believe that it's about time that all Haitians, without distinction would stop blaming foreigners for our fate and to learn to solve our problem without inviting Mr. White (foreigner) as coach. But alas! When will it be dawn?

What do we see when some members of the "KEP" (*Konsèy Elektoral Pwovizwa* /Provisional Electoral Council) + complice of other racketeers (local politicians) have just done with the peoples' vote? In our answer, there were those that thrown in trash, buried, burned, cancelled... But if Mr. White would manipulate them (secretly because he himself, is throwing stones and hide his hand also) but they could even resign in order not to take order from others, to show their dignity in order not to let people buy their consciousness for scraps, or for few dollars.

So, as long as all of this old and bad overly submissive mentality cannot be changed, well humiliation will continue for the worse (*alagrandefouwo*). As the Haitian saying says, "Money makes the dog dances"⁽²⁰⁾. That's true. So, before money, grafters don't back up. That's what we grew up observing and *Konze** or betrayers of one's country always exists after Charlemagne Peralte's death. Haiti is filled with *Konze* today who continue to betray the people, stamp on them, and exploiting them.

What's important for us to do (we who would like to show publicly where we stand)? The answer is let's sow these seeds everywhere:

Learn to develop pride in ourselves, learn to love our native land, clean our mind (so that it does not get blocked it the same way sewers in Port-au-Prince with bad smell do), honesty, consciousness, respecting everyone's right, respecting the people's will, stop calling others bad names (to make defamation), stop backbiting each other, stop behaving as brown-nosers to sell your compatriots, stop functioning like chameleon (we are people), stop taking orders from others for scraps, stop selling your country with foreigners. Dessalines says Haiti is not for sale!

If Mr. White is behaving as an ostentatious person in Haiti today, giving orders the way he likes, well it's our own Haitian brothers' fault. It's the fault of those who don't like hearing the word "change"; it's the fault of those who don't want Haiti to move to a new direction so that all of her children can be able to have some opportunities, to be able to attend school, to get health care, good housing to live, to engage them in some activities, and collective work for the country's development. Schemes won't bring Haiti anywhere and we see it today (not even one week after such a beautiful election that happened peacefully and one that took place before the whole world) the diabolic sector (the one that's always stand against any positive change) is always there. It was there in 1987 (with the *macoutes*, as it clearly manifested itself in the *Ruelle Vaillant*'s genocide). It was there in 1990 with Roger Lafontant ("Doctor Mengele"), emissary of the *macoute* sector. It was there on September 30, 1991 with general Raoul Sedras, emissary of the submissive sector of the army, and the vomiting elite. It was there in 2003 with a small group of the vomiting elite including some of the most corrupted politicians who are always present on the scene. These groups succeeded in manipulating many popular organizations (pretending they were on their side) in order to take care of their own business in the name of the people. It's present today through certain member of *KEP* (who have tried all possible ways to manipulate the people's vote) for they've already bought their consciousness with some dollars.

So, it's always the home cat that sells the wild one (as our saying puts it). Talking a lot, making beautiful speeches, nice analysis without changing the mind each single Haitian. This will always be a "*lave men siye atè*" (washing hands and wipe them on the ground) in solving Haiti's problems. Let's each of us take a moment to reflect on consciousness (finishing up with hatred, prejudice (off all types), arrogance, backbiting of others, digging at each other, calling each other names (to make defamation). If we know our weakness, we should learn to do self criticism by looking at our errors and try to correct them. And then ask ourselves: What have I done that's positive for Haiti, my country? What have I done that's positive that can help Haitians? What have I done to try to raise Haiti's honor?

Concerning school issues, it's almost something that does not exist in Haiti (in term of preparation that students should have had about "civism", a subject that has been greatly debated on some forums. Let's think of a "new Haitian school" in this sense in order to start injecting doses of

consciousness in the mind of Haitian youngsters to become good citizens, good politicians for tomorrow who are not turning into sellers of their country, and grafters (the same way we see it today), people who are really good in making delaying tactics (to stand on their own people or kill them for few green dollars) to remain foreigners servants all the time, pseudo scholars who only know how to write long and sophisticated speeches in French but their brains are empty because they have sold this grey matter for some scraps instead of putting it at the service of their native land to educate our youth for tomorrow and to serve their homeland also.

Gaps that need to be closed within the Creole language

Gaps that needed to be closed within the Creole language is a challenge to creolists, Haitian linguists and everyone who is conscious about the future of the language. First, all researchers in the area of Creole linguistics (Haitians as well as non-Haitians) know that Haiti is the mother of the Creole languages and it's the only country in the world where the Creole language has an "official status", a language that evolved in the American continent (during the time of slavery), that reached this stage and that continues to make its way. But how many Haitians who had the chance attending school who know the importance of their native language? Another issue we'd have to debate on more on it but it would take time.

Some Haitians (writers, researchers) try their best to publish some of their writing in and on Creole (though the volume is insignificant according to my latest research covering the review of publications on Creole from colonial times to the end of the twentieth century). Also at the same time, a person who is publishing in Creole has made a "vow" (because there not exist yet a Haitian publisher publishing anything work in Creole on all dimensions, works by any author without spending their own money). That is, most work that are publishing in Creole, it's their authors themselves who fund them and then look for ways of distributing them. But the work must be done and it must continue to be done in order to try to fill up the gaps even if that requires sacrifices from the beginning.

When looking at many thousands of dollars that foreign university (such as US, France, Canada in particular) are investing in research on our language, this sends us a message as native speakers to reflect and to learn to valorize

our language more, take care of it well, but we observe that it's in Haiti they would mistreat it more. The first question we would ask is: How much money has the government ever invested in research for the advancement of the Creole language? What publications are coming out from time to time on the Creole language in Haiti (e.g., at university level)? What tools do Haitian creolist in Haiti have in their hands to work on the Creole language? Are there real research centers for Creole Studies in Haiti? Gaps that needed to be closed within the Creole language.

For the Creole language in Haiti to really move forward, first the government's participation would be something very important. That is, they have the power of diffusing this language throughout schools and the media. For its diffusion through school, this is something that requires a series of works such as: development of teaching materials (covering all subjects and for all levels, in Creole), seminars for teachers (secondary and primary level in particular) in order to give them a formation, clean their brains to be conscious of the linguistic reality and how to make use of this language in the classroom and in the advantage of the students.

At the elementary level, there are teaching materials that exist in Creole. But, what is their weight? Should they only stop there and for the teaching of the vernacular language stop after a few years in this cycle? The work must continue; all that the students can find in French would make sense to find it in Creole. Here is the great challenge for the government in the work that they should have started on linguistic issues to respect what the constitution stipulates and to use the people's language, but when laws will be really respected in Haiti? And what other alternatives that we, who are conscious of the situation, can bring?

Luckily, Haiti is different from many African countries; we don't have a bunch of languages that exist within one country and the 1987 constitution clearly states that only one language connects all Haitians, it's Creole. It's a nice statement, one that shows a linguistic welding connection everyone as a particular people on earth despite the prejudice that exists at the same time in our society against the native language. We continue to see these prejudices through what some people with inexperienced brains are writing and comments that some are making on some online Haitian forums.

The source of all these prejudices, as many of us know, comes from directly from the former colonizers, a way to brainwash us (and they have

brainwashed many of us already) to make us that all that belong to us is inferior and that we should accept theirs instead. That elite that is always in power and the so-called Haitian intellectuals (most of them) get trapped in this gear system since a long time which cause the delay of the Creole language at home. But despite all, we can say starting from the 80's to the last decades of the twentieth century, some linguistic changes have occurred, many clarifications have been occurred at the linguistic point of view to show the reality of things through a series of publication on Creole and in all these research, the emphasis is always on "Creole" and not on "French" to support the argument as if there would really exist a "local French", a "Haitian French" or a "French speaking country called Haiti".

So, Creole will continue growing in scale and will continue to acquire a prestige. In this case, we can't let the media behind in our analysis when looking at the evolution of the language the last twenty years ago. It's through the media that we hear about many of the people's claims in the political climate of the 80' to end up to the century's end where the people started to see the dawn of a linguistic democracy.

Faltering or not, all media play an important role in the development of the language. In the case of Haiti, as we know, most people can't read nor write, so the "spoken news" (such as radio, television, gossips) are the main media carrying the Creole language on their shoulders. The written newspapers in Creole are quite poor if we were to review them: a) There has not existed yet a daily newspaper in Creole. b) There is not yet a weekly Creole newspaper. c) There are not many competent people who are writing in newspapers that have Creole columns.

Despite the small Creole newspapers that started to come out, they were very poor (when looking at the weight of what are being published and with a poor edition) and their publications stopped apart from *Bon Nouvèl* (that's has been holding on since 1967), but the question is: why *Bon Nouvèl* still exist? Is it because of foreigners who are always heading it for it to exit persistently? Well, it's not a question of trying to irritate a negative critic but the reality is that I like to speak of it and it's like oil, it must float on water's surface: why is it that Haitians can't publish a monthly newspaper in Creole only and to have goes on? A challenge for everyone (including creolists, Haitian linguists) who say they are working for the advancement of the Creole language.

The media has a great importance in the development of the language and we, who are in the area of linguistic research, know the importance that has in terms of research and documentation to accelerate research. In this case, we must encourage journalists, give them a linguistic formation (if possible) to continue giving the native language the push needed, taking good care of it avoiding bad use of it for its honor and respect. So, conferences would have to be organized for them in the way they are using the language and how they could use it better.

In summary, when looking at works that have to be done in the Creole language to get where it needs to, this is something that require researchers, editors, writers, intellectuals, journalists, linguists, the government, Haitian politicians who are conscious and all other people in all areas to bring their own contribution, to think of all of these interrogations to fill the gaps of the vernacular language, for its publications in all domains and for its advancement in the twenty first century.

Supporting *Libreri Mapou* is spreading out the Haitian culture in the United States

(1997)

One of the literary pilgrimages I have done was paying a visit to “Libreri Mapou” (Mapou’s bookstore) in July 1997 for a conference on “the literature of the Creole language”. For twenty-one years since I have been living in the United States, it was the first time I spent a week in Miami. I was really happy of the welcome received from the airport from Jan Mapou, the general manager of the airport’s parking, left his office to come to meet me. Despite we never met each other face to face but each one was already familiar with each other’s literary works and we always kept in touch either by phone or through writing.

For us, Haitians, I think it’s important to find out a series of important people in the Diaspora who are doing great jobs. Since a long time, I’ve been following closely Jan Mapou’s works literary works and community works, his devotion shown to work with Haitians, a difficult task. This philosophy is not something that Mapou adopted here in the United States but rather something that he himself has developed since he was young in Haiti. If we are reviewing his works as one of the founders and central figures of *Sosyete Koukouy** since in Haiti, one of the movements to launch the language and culture of the Haitian people, despite his experience with

lice at the *Fort Dimanche** jail together with Dr. Ernst Mirville (Pyè Banbou), another important personality in the Creole movement and many more countrymen who were thrown in this “Duvalier’s hell” for the same cause, their ideas remain persistent in going forward with the literary cause.

My visit in Miami was also an opportunity to meet face to face with Ernst Mirville who’s been militating in the Creole issue for more than thirty years, same with Mapou. In my conversation with Dr. Mirville, I was stunned when I learned about his works done in Haiti, not only in the medical area but also at the research level such as in the linguistic, ethnology, and psychological domain... and many activities that he created to support the youth. His dream is to go back to Haiti to continue this work.

These two men have such a wisdom and simplicity that make people eager to learn from them. It was an opportunity for me to take a look at the same time at some documents on Creole... Mapou is not only well-known as one of the leaders in the Haitian community of Miami but also, the American community recognizes the value of his works (whether at the literary or community level).

I don’t only see ‘Libreri Mapou’ as a place where people go to buy books and other things only, but I also see it as a center for documentation that exist in Miami and one that is very important for all Haitians who are living throughout the Diaspora. For instance, the first day I arrived at the local, there was a group of young white college students who were doing research in many communities; they stopped by to learn about Haitian culture and Haitians who are living in Miami. Mapou pulled out a chair to sit down and explained the subject from “a” to “z” to them. Dr. Mirville discussed the history of the Creole language and he also talked about its structure and how it’s different from languages such as French and English. Babzètòk, a well-known drummer in Miami was present at this meeting. This artist talked about the importance of the “language of the drum” had during colonial time to send messages to slaves. As we already know, the white men separated the slaves who spoke the same language; they would sell them where they would be working hard on other plantations. It was a way to cut all possible linguistic contact among them, fearing of all plots they would mount against them. But the language of the drum reconnected them and most of all, with the development of the Creole language, the white masters could not bring the situation under control. Creole got to a point where even officials of the French government sent to Saint-Domingue were obliged to make their

speech in Creole so that their message would be better understood by everyone. This same Creole language was going to connect all slaves in order to make November 18, 1803* and January 1, 1804*.

Well, to go back to the issue of “supporting ‘Libreri Mapou’”, one of the questions I can ask, especially for Haitians who are living in Miami and in other places of the United States is: do we know the importance of this bookstore or the works that Jan Mapou has been doing in the Haitian community of Miami? According to documents I’ve searched, I learned that since New York Jan Mapou started helping in spreading, and promoting the Haitian culture. The point I want to make here is that it’s not newspaper such as *Miami Herald* and others that we have to wait for to tell us who is doing what in Miami. Whether we are living in Haiti or in the Diaspora, we should try to help supporting ‘Libreri Mapou’. If you are in Haiti, maybe you can say it’s something difficult to do. Not at all! Supporting ‘Libreri Mapou’ does not mean only supporting it financially to help it paying part of its spending of the new local that Mapou is paying monthly. Regardless of Haitians who are coming from Haiti to Miami, they can visit the new local that is open from 9: 00 am to 7:00 pm. ‘Libreri Mapou’ is open to everyone, regardless of their ideology. For people who are writing books, theses, articles (in Haiti or in the Diaspora), it would be a good idea to send some free copies to the bookstore as a gift and to hold them in their archives in order to help other people who are doing research. “Moral support” is also important to support Mapou, to encourage him in the precious work he is doing in Miami. All together, we can support ‘Libreri Mapou’.

Védrine’s last comments on language issue in Haiti for 1998

“Language issue” Haiti Mailing List or Bob Corbett’s. – Reviewing these comments on the language issue in Haiti (from Bob Corbett forum), I believe certain people (particularly some fellow Haitians) misinterpreted some of my comments and the comments by others who were elaborating more on this issue to make it as clear as possible.

It is not a question of fighting against a particular foreign language in Haiti (as many Corbetters point out). Anyone with that doubt can delete it in their mind. The more languages a person speaks or can speak, the better it will be

for that person. But! When it comes it , there is something crucial, something sensitive to culture involved.

Some researchers on Bob Corbett list have already made it clear (concerning the linguistic reality in Haiti and the need to value the first language, Creole when it comes to dealing with Haitians and issues concerning Haiti). At the same time, people can say whatever they want concerning this issue (consciously or unconsciously). They have the right to speak.

I was born and grew up in Haiti. I am not some foreigner who just went to Haiti to research, staying in some big hotels in the suburbs of “*Montagne Noires*”, enjoying my cognac, and reporting one side of the Haitian Reality, which I believe some fellow Haitians have been hiding.

Up until now, I still feel guilty about some fellow students in my class when I was in elementary school back in 1969 in Port-au-Prince. We had an assignment on the French verbs. The next day, the teacher called students to the front of the class to conjugate them. Those who did not know them well in French would not only receive a whipping with a *rigwaz* (braided leather whip) but, also, the teacher would have those students who could conjugate these verbs well, do so loudly in the ears of those who couldn't. I was among those who could conjugate them well. We were all friends, young boys wearing our beautiful uniforms, playing ball and marbles during recess, and all of a sudden we became enemies. Why? For a foreign language we never speak at home, we never used while playing. What sense did that make to me and to them?

If we really love our country, we should also have the courage to criticize that we don't like in our society. It takes courage to do that because sometimes we tend to please a sort of elite (whether we belong to it or not), which loves things to continue the way they have been, and we fear of being rejected from this circle (if we criticize it).

I don't have time to go over the history of some people from the “Creole Movement” such as some members of “Sosyete Koukouy”, who are still alive today and who went to jail in the late 60's, or the famous “senbòl” (such as punishments for speaking Creole in class up to the late 70's), or other prejudices against Creole which one could name (such as one would not get good service when entering an office if they spoke Creole).

I think all these discussions on “language issue” in Haiti that we have been conducting (a chapter of the Haitian Reality, a reality in our society back home, which Haitians carry with them abroad) are very important to reshape the Haitian society in the next millennium. Though each of us may see it differently or some of us may try to hide the truth in order to keep things the way they have been, but the Creole saying makes its clear: “*Verite se lwil, l ap toujou rete sou dlo*” (Sooner or later, the truth will come out).

Last year, a Haitian doctor told me that he went to jail (in the 70’s) for few hours. “Why”, I asked him. “I spoke Creole in class when I was a medical student in Haiti”, he answered. He was lucky to know a VIP who quickly helped him out.

Before my closing remark, I want to leave you with some thoughts from Brian Weinstein and Aaron Segal in their book, *Haiti: The failure of politics* (Praeger, 1992):

“... The issue of Creole is directly related to the franchise system and to participation in the political and economic systems of Haiti. For the last 45 years the role of this language has been openly debated. Earlier in this century Jean Price-Mars warned his compatriots that the exclusive use of French from the first day of school to the last day barred the way to an effective education, particularly for the monolingual Creole-speaking poor urban and rural masses. He believed that if educators would admit that Creole, not French, was the pupils mother tongue and Creole was not some corrupt form of French, they would first use Creole as a medium of instruction. They would teach French as a foreign language... Studies by Haitian and foreign scholars have strengthened the case for Creole. The question of education through the mother tongue has been raised worldwide in Africa, India, and Latin America. Staff of Unesco, promoters of International Literacy Year (1990), many educators, linguists, and the World Bank have supported the use of mother tongue as media of instruction. Fears of elite whose knowledge of the dominant language is one guarantee of their status, the often underdeveloped lexicon of mother tongues, and fear of monolingual masses themselves that the life chances of their children will be limited unless they can use French or English make the question more complicated in these countries... Despite the debate, Creole has spread unannounced into the spoken and written media, churches, creative works, and schools without government sanction. For many years Catholic and Protestant schools have been using Creole as a spoken and written means of

instruction because teachers concluded that French would alienate and discourage the youngest pupils... Use of Creole in primary education began under Jean-Claude Duvalier. In September 1979, the president signed a law that recognized the importance of Creole as a symbol of Haitian culture and an instrument of education... Even though the reforms did not touch the Duvalier interest directly, the ruling family wanted to ensure the loyalty of the urban elites and rural middlemen and women. Pressures from these elements forced Duvalier to stop the Creole program in June and July 1982.

This points to a significant difference between François, who had terrorized the Port-au-Prince middle classes, and Jean-Claude, who wanted their support. The president dismissed the talented minister of education and withdrew his support from the Creole program. In the same year, 1982, the Roman Catholic bishops decided to launch an adult literacy program after they received many requests for it. The president agreed on a church project for adult literacy in Creole, but Roger Lafontant, who then served as minister of the interior, opposed it. In a meeting between Lafontant and church officials the former expressed a desire to control the program by taking responsibility for the printing of books. Recognizing the offer for what it was, the church hesitated. According to Father Yvon Joseph, chair of the program, the minister was obviously angry. The inevitable result was that the program was blocked...”

In short, all these talks about Creole from fellow Haitians and non-Haitians (who are connected), who want to show the reality of our society to the rest of the world and who want a change at home) are not about fighting the use of any foreign language in the country where Dessalines was born, but rather try to help those who are still living with a colonized mind to understand the reality, to become conscious and to take actions. It is not easy job decolonizing a mind that has been colonized for 500 years. That can't be done in one day. It is a gradual process. The Creole Movement, in a sense, has to do with 'liberation of the mind' also, the reality of our society, a philosophy of liberation and values that we have to be proud of.

Comments (#1)

“May I say your last language post to Corbett, that your remarks, of all the discussion (re: French /Creole), are the most reasoned of all... All the discussion about language one has read recently in Corbett seems not to apply to the average Haitian... they don't have computers with which to

discuss such issues! I have no doubt that as time ‘moves on’, the issue will be resolved in favor of Creole, as it should be... Haiti is Creole, not French... and, Haiti should take pride in its own language... for Creole is the ‘heart’ and the ‘emotion’ of all that is Haitian, the good and bad... how often I marveled that in public, the ‘elite’ would speak French... and when they did, they were not being themselves... then when we were behind ‘closed doors’, they would revert to Creole, and became themselves, more real and less ‘packages, as though to the world, they must act and speak French, something foreign to their true selves... ah, they know this, but if this is mentioned to the ones I know, they smiled that slow ‘sheepish’ smile and look uncomfortable... I think the ‘elite’ know they are fighting a losing cause... there are too many groups, both in Haiti and at various universities in the US that are working, behind the scenes, refining the written language, preparing language manuals, etc. that will, over a period of time, ‘take over’... the sooner the better...

My hope is that though Creole receiving rightful place in Haiti, it will be the tool whereby Haitians can truly ‘rally’ around something that truly brings them together as one nation... to have true unity... Once something like this happens, then it will become more difficult for some group of elites to continue to control the country for their benefit, to the exclusion of the average Haitian who wants to eat each day!

I do think that the use of French is one of ways the ‘elites’ have kept control of the country... let us hope and pray that this ‘grip’ on the country, strangling the hope and future of the average Haitians, will be broken so that Haiti can belong to the real Haitian people.” (Mark Gill)

Comments (#2)

“Dear Védrine, my special thanks and private ‘*Apye nou ye*’ (we are on foot) prize goes to you! I have always been interested with your passion, and with today’s post, I can understand some of the tough backgrounds of Creole in Haiti. I have already sent my last HIN this year, but I am adding the translation of your post as a special edition. You don’t mind? I also thank you for the very precious document ‘Proclamation Sonthonax Léger-Félicité, 1793’. ‘The writer Pepin from Guadeloupe answered to my question if Creole was only for speaking, that there is a proclamation in Creole as early as at the time of independence, and now I understand he meant this. Creole to me is a surprise, attractive. When I think how those slaves under heavy

labor could develop a deep language without the aid of any written materials, it would be my pride instead of shame if I were Haitian. The primary education in Creole is what I am dreaming to see within my lifetime.” (Mihoko Tsunetomi)

Comments (#3)

“Good summary of a complex issue to end the year with. My thanks for sharing with us those personal experiences that really help those of us outsiders who want to understand what it is (was) like to live under a situation that we haven’t directly expressed. It helped me understand why various Haitians have told me often contradictory things about this issue.

I have been in ‘immersion’ situations to learn languages, but always with the prior knowledge of my first written and spoken language to relate the new one to. My conclusion: support Creole education in Haiti first, then French or English as a second language, but the priority for the country must be literacy of the people, meaning literacy in Creole...”

Comments (#4)

“Comrade, you say the things well! You say them clearly!... We’ll never stop fighting so that the truth can liberate us” (Michel Degraff).

Politics and Haiti’s reality: when will it be dawn?

(October 24, 2006)

Most Haitian politicians are smart in talking (theory) but stupid in politics (practice). Many get trapped, many received knockdown blows because they are good in talking a lot, good in making beautiful, long and sophisticated speeches (specially in French, the language that is not the people’s one), a way to show the public that they got far in school but in practice, they fail.

Haitian politicians need the people to vote them during the election season, but in the meantime most of them distance themselves from this same people from time to time. They are living in illusion; they are dreaming with eyes brightly open. Indeed, they are not realistic. What does this mean in Politics?

Well, the late American politician, Tip O'Neil, a former speaker of the house, a great politician and a native of Massachusetts states that "all politics are local". In other word, if you want to rally people behind you (as politician), you must get into the people's circle, you must learn to work in the people's surround, you must learn to live with the people. It's quite simple, it's as clear as the day.

So, you can't lead a "living room politics" wearing a tie around your neck with a suit on all day long making nice speeches in the Voltairian's language to rally people behind you. That's foolishness! Truly, you are preaching in a desert when doing that. Truly, this people won't listen to you. They are deaf. So, you must go to *Bèlè, Boston, Kafou, Kafoufèy, Matisan, Site Katon, Site Solèy, Solino, Soudal** etc... go and visit many remote places of Haiti to see the reality with your naked eyes and then try to understand the problem of the mass, the reality the country is living daily, the people's suffering, these people who are tired of saying "God is good". It's not something that politicians would do only during election seasons.

The Haitian people is one that is "faithful", faithful like a dog. Truly, as long you do good to the Haitian people, you suffer with them from time to time, they can even give their life for you. But once you do evil to them, truly they never forget; it's a matter of minutes being counted down for them to revolt. The stupidity that the so-called "Haitian leaders" commit and continue to do is: scorn down the people, stay away from them and once they need their votes they expect the same people to cast their votes for them. That's funny! Even if these people are illiterate but they are not stupid per se. When these people decide to vote massively for a leader who seems to be close to them, well once the result of the votes is in you hear complaint of the opportunist candidates here and there, you hear there was fraud in counting the votes, you hear that they should recount the votes, indeed you hear all sort of possible manipulation and capture that are ready to be done on democracy (the people's voice, the people's choice).

Well, who vote mostly during the election season in Haiti: big shots, bourgeois, petit bourgeois, the mass? Any Haitian who has never been to school already knows the answer. And this answer is important for us who are researching in order to embellish our findings with ingredients coming from the nucleus of the "Haitian reality".

Our hope for compatriots who want to go into politics, who want to bring a new style of making politics or who want the people's votes is that they should start working side by side with people and within the people, they should start doing positive works in the society (regardless of how small they may be because there are always people who are taking notes of our works) and stop making sarcastic remarks concerning others back and forth because defamation has nothing to do with "constructive critics". Defamation is only there to rampage but not to construct. Just come yourself with a style to "meet a challenge" without criticizing right and left, without talking nonsense because it's important for you yourself to create a space in order to allow critics to see your own works and to see also within an important leader who see before all, a community, a country's welfare.

To conclude, neither more nor less, the Haitian people (in Haiti as well in the Diaspora because these are the two real wings of the bird to enable it to fly for real) is thirsty of another political class in the new century. Yes they need to see another style of politics on Dessalines' native land. Yes, they want things done in another way because they are tired of the same political coveralls, the one that has been there since a very long time. They are tired of living in hopelessness. It's impossible for Haiti to move forward if continues to function with the same old model. They are tired of hearing the same bell sound.

When we go over Haiti's political history, we see "accusation" back and forth as if we would find a politician, a leader, a chief who is 100% perfect, with no slyness. Duvalier (in reference to the whole dictatorship : father and son), is gone twenty years and month ago. Up until now there is a big political vacuum that is not yet filled up (whether we want to call it "political vacuum", whether we want call it another name, but in reality there is a great challenge that has been never met in terms of "the people's suffering in general", and in terms of hope for tomorrow where they've not seen where they stand. Truly, Haiti has become worse comparing to twenty years ago. As author of this article, don't believe that I am a supporter of Duvalier if I speak like this. I am a "realist", and a faithful observer of the "Haitian Reality". Under Duvalier, many Haitians in Diaspora could go to Haiti for vacations from time to time; many could go to Haiti to visit their relatives and stroll in the country without fear (doing local tourism) as long they would mingle in business concerning the dictatorship or if their names were not on a "black list" somehow. How many of us can go Haiti and stroll in the country today, rent a car to drive around with no fear, walk down Port-

au-Prince the way we like after 6:00 pm? That's the reality Haiti is living today; and we can't deny it though it hurts many of us when observing our country that has become worthless in plain twentieth century.

Plan to develop small schools in Haiti
(Summer 1987)

Many time, Haitians think that they'd have to have many millions in order to make a series of project that would help a community. With the problems that Haiti has been facing since a long time, I believe that one of the strategies for the country's development is "community development". How can we define 'community development'? It's all that people who are living in the community can create in that community to help people in it and for its development. Among these projects, we can cite: schools, hospitals, clinics, health centers, libraries, churches, business, hotels, restaurants, boarding houses, jobs, centers to learn a trade, etc...

We can't talk about "community development" and then to live "organization" behind. First, people in this community must have the intention to create a series of things. How can this be done? This cans be done through meetings where a group of 3, 4 people can sit down together to think about what they'd like to create in their neighborhood and how they are going to realize these ideas to bear fruits. The organization can also be done at the "Diaspora level" where a group of people who come from the same area can meet to talk about it and then make a chain with people back in Haiti. Whatever project of development people in the Diaspora would like to start out (for Haiti), they would have to be in touch with those in Haiti to verify, to have more information. And for the people in Haiti, they'd welcome with two hands a series of mini-projects that their neighborhood will be benefited from. This can create jobs also for people in the area.

"Long term project". – For this group that is taking into consideration a long term project and how it's going to manage it to continue functioning and when they are no longer there to have shifts. In this case, "recruiting members" into the organization is important. When mentioning "recruitment", we can think of a group of people who are first going to benefit from this project and in return, they will have as duty to help the project in the future. We must think about the youth because we are growing

old. There must be meetings from time to time to achieve them, to encourage them to learn to love and serve their community.

Objective: Building a community school (first).

1) *“Planification”*. – The project’s name. The who taking into consideration creating the school can think of a name to give to the project. Here, I don’t use the word “school” (which is the first purpose of the project).

2) *“Monitors”*. – *We can’t think of a school project, a literacy project without monitors or teachers.* – How are we going to find or recruit monitors to teach? The answer is: investigate who in the area can do the work, who in the area show leadership in this work without taking into consideration money (in the first place) even it’s only one monitor to start with.

3) *“How are they going to get paid”*. *Are these monitors going to get pay each month?* – The monitors must get paid anyhow, a way to help in the community development. But the money issue is something that will support (small or big).

4) *“Their supervision”*. – *Who is going to be in charge to supervise them?* – For such a project, there must be someone to supervise it, to see what the community or the monitors are doing, what they’ve achieved, what progress the students have made. The people supervising the monitors don’t need to be monitors themselves but some members from the founding group can trust and one who can function as referee, someone who is neutral.

5) *“Funding”*. *Where will funding come from to finance the project?* – How are the group or the founding members going to create or look for people to support the project (financially or find other aids) [example: look for people in church, other people who will be willing to give a fix amount of money monthly, each month, each six month...the founding members suppose to have a list of people who are supporting the project, taking notes when they pay, when they are late to let them know. Asking for money – The proverb says: “Ask and you’ll receive”. It would be important that the founding members start a fundraising campaign to collect funding, a long term campaign. This can be done through flyers that explain the purpose of this project and why they are collecting money to support this in support of Haiti’s development. These flyers must be circulated through many

organization and there will be conscious people who'd give some money from time to time for the work to continue.

6) *Teaching materials. What teaching materials will this school need?* – We can't talk of such a project without mentioning "teaching materials", where will they come from, how much will they cost. Teaching materials of all sort that would be used to teach, all books that are adapted for teachers or monitors to be used at all levels). Teaching materials can take these forms: books, tapes, educational videos, etc. Sometimes they call them "founiti" in Haiti but we are trying to use the technical term also that is related to 'pedagogy'. What other things can we include under "teaching materials"? On what are the students going to write? With what are they going to write? On what are they going to sit down? The answer to all of these questions can be included under "teaching materials" (boards, pens, pencils, benches, tables, etc.).

7) *Creating a resource room.* – No school will function for sure without a "resource room". What is a 'resource room'? It can be a small library, a particular room where they put copies of all books that are being used inside the school, books for the children, books for them to do research, newspapers, copies of articles, review, etc. With the economic situation in Haiti, children's parents can't buy books for them and the government does not establish any resource center in any public school where students can sit down to read books that they don't have. If we are really helping poor people, children who don't have the opportunity to go to school, it would not make sense to ask their parents to buy books for them. Books already cost a lot of money in Haiti and for those students whose parents can buy them, it's a luxury. It's one of the things that we must be careful not to rush asking children's parents to buy books for them. In some cases, if some parents have the opportunity, a way to help the school moving forward, no problem. First of all, it's an economic factor that causes many children not have access to school. So, even if the can't buy books, he will somehow find a way to help some parents and this will encourage them to send their children to school even if they are poor; they'll be happy because they'll see that we are trying to support them for sure; they will support us and we must encourage them to participate in all ways they can.

7a) *What level would that school be (elementary, middle...)?* – To start out such a project, we can't think of a high school. We are rather thinking of a school at elementary level because we are making nurseries, while this

school is growing up, we can increase the grades to reach middle school level.

7b) *Training for the monitors (how are they going to get a formation even before they start teaching?).* – Even before the monitors start teaching, they must receive a training (even if they already have experience). Who is going to give them this training? Do they have access to some books that they can read in order to have an idea how to teach in case they would not have access to receive a training?

7c) *Creole seminar for monitors (where will they find this formation?).* – It's a big problem in Haiti where monitors or teachers are teaching without attending any workshop for teachers, workshops to learn how to teach, have not attended any seminar on Creole. The Creole language has a great importance in teaching and there must be some work done to get rid of all bad ways many teachers act toward their own language. When talking in the children language, they give them explanation, they grasp things in a wink of time. In Haiti, the government always remain bare. I believe that the government should make it obligatory for teachers (regardless of the level they are teaching) to attend a Creole seminar before coming in front of a board. It's one of the reasons that cause many Haitian teachers to develop an inferiority complex against the native language the fact that the government never makes it mandatory to have a formation in the Creole language, their language, the language spoken by the students. Here, the student is going to appreciate his native language if he sees a teacher ignore it.

7d) *Seminars to show them how to teach or to learn to teach better (who is going to do that for them or where are they going to get this formation?).* – Many people who are teaching in Haiti did not have the chance to attend some workshops to learn how to teach. But if the person is really devoted to teaching, he will teach anyhow because most teachers in Haiti never attend any formal workshop or seminar. Who is going to do these seminars?

7e) *Evaluation.* – There must be an evaluation done from time to time to see go over the progress of the project, what success the teacher, student, what's reaction the people in the community vis-à-vis this new project?

7f) *Canteen.* – Will the student really learn if we don't think of how we are going to give them some money? Let's think also how we can include canteen in this school (depending on our budget).

Strategies for REKA to move forward

First, there is the “legal aspect” for us to think of, that is legalizing REKA (*Rezo Entènèt Kreyolis Ayisyen* / Internet Network of Haitian Creolists) or to include it under an organization that is registered with the label of “non profit organization”. I put emphasis already for REKA to start functioning as a research group on Creole. First, there are important issues to be discussed concerning languages in Haiti (Creole, French and English), “the linguistic reality”. There is “standardization” issue concerning Creole. Some people (who are not linguists or who don’t know anything about Linguistics) think “the 1979 decree” under minister Bernard would solve all the problems of the Creole orthography. As of now, France and Germany, the issue of reviewing their orthography appear in discussion.

There is a problem of “working together” among Haitian linguists; so, I believe it is important if REKA would get to legalize itself and organize an annual conference where Haitian linguists (who are already known) would be present to discuss important issues related to the Creole language, where do we want get with our language. Foreign linguists who are doing research on Creole (such as for instance, the French group), to meet each year. Why a group of Haitian linguists /creolists cannot get together each year? I don’t believe the true reason has to do with “money” but rather “organizing themselves, problem of working together”. There are important issues to be discussed on Creole. The Creole language has not been used 100% in schools in Haiti and in literacy programs. What do I mean by that? First, the linguistic situation in Haiti is a “diglossia” (where we have two languages that exist side by side, talking about French and Creole). In a diglossic situation, there is always a ‘dominant language’. The French language dominates in some cases, for instance most school books, official documents are in French. There is a necessity to translate many of them and have a series of official documents translated to Creole in order to have a “linguistic balance”. It’s a right, something we suppose to claim according to the 1987 Constitution, stipulating two official languages of the republic.

Teaching materials —

With the lack of teaching materials that exist in Creole (on all forms), those that exist in French can continue to be used in school but all the explanation would have to be done in Creole so that students can grasp the kernel of the subject, but for that to happen, there would have to have robust seminars for teachers, seminars related to pedagogy and the linguistic situation in Haiti. Who are going to do them? Are we going to wait for the government for many years? It's an issue that we must think of. Some volunteers went to Haiti to conduct workshops for some teachers (for example, we know of some travel by our compatriot Yvon Lamour) has done in Haiti in this sense. We need to encourage these types of activities and offer ourselves as volunteers. That is, in these types of workshops, we must include them in conferences that REKA would have in the future and I think Miami is a very important place that is very important for REKA to think of it since it's closeness to Haiti. In this case, if we want to help Haitian teachers, we must think somehow to pay the trip of some teachers or coordinators of some serious organizations in Haiti who are working hard for a better education. When I was thinking seriously of a way or strategy to help teachers in Haiti (where most of them never had any pedagogical formation); I wrote [*Yon koudèy sou pwoblèm lekòl Ayiti*](#) (“A look at the problem of schools in Haiti”), a book written precisely to teach Haitian teachers, to help them understanding the school problem back home and how Haitian teachers in Haiti can work together with Haitian teachers in the Diaspora who already have expertise in this sense. That way, I've given away many copies of that book to Haitian teachers with the intention to read it and apply some principles in it to help other teachers.

Globally, in this case, I think people who have expertise in pedagogy can think of developing some manuals that can help Haitians (particularly those in Haiti). On the “curriculum problem in Haiti”, it's a term that touches me a lot and one that interests me at the same time (being a Haitian teacher /researcher with a background in pedagogy and linguistics).

What type of curriculum, we Haitian experts in pedagogy, think that will be advantageous to Haiti in the 21st century?

To answer this question, first we must not think that we are an underdeveloped country, that we can't do big things. We should not think like that and at the same time, we can't forget the “Haitian reality”. What do I mean by that? In this sense, first we should tackle “the economic factor” (schools in Haiti cost money, or to receive a good education in Haiti, it's

something that cost money). It should not be like that according to country's constitution but the question is: is does the Haitian government really believe in education as the first base for a country's development? Do we have politicians who care about the youth's education when they can't even read the country's constitution and then to interpret it? So, when we, in the Diaspora (who had the chance attending universities abroad) think of these complex problems in education in Haiti, what can we do to bring changes? Well, the first response is organizing ourselves but with discipline, discuss these problem through forums, exchange ideas, go and look for Haitian experts (find out who they are and how we can invite them with wisdom to conferences /workshops we are planning to do, encourage and support organization in Haiti that are struggling for better schools to give the young people an education they where they serve their country. Let's encourage the development of schools in Haiti at community level. Why can't each "*komin*" (town) in Haiti have a high school? It doesn't cost many thousand of dollars but it's a question of "organizing". People in a 'komin' can give them a high school without waiting for the government but they must be organized and in this sense, we can think of self-sufficiency [in the case of community development] which is another alternative (short cut) for Haiti's development. So, important discussion related to all of these issues I cite here should be discussed on REKA's forum. Let's talk seriously, let's discuss Haiti's real problems (while having the chance of doing so via the internet) and what strategies we, scholars and experts can suggest for Haiti's development in the twenty first century.

We need a practical school in Haiti —

By "practical school", I mean when the student completes high school he will be able to help in the development of the country, he knows a trade, he knows how to type, he can use a computer, he can drive a tractor, he can ride a bike, he can swim (to be able to save his life or someone's else), he can speak many languages (particularly the main language of the region: French, English and Spanish), he knows how an engine works from "a" to "z", he has a knowledge in technical things, he knows a trade of which he can make a living. To achieve that, we should look back again to revise the school curriculum (particularly at the high school level) where the student took a bunch of useless courses during the secondary cycle that last six to seven years and cannot help himself afterward, he is a good-for-nothing in the society. To better the school curriculum in Haiti (particularly at secondary level), we'd have to revise France's curriculum (which is important in this

sense because Haiti copies on it though not doing the necessary changes that France has done) and then revise also the secondary school curriculum of the United States (here, there are some parentheses to be opened because there are some variations to be taken into consideration; that is, globally we could do a research on American curriculum at the high school level and then look at it also the private school high school level that is more advance). After these analysis to make a synthesis for the prescription of a new curriculum that would be adapted in the case of Haiti or we can even think of a school in Haiti as model to implant this new curriculum and that this school could serve a type of “laboratory” or “nursery” for the country. So, finally, Haiti needed our help in all sense; that way, let’s try to be very practical in what we are doing, what we can do and how we can put our expertise at the service of the country in the twentieth century.

**A reflection on the international symposium
for linguistic policy in Haiti**
(February 19, 2000)

I come up the comments below after a compatriot has sent me this note: “Hello Védrine, I would like to know your reflection on ‘The International symposium for linguistic policy in Haiti’ that was held in Port-au-Prince last week, what think of “bilingualism”, a theme that is misused by some influential people”.

Thank you for the note! It’s a subject that requires time to debate it. Well, first, I was not in Haiti to take part in it in order to give more details on that. To summarize the question, we can just ask ourselves this question: where did the funding for this conference come from? Does most of the funding come from the government?. Here, I believe there is an important logic, and it’s from this logic that we can enter into more details for the debate. And how about the political issue? Is this conference going to change the Haitian government’ attitude vis-à-vis the use of the Creole language the was it was supposed to be done according to 1987 Constitution (that is, to have an equality for the Creole language to enjoy all of its privileges same as the French language in all important documents that are writing? Also, at the same time, we must encourage these types of cultural conferences to take place (because don’t forget that Haiti is the mother of Creole issues in the world, and unfortunately that’s where they mistreat more this language) and

we must come up with our own critics, the same way you ask me here for my opinion.

We are late in Haiti in all domains and since we are debating on language, we are very late in linguistic issues (in terms of “language policy”) And I must repeat it again, most research that are being done on Creole, we know it’s not Haiti that is doing them because there is no investment in the advancement of the Creole language and culture issues. The old (unproductive) and underdeveloped Haitian bourgeois – see a reality that can make them lose power if all Haitian youngsters, all the poor children would be able to write their native language and then learn to speak and write) the colonial languages (French, and mostly English) Too many right would be claimed! For Haitian scholars, most of them, that doesn’t exist at all; if they really exist, we must ask ourselves this question: but what have they done in the country’s development? In the development of their own language and culture?

It’s big universities abroad that spend money, that’s constantly doing research on Creole and lay people (such as simple people and some organization such as *Bon Nouvèl, CIDIHCA, Édition Lagomatik, Edisyon Mapou, Educa Vision, KIPKAA, Oresjozèf Publications...* add on to the list please those that I miss, together with some good Haitian newspapers (some with electronic versions). We would hope they that they stand firmly to keep on doing their works.

We can’t forget certain web sites such as “Windowsonhaiti.com, “CreoList” etc. that give many opportunities to research on Creole. Furthermore, I believe that every Haitian who would like to see beautiful for Haiti to develop, he’d have to learn to like the language and home culture also, encourage the promotion of home language and culture (particularly the positive works that are being done on the Creole language).

It’s a collective work where we need strong men an women. We need to make the people in all areas aware of the importance to invest in the development of the Creole language (e.g., physicians would have to write good books on health in Creole, Biology books, things that are related to science; writers, engineers, agronomist, lawyers, teachers... indeed all profession one could cite would have to contribute in the development of the Creole language. And then believe it’s important for everybody who is producing in or on Creole to try to know one another (whether via the

internet, in conferences, exchanging research when publishing them, organizing big literary festivities, encouraging one another in the work for the promotion of Creole.

We are very late because when looking at the advantage for us, creolists, should have taken from the internet and we don't take them, this is sad! When contacting a person (on-line) who says he is in the Creole movement, if you are lucky he will answer you after a week. At the same time, it's a work that requires sacrifices and to succeed, we must believe in sacrifice and then give ourselves as example.

So, in short, don't tell me I kick the ball outside or I am off track. You've made a nice pass to me, but I had to do some little dribbling before getting at the mouth of the box. So, for us small organizations, creolist activists, we must be proud of the work we've already done and the works we are doing to promote the native language and it's important for us to learn to work together, to encourage one another because that's where the force is.

The Haitian government has resigned (or not really functioning) quite long ago. Many of us know that. So, we have many responsibilities on our shoulders to save Haiti and, the young generation and one who has not seen the color of the sun of the year 2000. So, our work toward the advancement of Creole shouldn't have any breaks in between, we must go on to the end!

Bilingualism —

Many times, it's a theme that is not well used or some Haitians who are making nice speeches in French play with it but it's an important theme that deserves to be well analyzed. First, in this theme, there is the notion of "two languages" and in the case of Haiti, French and Creole.

Globally speaking, the linguistic situation in Haiti cannot be described as one that is bilingual where everybody can speak French and Creole. Indeed, it's mostly a monolingual country with a very little percentage of the population that can be considered as "bilingual". 100% of Haitians speak Creole. No lie about it. It makes sense to say "Haiti is a Creole speaking country". The reason why most of the people are monolingual (speaking one language) is that they did not have the opportunity to attend school in order to receive an education in the French language that is being used as "language of instruction" since quite a long time and Haitians don't speak

French as “native language”. It’s a reality, though in many cases we’ll find those who brag saying that French is their “native language”, a statement made because of lack of education where they are not really conscious of Haiti’s linguistic reality, together with the “French speaking label” given to Haiti. There’s nothing wrong if a particular people or nation are monolingual, with the condition that they receive an education in their native language and have all that they need in that language also. A good example of monolingual people we can give is the American people where few of them can manage to speak a foreign language but they receive an education in English.

We will never get to a real “bilingual situation” without having 100% of the people benefiting from a free education in Haiti. Does this exist today in Haiti? When turning the page of the 1987 Constitution, we see nice articles on education, school supplies, things that the government should give to all students free of charge but in reality, it does not happen because we’ve not seen anything serious that have started (in terms of “real change”). We are still in “diglossic situation” where we see one of the two languages dominates the other (in certain cases) and this would take time and great effort to get to a “real bilingual situation”.

We must be very watchful concerning the position of the government in this issue, it’s their duty to respect what’s in the constitution. So, we should function at the same time as watchful but we must work in block, we must organize mini-conferences from time to time, we must not waste time. It would be my dream to see in ten years some real works taking place in the area of education in Haiti where these ideas would become a reality. The change also depends on me, on you and on all other Haitians who would be conscious to form one block at large, we’d have to penetrate the grassroots organizations in Haiti that are trying to do some serious works in this case.

We must also make a big block. Maybe we can pick up all of these ideas to organize a big conference. It would be great! But before, we must identify important people as guest speakers, people to make presentations, to conduct workshops related to all of these issues because we, in the Diaspora, have a great responsibility also toward Haiti as our country and people in Haiti have many hopes on us. We can find some money and we have access to technology to produce many things for the home country.

The theories are really beautiful when analyzing these issues. But what does Haiti needs to reach a stage of “real bilingualism”? When observing, most secondary school students can’t write their native language and despite spending 14 years repeating and memorizing Voltaire’s language, they can’t speak and write it well. And how about the teachers? What’s their background? Don’t you think it would make sense for someone who is teaching at secondary level to have a “Bachelor degree” and attend some teaching seminars before showing up in front of a board? Don’t you think that someone who is teaching at elementary level should have had a “High school diploma”, attend a series of teaching workshops before showing up in front of a board? And then these people should have had passed some real test both in French and Creole?

What teaching materials that exist in schools in Haiti (mostly public schools) in order to have a real bilingualism or one that is “well-balanced”? What access do school teachers have to all types of research, periodicals and all that can be counted as teaching materials for them to read and to learn to do research? Have we really taken our time to look at how schools in countries like Germany, United States, Finland, Japan, Canada, Cuba, China, France, Sweden... indeed everywhere we find a percentage of people very high and who are educated in their native language? So, sometimes we may close our ears with cotton when some people are making nice speeches on “bilingualism” and down deep inside there’s nothing serious taking place. Big wind and no storm! In any situation we can’t talk really of a “bilingualism in Haiti” without having a “real school reform” taking place and we’d also say, including a “linguistic reform”.

So, to respond to this claim, the question we can ask is: do we have to wait for the government in all of these issues? First, participation of the government is very important to make a national work in the case of diffusing the two languages in all domains and laws that would be enforced. Second, what can we do as conscious Haitians? The answer is: organizing ourselves and continue to do so, organizing conferences to analyze /discuss these problems and then try to work together to find some solutions. Many hands, the burden is light.

**Some comments on “Creole Dictionaries
and the interpretations of native speakers”**

(2000)

“In Creole, the word ‘kontribisyon’ mean a state office where people go to pay taxes and where people go to buy stamped papers or go there to make an identification card (Haitian Creole Dictionary. A.Valdman.1981, pp. 304). The real Creole word could be “kotizasyon”; this word is served for money that people are raising for a cause”. (Lionel Hogu).

The Valdman Dictionary (*Haitian Creole, English, French Dictionary* - 1981) gives only one definition: “*n/n loc. F bureau de Contributions E tax office. M pral nan Kontribisyon, m pral peye dwa lokatif* (pp. 304)”. In the Bryant C. Freeman and Jowel Laguerre’s (*Haitian - English Dictionary*, ed. 1998, pp. 315), here is what is being said about the word ‘kontribisyon’: “*tax office, internal revenue service; pledge; contribution*” and then they give up the sub entry): *ajan kontribisyon* (tax collector); *biwo kontribisyon* (tax office)”.

Hogu’s problem is that he only bases on the definition of “kontribisyon” basing on what Valdman says, including few information added but which are not totally in their (right) place instead of thinking about the whole semantics of the word (can have) and what he would have to say as a native speaker of the language, including what other dictionaries would say and then making a final analysis. So here, if Hogu were to publish a Creole dictionary, he would have to take this issue into consideration; that is, all of us, being native speakers who have spent some time in Port-au-Prince (Haiti’s capital city), we know that there is a big building called “Kontribisyon” (in Creole language), one that deal with Internal Revenue. But, what are other ways can the native speaks use the term in conversation? So, if we are writing a monolingual Creole dictionary, we would define “kontribisyon” this way:

kontribisyon 1. n.p [non pwòp] Biwo leta ki okipe l de revni entèn, enpo. Yo se anplwaye Kontribisyon. 2. n. biwo kote moun peye enpo. M pral peye enpo lokatif la nan Kontribisyon. 2. n. kotizasyon. Yo mande pou chak moun bay yon kontribisyon pou achte teren an. 3. n. kolaborasyon. Anpil Creolis pote kontribisyon pa yo nan lang Creole la.

“kontribisyon” 1. proper noun. State office dealing with internal revenue. They are employees of Kontribisyon. 2. Office where people pay taxes. I am

going to Kontribisyon to pay housing taxes. 3. n. collaboration, contribution. Many creolists have brought their contribution. To the Creole language.

In a short paragraph, Hugu forces critics to raise a whole issue. In a comment on Creole, the late Pòl Dejan (Paul Dejean) says: “*Sèl moun ki vrè pwofesè lang Creole la se pèp la*” (The only true teacher of the Creole language is the Haitian people). Albert Valdman, in his wisdom on lexicographical research, repeat the same phrase in an annual HAS (Haitian Studies Association) conference in Wisconsin (October 1995).

Concerning the “dictionary” issue, it’s something that makes me scratch my hair when talking about it. Bryant C. Freeman and Jowel Laguerre (F/L) had the chance to publish a better edition in the one published in 1998; though more entries have been added to it, but still many readers would expect something where some words are used in context. That’s among the linguistic research that took me a lot of time revising it from “a” to “z” (38,00 entries) for a database for any dictionary. So, the Valdman’s dictionary (1981) still remains as the key lexical research (analyzing the way the research is done with important illustrations in their respected contexts. Hate the dog but say its teeth are white (as the Haitian proverbs says); the F/L (Freman /Laguerre) dictionary covers more words in the Creole language than any dictionary published on Creole before the year 2000 because F/L have use an extensive volume of “written corpus”, including what they take from the Institute of Applied Linguistics (in Port-au-Prince) under the direction of Pierre Vernet). Also, most of the corpus of Creole works that F/L could gather in the 60’s in Creole. But still the main problem of the F/L dictionary remain the absence of “context” (for many illustrations), few “neologisms” that slide in it (through the collection of written works, where some authors may have invented some words that native speakers would not be familiar with or never heard of, “dialectal variations” that is not clarified (e.g., what part of Haiti one would hear certain “regionalisms”...)).

The source of all of these problems shows a series of principles that are not respected in writing dictionaries but anyhow, they have made a great contribution to the Creole language because regardless the type of dictionary one is going to write on Creole today or research related to Creole dictionaries, it would be impossible not to take a look at F/L’s as part of a “selected corpus”.

They could improve the work if after treating their database and then travel to Haiti (where the language is spoken) to do some testing on the ground (that is, testing a series of words from the written corpus) on some native speaker in order to see their reaction though it's impossible for a native speaker to know all the lexicon of the language (if we want to get deep in studies related to "dialectal studies") unless we would begin again with Dominique Fattier's latest research (this 4 volumes "thèse de doctorat d'état" presented in 1999; this research covers 20 linguistic communities). It's a research that took her 15 years but, truly it's the first great "oral research" done on Haitian Creole. Here, there's no doubt to use lexicon in this research and then she chose student from the faculty of Applied Linguistics (State University of Haiti) who are native speakers to make all of recording as part of the field work since she herself is French.

So, any real monolingual Creole dictionary or even a good bilingual one that would have to be published would have to reflect these two: "theory" and "practice"(written + oral corpus). Finally, in reviewing the F/L dictionary, we don't see a challenging final edition after mounting all their debate; that is, there is not a final "sorting" or "selection" of a corpus that would be based on the oral corpus in order to drop certain lexical entries from the written corpus) from "a" to "z" in treating the hyper base, by testing cross-references, synonyms and words that would be related to "family" (though they might not be "direct synonyms".

If we were to make an actual census, the list of dictionaries related to Haitian Creole amount to over twenty (including some glossaries) but the real question is: what is their weight after Valdman's (1981), F/L's (1996, 98...) which make a great difference in lexicographical studies. Also, we must never forget the contribution of the compatriot Jules Faine (*prix de l'academie française*) who left behind the manuscript of a bilingual Creole dictionary which Editions Lemeac (Canada) published in 1974 as the first one the Creole language (due to the devotion and speed of the Canadian linguist, Gille Lefebvre) though Valdman knew about this research in the first place but as the Haitian saying says, "*pye kout pran devan*" (short legs take the lead). Though Faine is considered more to be a philologist (by many linguists) but he was contributed to a seminal work in the area of "Creole lexicon" and we can't forget our late Pradel Pompilus (who recently passed last week); he is considered to be a "top" linguist according to Albert Valdman and many other critics.

Few months ago, I reviewed an important article by Pompilus which he presented at a conference in France (in the 70's) with focus on "working on Creole dictionaries". In this remarks, he opens a whole road of idea in ten page article. He also defended two dissertations at Université Sorbonne in Paris ("*La langue française en Haiti*", 196. 278 p. and "*Lexique du patois créole d'Haiti*". 246 p. unpub.), supplementary dissertation presented to the Faculty of Letters for the for the degree '*Docteur ès Lettres*' under the direction of professor G. Gougenheim. Both theses are valuable to researchers in Creole Studies.

The "dictionary" issue remains type of work that is pending, still a challenge for in the case of "better dictionaries" (all types) though I know that many surprises are on the way, works that have never been mentioned but in general, working on dictionary is a type of work with no end and one that requires an extensive knowledge with research in that field, including methodology to apply them.

What can be done to better education in Haiti?

I would suggest that everyone who would like to bring some changes in education in Haiti, particularly those who have access to the internet, to form a big block by building an e-mailing list in order to exchange correspondence. I would be more than happy if they would send it to me directly to me to manage it and to keep track of everything that may be sent to such a list.

We can also track down other people's e-mails such as those who participate in some forums related to Haiti or those who have talked about the issue. That's one of the ways we can start organizing ourselves and participate actively online. The internet, nowadays, gives such a great opportunity to do so much and we Haitians and friend of Haiti can take that opportunity to do such toward helping that country in a wink of time if we really have good will.

Haiti desperately needs a brand new curriculum and one that is practical also. We, as a group, can discuss what should be included in that curriculum in order to avoid all jakorepèt ('the banking system', according to the

Brazilian philosopher, Paulo Freire), but instead to enable students to develop critical and creative thinking.

It would also be important to do a synthesis of the French, Canadian and American curriculum (by taking the cream of the crop from these three countries and adopt it for schools in Haiti). Instead of attending secondary school for seven years in Haiti, with a good curriculum, the Minister of Education could reduce that to six years by making some courses optional instead of having them as mandatory courses. For instance, students don't really have to take Latin, Greek, and some unnecessary course early on. As a matter of fact, some courses should be have been taken when students enter a particular section (be it A, B, C, D). That way, students could have a better focus in their chosen 'section'.

I mention these two language courses just as an example. We could go on citing some courses in other areas. They are not going to help students mastering French, English, or Spanish (the main foreign languages that all students in Haiti should have mastered at the end of the secondary cycle).

In the British system, students attend secondary schools for five years; in the American one, four years. Now, what qualification do most students in Haiti have (at the end of the secondary school cycle) in order to function at any foreign university without any problem? There comes the issue of a "practical education" that also appears here!

The Internet – Thanks God! It helps me so much as writer and researcher. I believe that those of us who really want to make real changes in education Haiti (by talking less) can do so much if we are organized. We can make available online all the materials that are being used in schools in Haiti in a wink of time, and scan some other important materials also. That way, even if students don't have all the books needed, they could go to cyber cafes to read or copy them. Cyber Cafes are quite important in the development of Haiti in order to connect our students with the whole world and to enable them to do online research. So, let's encourage their creation throughout the country.

Of course some of us may propose a better curriculum to the Minister of Education. But, would they apply it? That's another question. Once most people in Haiti enter Politics or have a government job, most of them become businessmen instead of being servants of the Haitian people. At the

same time, those of us who dare to bring changes to our native country should think of alternatives or other ways of helping. And by grouping ourselves, we can succeed in making many of our dreams come true.

Also, let's try to make some of our writings (in French, Creole, and English) available online to help teachers, students and researchers in Haiti. I am so glad to have done that already through my web site (www.palli.ch/~kapesCreole/bibliographie/vedrine.html) and from time, the number of contacts I have been receiving from all over the world multiply. Let's see what all of us can do together in order to change the negative face of our beloved Haiti.

Long live or down with the Haitian army: uttered nonsense by some Haitians

(October 27, 2006)

It's not a question of rushing to say "long live" or "down with". One of Haitians' problems is that they are very emotional; they act upon emotions for any little thing. For a long time, I've been following the psychology of some (conservative) Haitians on the internet on how they would approach issues regarding the army. The worst is that those that I notice who so-called got far in school don't even take time sometimes to do some logical analysis. They rather let their emotion and fanaticism carry them away. Therefore, "Voye monte" or just talking for talking, somehow, has always found a little spot.

If some of us would agree to see the army's return, I believe that we'd have to be very precise in terms of exactly what army we'd like to see:

- 1. Would most Haitians like to see the return of a repressive army again?*
- 2. Would the Haitian people like to see a puppet army that's only waiting for orders from abroad to kill its own people?*
- 3. Would the Haitian People like to see an army that would be doing coups back and forth in order to put people it wants in power?*

4. Would the Haitian people like to see an army that is in favor of a small group, and one that is defending only the interest of foreigners?

So, I don't believe in just talking for talking when we want to address, for sure, important issues concerning Haiti.

It is quite clear that the few men enrolled in the Haitian Police, without having real or heavy weapons, won't be able to do an efficient work to provide security for the whole population, to disarm bandits, kidnapers who are still circulating in the country and who are terrorizing the population through their crimes. But does nevertheless, does it require the return of the old army that gave repugnance to the Haitian people after its disappearance? Here, we say "disappearance" because it's not really functioning since a long time and neither the Haitian parliament has yet voted on its physical elimination.

Yes, Haiti needs an "arm forces" that does not need to be called "the army". Me, personally, I see a national guard corps that would be spread out throughout the country and to give at the same time, the reinforcement needed by the national police force. How to recruit these people? A crucial question for us to think about. Should they include in it former servicemen who already had records, those who have their hands dipped in all sort of crimes? Another question to think about. Who is going to train them and to serve who? And I don't believe the most important thing would be to teach them only how to shoot as skills.

In our discussion, I rather see a whole program focusing on Civics. That is, it would be important for them to receive a formation that would define the purpose of their works towards the motherland, a formation where they would not be seen as the people's enemy (the way the people see the old army), but rather friends who are protecting the people. It's not just writing long literature in the French language about this issue (as I've read some writings related to it) thinking that's going to solve Haiti's complex problems. But instead, it would be better to come around the table, participate in on-line forums in order to exchange ideas, and to think together about Haiti's all problems and see the possible solutions.

What does Haiti really need? Gosh, so many things that we would include in this answer. First, when analyzing the problems from the time of Duvalier's departure (February 7, 1986) up until now, we notice such a big gap, what

some people would call “political vacuum”. We see talking for talking in almost all great issues that should have been carefully discussed, we see more fanaticism, and some people who are labeling themselves as communists, Marxist-leninists, liberalists, socialists, indeed all the “ist” we could cite. But meanwhile, the real problem is never tackled on a basis to end up in anything concrete in the advantage of the mass who has been suffering for so many years.

It’s clear that it is not such and such political party or a particular leader or such and such presidential candidate who is going to solve the country’s problems. We need laws (not “lwa” or “native spirits inherited from Africa” or gods who are dumb since the word ‘lwa’ (in Creole) carries the meaning of laws and spirits in the Haitian language, but rather “real laws” voted by the parliament and principles for everyone to follow. Laws should have been one for all; in other word, observed by everyone without any distinction and those who violate them should have been punished. First of all, a president or a prime minister shouldn’t have had any right to act the way they want to as supreme chief. A real parliament should have been there to question them about what’s going on, why the abuse of power and bring them to justice. But, do we have yet such a parliament? What have been the work of group of individuals, the civil society, so on and so forth in issues like this, in watching to see if those who are leading are violating the laws or they aren’t above the law, or if laws are being used as toilet tissues?

The answer to all of these questions remain to be a mystery for many of us who are still dreaming of changes in Haiti. Again, Haitians act with emotions in almost everything they are doing. Let’s take our time, let’s calm down in order to analyze together Haiti’s problems. It’s not only a single leader, or political party which is the source of the problems, but rather a legacy for more than two hundred years and the mentality that need to be changed. So, let’s go to the source of the problem to analyze it and then see what we can come up as prescription for Haiti. And most of all, by begin to change our way of thinking and acting. (E. W. Védrine).

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A native son’s message for Haiti’s president elect
(March 2006)

First, congratulations to the Haitian people who have decided to burry dictatorship (since 1986) in order to walk in the democracy’s road despite of all big thorns found on that fragile road!

Congratulations to the president elect, Mr. René G. Préval!

Dear president elect, the majority of the Haitian people have shown that you are the one they want to lead them in five years again. When we say “majority”, we see the whole population is being represented in it, with no distinction. That is, once again, you are going to be the president of all Haitians from March 29, 2006 (God willing). You’ve already heard their cry (poor, those who are making ends meet to survive, those in the middle class, the bourgeois, and the few rich ones [great business people]), they all have their own problems; so, it’s logical to take all these claims in your notebook, and you have already promised us that you are going to do your very best (so, the maximum possible).

You’ve already noticed the importance of “union” that should be taking place right away among Haitians in order to save our nation, and to restore our glorious history and most of all “All together we are strong” is Haiti’s motto. In this union, we see the importance for all Haitians (regardless of their social class, political affiliation, ideology, sex) including the Diaspora also (the two real wings of the bird which will enable it to fly) to work together hand in hand in a great “konbit” so that collective work can save our homeland and also its honor.

We also know that whoever leader that would get elected in your place today the road would not be such an easy one either because Haiti has a cancer (that has been developed since two hundred years from a virus called “disunion”) and she has a chance to get treated through the chemotherapy of union that she can get from all of her children. The funeral of hatred, animosity should be celebrated among all Haitians. The funeral of

“insecurity” should be celebrated right away so that everybody can go back to their regular activities. Respect for every Haitian should start budding right away so that we can move forward without wasting time.

With “Lespwa”, we imagine that you want to tell us: “all Haitians have ‘hope’ that things are going to be better”. We are certain that you are going to listen to the people’s claims. They have been dreaming of a new Haiti since a long time where all of her children can be proud of her and we know in order for that to happen, it is through a “konbit” of participation of all Haitians. We have no doubt that you are going to motivate this collective work as head of state and encourage it through the possible channels that you are going to create in order for that to become a reality in throwing these bases to put Haiti on the rails of development. May God to give you the wisdom needed to govern and good health so that you can help us during these five years ahead. Patriotically, E. W. Védrine, Boston (USA).

**Collective work for electronic publications
to help in the diffusion of the Creole language in Haiti
(December, 2006)**

It’s quite a pleasure to write this article, trying to raise writers (Haitians and non- Haitians), creolists’ consciousness, and everyone who would like to see that the Creole language finds the true place it deserves in the Haitian Society.

Our dream is to see that it’s full diffusion 100 throughout all schools, government offices, the media, etc. and that all streets’ signs to be written in Creole also. The most classical way for that to be done would be through a legal process. In this case, we envisage that the new parliament coming in would finally vote a on a previous bill, dealing with a Linguistic Policy - something that Haiti needs for over centuries among its social changes that should take place in the country. Though such a project existed under The Preval’s Administration, but it never had the chance to become law(21) in order to be successful. It is the Haitian People’s dream to see some conscious candidates get elected in the Haitian Parliament to go over that bill again, one that should be among their 2006 -2007 agendas to work on.

Today, we are living in a Hi-Tech century. Haiti is always considered to be a “third world country” despite of our cultural richness that many people in the world don’t know of. And despite of being scorned at an international level, it does not mean that we, Haitians, cannot come up with beautiful ideas for our country’s development the same way citizens of other nations have done already for their native land. And through my writings, I constantly repeat that the very first resources of Haiti are Haitians themselves, resources that have not yet been exploited.

One of the ways we, writers and researchers who are producing in Creole, can help Haiti is by publishing some of our works on-line. The question is: How many of us are willing to do some little sacrifices for the benefit of Haiti’s development when most of us are just trying to make money with our publications? Well, fine! There is absolutely nothing wrong when making money the right way. But how can we help our community, our country? Can part of this money help Haiti somehow? Can we publish free on-line some of our works to help Haiti? That would be a way to help with reading and writing in a wink of time, particularly students who are navigating the net all day long. Yes, we can do such a job if we become conscious of our country’s reality. And it’s the only way we can help Haiti moving forward when each of us tries to bring our own contribution and try to work in group also (if possible).

Though Haiti has been facing an electricity crisis for over decades, it’s solution would be something crucial in order to start putting Haiti on the rails of development, but we still have hope for the better and brighter tomorrow where we are dreaming of having good leaders to say: “It’s about time that we start solving some of the country’s main problems in order to throw the primary bases for infrastructure”.

Today, many people in Haiti, particularly those who are living in the capital, subscribe to a Ciber Café which is an advantage in the sense of being connected with the world. They can write to their friends in other countries and they don’t have to stay in long lines for hours at the Central Post Office in Port-au-Prince (Haiti’s capital) to buy stamps. These correspondences are very important and through some, they meet great friends and sometimes, people who are willing to help them, people they have never met once in their life. And most of all, they can find of types of information needed on this highway of knowledge. It’s a genuine idea, and we are encouraging more people who are living in Haiti to do that (subscribe to a ciber café),

specially our youth who don't have other activities after schools or after school programs to go to. So, going to a ciber café is a nice and educative hobby, and they can learn more about what's going on in the world.

After 15 Years of research and publications on Haitian Creole (Creole), I realize the importance of electronic publications a way to track down information in a wink of time in all domains. People all over the world who are researching on Creole contact me from time to time because they find my publications on-line. It is also a great advantage for me to work some great editors and translators that I've never met, but become colleagues since we share, somehow, certain common interests. Isn't that great? That's globalization to me (in its good sense, in the sense that we are all humans, we can work together, we can help one another, we can care for one another, and most of all, we can communicate). Praise the Lord! Yes, thanks be given to God for this amazing means of communication that the whole world has access to today and we are encouraging people who are studying science (whatever their specific area) to continue enriching more and more their knowledge in it for they can, in the future, do great services to humanity the same way we are benefiting from high technology today, connecting the children of the world.

Few years ago, I came up with an electronic directory entitled "Haiti's Super Web Directory". The purpose of this directory is to document all that is related to Haiti and its Diaspora (the two real wings of the bird to enable it to fly for real). Sometimes some people wonder how they can help Haiti. I came across many young Haitian Americans and friends of Haiti who ask that question. As a researcher (doing research mostly related to Haiti), I realize that it is important to have an on-line directory that would include everything related to Haiti. There are also people who are researching on Haiti and who are constantly asking for information because they did not have access to a directory that would include everything from "a" to "a". I took note of that and try to use the access of the internet in order to ease research on Haiti in the 21st Century. So, people who have some written documents on Haiti that they would like to publish on-line, they can send us the electronic version to document it. Those who want to send chapters of their books to be published on-line are also welcome.

Authors who would like to publish their manuscripts on the internet (not only in Creole since Haiti has been dealing so far with three languages: French, Creole and English and also there are millions of Haitians in Spanish

speaking countries who speak Spanish as their primary language also. So, we also welcome documents in Spanish], as long the work is related to Haiti, and with all due respect for Haitians, we can do that free of charge in order to help people who are conducting research on Haiti. It's the author of the work who has the "copyright". We are not there to claim anyone's copyright. And when some authors would like to remove their works from our site, we won't have any problem doing so. It's a great advantage for those who are writing to find comments and suggestions for their works. We hope that readers of this article can spread out the news by passing it to other people or to some friends, one way or another so that all together we can help documenting Haiti, and at the same time, respecting the primary language and culture of its people. On this note, we wish everyone the very best in all of their endeavors for 2006. We also hope that during the new year that each Haitian would sit down to reflect on how to help Haiti, what contribution they can bring in their own area, together with all strategies to work in group for Haiti's development because the motto of our country is "L'union fait la force" (Union makes strength).

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Creole Month Celebration : Jean-Jacques Dessalines’Month
(Oct. 2005)

Haitians are celebrating the Creole Day, October 28, as it is customary in the Creole speaking world. Some of us, Creole People, even go further to have the whole month of October as “Creole Month”. At the same time, many of us (Haitians) forget about the great black revolutionary leader (who took the lead after Toussaint’s capture by the French) and who was brutally assassinated on October 17, 1806. Dessalines, father of the First Black Republic (Haiti), sacrificed his life for all the children of Haiti.

He tried his very best to unite black and mulatto officers to fight Napoleon’s most powerful army marshaled against the Haitian Revolution (“Bataille de Vertières” - Nov. 18, 1803) and won that war which not only liberated all the former slaves but also created a homeland for them. What must not be forgotten also was the immense influence that black slaves liberating themselves had on millions of unfree and semi-free blacks throughout the

Western Hemisphere at that time. Dessalines never had a chance to attend any school, but he was one of Haiti's greatest leaders because he had such a great vision for the country so that all of us, Haitians, could live proudly on the land of the braves.

Thinking about a subject related to Creole to write about for this year's celebration of Creole Month, Dessalines all of a sudden came to my mind and so with great pleasure and homage, I dedicate both my poem, "It's Creole I speak"(22) and this article to him. As the Great Felix Morisseau Leroy, renown "dean of Creole literature", puts it in a title of one of his poems dedicated to that super hero, "Mèsi Papa Dessalines" (Thank you, Father Dessalines). Thank you Father for making me free; thank you for making me proud to speak your native language, the one you spoke with many thousands on the island of "Ayiti"(23), on that beautiful and mountainous land as the natives would have called it thousand of years before the Caribbean Sea had vomited monsters coming from nowhere to claim it their as their land, and brutally killed these first inhabitants.

In the above paragraph, I mention "a subject related to Creole" for there are so many that we can talk about if we were to do brain storming. Most Haitians, I would say those who can read and write French and those who have made or who are in the process of making an effort to read Creole, don't have any idea of how much has been published on the Haitian language over the past two hundred years and even better, for more than two hundred years. Here, I mention that number "two hundred", reminding me of Haiti's Bicentennial of Independence (1804-2004) and in terms of what our country has contributed to the world linguistically speaking. So, that was one of the key ideas I had in mind when I first embarked on the my tedious and most extensive bibliography research on Haitian Creole (from 1997-2002) to publish my latest book, *An annotated Bibliography On Haitian Creole: A review of publications from colonial time to 2000* (700 pages, 2003. Educa Vision).

Documents have been published in Haiti since colonial times(24), but it is not easy to find traces of these writings since there has not been an established formal or uniform system to protect them. This stimulated me to work on this bibliographical research on the Haitian language. Furthermore, Haitians (both in Haiti and in Diaspora) are facing serious challenges dealing with "documentation". Every single researcher and writer

should think of how they can find a solution to this challenge or how they can collaborate to improve the situation.

Looking at the progress made in the Haitian language at the lexical level, it is a remarkable testament to the language and the people. As of now, there have been more than 20 bilingual dictionaries published on the language within the last three decades. It is necessary to have as many types of tools as possible to promote linguistic research in different areas of the rapid developing study of the Haitian Creole (Creole). But since documentation has been one of Haiti's key challenges, many people were unaware of the impressive publishing ventures on our native language. *An annotated bibliography On Haitian Creole...* can also be seen as an inventory of publications, documenting publications covering a wide-range of subject areas as detailed in its Table of contents (A Bibliography of periodicals with publications on Creole (268 entries); Agriculture, Flora & Fauna (61 entries); Bibliographies (12 entries); Dictionaries, Glossaries and Related sources (130 entries); Education, Literacy and Teaching materials (334 entries); Folklores, Folk tales & Stories (230 entries); General Subjects (445 entries); Geography & History (63 entries); Grammar (72 entries); Health & Hygiene (52 entries); Historical Linguistics (88 entries); Novels & Short stories (108 entries); Orthography (112 entries); Plays (including related works, 87 entries); Poetry (204 entries); Proverbs (54 entries); Religious Writings (145 entries); Sociolinguistics (116 entries); Teaching materials for Learners of Creole (41 entries); Theoretical linguistics (325 entries); Theses & Dissertations related to Creole (75 entries); Interviews with some Haitian creolists, journalists & authors (13 entries); Appendix (Part I, II & III: Part III, Theses & Dissertations related to Haiti, 308 entries).

From there, readers and researchers can have a idea how much has been published on our native language Creole but at the same time, Creole has not enjoyed the full right that the French language has been enjoying for over two hundred years in our homeland though the 1987 Constitution recognized Creole as another official language on par of with French and even beforehand in 1979-80, a degree was published where Creole would be used as that primary language during the first four years of primary school. But things in Haiti usually remain on the written level on paper whereas government never really do their jobs. Whether do to an ambiguous linguistic policy or bureaucratic inefficiency, nothing was really taken place in establishing in a systematic and serious way Creole in the country]

Seychelles(25) would be the perfect model that government in Haiti should at in this sense.

Agriculture : the first target for Haiti's development
(July 2004)

“The primary need for Haiti at this moment is education. Education is the primary vehicle that can change our poor culture for the best. Is a poor culture in the sense of developmental capacity. The majority of our people barely have a good elementary education, not to mention a high school education. Education has to be the fundamental center of a national goal. That is to say, to culturally be attractive to other society and to be self-sufficient our nation has to be educated. Thus, illiteracy is the cancer of Haiti.”

Responding to this quote from a friend, I jot down some of my views on agriculture in Haiti in this article.

Education –

Of course we do need popular education and consciousness-raising so that the majority of people can discover the real roots of their problems, analyze the causes and raise their voices for change. Education is an important issue in the development of Haiti, but it depends on how one approaches it. Haiti is not going to move a step forward without a radical change in agriculture. Any real economist who is familiar with Haiti would say the same. Can we succeed with literacy while people in Haiti are dying of hunger? Would the mass (the majority of the population) care about to read and write when they can not eat, can not get a job, can not have any activities to give them some cash? The answer is “no”. So as one has been following closely the political situation in Haiti, it is crucial to take note to see if any of the leaders has a plan to approach the agricultural issue to bring some changes.

A strong school curriculum in Haiti (if ever there will be one) would have to include agriculture as a major subject of study from kindergarten to the end of secondary school year. Why? The earlier, the better in terms of educating the young generation and as they grow older, they would be conscious of the related problems (e.g., deforestation, erosion, no irrigation in most areas of

the country while water can be found almost everywhere, the absence of machinery to be used), know them well and participate to help solving them. Students would not just be sitting in class and studying through books some species of plants (those that still exist and those that have disappeared). It would be a good idea to teach them how to create nurseries to help with reforestation projects and the importance of doing that. It would be good to have some field trips throughout the countryside with the students; that way, they would become familiar with the country's geography instead of just studying it in books and they would have a general picture of the country's problems. It would be necessary to show them videos dealing with the subject. In my discussion with some countrymen concerning Civics, I usually tell them that this subject is not yet taught in Haiti. It is not enough just to write down some paragraphs in some *Civique et moral** books for students to love their county. Activities must be created for them in order to engage them in some work at a very early age. I suggest that the Minister of Education Friday as a particular day to do activities with students who attend public schools. They can organize fieldtrips with them; they can also participate in any activities that the state would be doing such as building schools, hospitals, clinics, constructing dams, building roads, planting trees, camping (where they can have specific workshops for them to learn something), anything that would be part of the country's development and their future career.

At the beginning of his paper on Haiti's environmental problems, Michael T. McGeehin intends to explain the famous phrase used quite often with Haiti. 'Poorest country in the Western Hemisphere'. For him, the phrase objectifies the situation of the country and its people into a discursive materialist formation. The majority of Haitian people live in the poverty sector. They don't have a rich standard of living; so they are categorically poor. As the second oldest independent country in the American continent and a member of the Western Hemisphere, the country lacks political and economical organization.

"Why do Haitians lack sufficient diets, access to water, access to arable land, and health provision is more than the phrase 'Poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere'", claims McGeehin.

Destroying the environment: historical facts, reparations, mismanagement of the country's environment —

This problem started out in Haiti as a sort of punishment for the New Black Republic's independence (1804) as one reviews carefully the country's history. Quoting Paul Farmer (an American anthropologist and physician), McGeehin (2002) points out that as late as 1824, the French monarch Charles X pressed Haiti's president Boyer for 150 million francs and the French would pay half of customs charge for trade. They would do that as indemnity for the losses of the plantation owners. The Haitian government at the time was strapped for cash so it had to turn to its valuable vast amount of forest which was a source of cash. Deforestation began at a large scale. The export market converted the timber into cash. That was the motor revenue that the Haitian government generated in order to pay their indemnity to France. Mc Geehin cites Paul Paryski who states that in the year 1945 alone, 18,600 cubic meters of mahogany were exported from Haiti. From there, we have a clear picture where the environmental history of Haiti begins (as an alternative opening) since Mc Geehin goes further in his essay when he states that a proper starting point would be the European contact with the island of Hispaniola. His historical statement reveals that the latter colonizer had a profound effect on Haiti's vegetation patterns. He writes about the impact of European settlement by quoting Paryski. This author states that in the early 18th century, exploitation of the forest resources of the new French colony (Saint Domingue) now Haiti, accelerated as whole mountain ranges were deforested for the valuable forest hardwoods. Land had to be cleared for plantations and other types of agriculture.

In a way, both the former Preval and Aristide's administrations were looking for a political discourse that would draw the attention of the majority of the people and, of course the attention of the so-called "opposition" (with a sole goal: Aristide must resign) were trying to inflict the punishment on the French by reviving the Creole saying "*Ayiti dwe Lafrans*" (Haiti owes France). But this time, we were treated with the reverse of the Ayiti: "*Lafrans dwe Ayiti*" (France owes Haiti). Aristide, in his calculation, went further demanding \$21.7 billion in reparations for charges paid after independence in 1804. Truly, on the one hand, many people supported that claim and would like to see the money to help Haiti (though conscious people may pinch themselves in a way to have doubt about its use), but at the same time some critics only see a rhetorical Aristide as since he talks more than he acts; clearly he is a master manipulator in this instance emphasizing this issue, hoping to make people ignore the country's real problem (lack of infrastructure at all levels). The truth is that many things could be done with a limited amount of money and within a short period of

time. On the other hand, many Haitians know that France would not easily give such a large amount of money in reparation. Different from Preval and Aristide, Prime Minister Gerard Latortue shifted his focus diplomatically, trying not to awake the sleeping cats, especially under a U.S-France led occupations, in favor of his government. He declares that Haiti does not want reparations from its former colonial master France but thinks Paris has a moral obligation to extend it credits... Its contribution could be a line of credit for French companies for infrastructure work in the energy or road construction sections. (Reuters – Paris, May 12, 2004).

So, the mismanagement of Haiti's environment is not something recent when analyzing all these historical facts. It has its roots in European colonization. Talking about the problem of agriculture, it is important to bring up challenges such as the ecological ones that are related to the issue. My novel, *Sezon sechrès Ayiti*, (Season of drought in Haiti)* covers part of the ecological problem where peasants cut down trees to make charcoal (for cash) because of the absence of other cash-crops. Charcoal constitutes 80% of energy use in the whole country. We have had a lack of electricity in the capital city for many decades; an example of a problem that has not been solved in spite of the fact that we have engineers and technicians in Haiti. So people rely on the burning of charcoal for the energy needs.

Gerard Murray, a well-known scholar and anthropologist who lived in Tomazo, Haiti for ten years, has addressed the ecological problems of Haiti in many of his published papers. With assistance from some foreign organizations, he participated in the planting of one million trees in Haiti almost two decades ago. Yet, in a lecture at the University of Massachusetts-Boston in the early 80's, he mentioned that it is a sad fact that people later cut down some of those very trees to make charcoal – even those which were fruit-bearing. Why did they do so? Because they didn't have a choice; they could no longer rely on agriculture; it's so poor, no irrigation, most of them don't have land to works, no machinery.

Haitian migration due to poor agriculture —

Why do most Haitians have been trying to leave Haiti? The answer lies in the poor agricultural system that we have. The quote in the paragraph below gives an idea of certain regions of the country that have been affected.

“The condition of land in the Norwest appears to be inadequate to support large population. The vast majority of the vegetation in some areas consists of desert plants. Cactus and other thorn plants cover much of the hillsides and make it very dangerous to go more than a few feet inwards from the roads... A certain percent of the population is involved with what seem fairly desperate efforts, the making of charcoal from almost every source of wood, including cactuses. Besides the ravages of goats, it is generally held that charcoal making is one of the main contributions to deforestation” (See “Land and Agriculture” in references).

Here we shouldn't put “education” aside, but again it depends on how one approaches it (we can see it at the agricultural level also, educating the peasants to protect their land, what to plant or cultivate in what areas, the problem of deforestation).

When peasants don't have land to work, no irrigation to water their small plots of land, prices of food are very high which are part of what they call *lavichè* (high price of everything)*. They have to leave their little rural towns and move to Port-au-Prince. There, they hope to find something: a job in the factories and if not, going illegally to the Dominican Republic to work in the sugar cane, coffee fields, constructions or try to smuggle onto a *kanntè* boat that would take them to Miami by risking their lives in high sea.

If there is a radical program in agriculture, it will do the reverse: those Haitians from the countryside who are in transit in Port-au-Prince in search of a better life would go back to their native provinces to work their land. With comprehensive and effective government and programs, they would have access to irrigation, fertilizer, machineries to help them plow the land and take part in other agricultural activities that would keep them busy.

“Most agricultural labor in Northwest Haiti is entirely by hand. Even the use of donkeys or cattle to pull plow equipment must be rare, because I only saw people hoeing by hand. In another area, the very productive rice area in the low lying north of Port-au-Prince, farmers were leveling the mud in rice fields by hand. Farmers in the Northwest are very skillful and patient in their use of the hoe and machete to do just about everything, and it was obvious that they took much pride in the quality of their farm work...” (See “Land and Agriculture” in references).

By having the necessary tools, farmers will be able to produce food not only for themselves, but also to bring to local markets to get cash for their needs. That is: creating activities for them, keeping them busy doing something in their own countries that is helping them. Now in order to have that done, we do need leaders with a vision for the country, not those leaders who had nothing before and who, all of a sudden, rise to power in the name of the innocent and illiterate people to fill their pockets and become “the new millionaires” in a wink of time.

There are also many things that fall under “agriculture”: raising animals, fishing, reforestation..., a national program that can be put in place to subsidize gas for cooking in order to discourage deforestation and charcoal energy burning. The burning fume is poisoning human health and the environment.

“Production of animals, mainly goats and cattle, has four problems in Northwest Haiti: water, grass, diseases, and breeds. Apparently farmers do not adequately appreciate that even goats need a certain amount of water to survive. Cisterns may be the passive solution to provide water to animals. There is not much good quality grass for the goats to eat. They suffer from nematode problems. It is difficult to maintain pharmaceuticals and other medicines because of the general lack of electricity. An example is the Newcastle’s disease of chickens, chronic from December through March, for which \$10 of vaccine could save \$500 worth of chickens. There is an opportunity to improve the breeds of animal, because reproduction is poor. The central part of Haiti has better breeds of goats”.

In the above quote, we have seen the problems that animals in Haiti have been facing, problems that could be solved with a little amount of money to help farmers. All of them must be taken into consideration if there will be a real agricultural program for Haiti’s development. We have also seen the importance of electricity and the role it can play in saving the life of many animals by maintaining pharmaceuticals and medicines for them.

In raising animals, we do need a strong project that would bring back the Creole pigs since that had been for years the backbone of the peasants’ economy. But unfortunately, the unnecessary slaughter by the puppet government in the 80’s was a big slap to peasants. Since most of them are not landowners and don’t have cash crops, they used to raise animals (and mostly Creole pigs) before the 80’s. They would get cash when selling them.

“An essential component of Haiti’s informal economy and the real savings account of its citizens was the ‘Creole pig’. The term ‘was’ is appropriate, because in the early 1980’s international agencies convinced the peasants in Haiti that their pigs carried a disease, that if transmitted to the swine industry in America the loss would hurt the global economy, and their Creole pigs needed to be eradicated... The peasants were promised a repopulation program with new pigs from Iowa that required clean drinking water (unavailable to 80% of the human population), imported feed, and special pigpens. Haitians couldn’t afford the new pig; the repopulation plan was a disaster. The eradication of the Creole Pig levied a pig toll on the Haitian people. Jean-Bertrand Aristide write, ‘One observer of the process estimated that the monetary terms Haitian peasants lost \$600 million dollars. There was a 30% drop in enrollment in rural schools, there was a dramatic decline in the protein consumption in rural Haiti, a devastating decapitalization of the peasant economy and an incalculable negative impact on Haiti’s soil and agricultural productivity’”. (Michael T. McGeehin, 2002).

From this quote, the author tells it all: the disappearance of an essential component of Haiti’s informal economy, the disappearance of real savings account of its citizens, the influence of international Politics on Haiti’s economy, adaptation problems with the new pigs, a multi million dollars lost, a significant percentage drop in enrollment in rural schools, problems in food consumption in rural areas and all contributed to the destruction of Haiti’s economy.

Kote kochon kreyòl nou yo?

What happened to our Creole Pigs?

*Zòt soti kote l soti, vin
Di nou yo gen lafyèv Pòsin
Yon konbinezon matyavèl
Pou peyizàn, move nouvèl.*

These guys came from far away
Telling us that they have pork fever
A tricky combination
For peasants, bad news.

Yo ban nou kochon grimèl yo
Pou n toujou rete esklav yo
Se vre yo di n analfabèt
Men nou konnen ke nou pa bèt.*

They give us the colored Pigs
In order to remain their slaves
It’s true that we are illiterate
But we are not animals

(E. W. Védrine. Collection: “Ti powèm ayisyen oktosilab)

The agrarian reform under the Preval administration —

“The President announced that he wants to spread agrarian reform throughout the country over a period of just three months. In order to do this, INARA has to open offices in 14 districts (9 departments and under districts) covering the whole of the country not yet touched by the reform. This announcement, widely reported, raises big hopes both on the part of peasants, who are marginalized and strangled by the high cost of living and the scarcity of equipment, and on the part of government, committed to a policy of raising national production and establishing social justice.”* (Peace Brigades International – Haiti. Bulletin #10, April 1998).

That sounds to be a great announcement, one that is filled with hope for the desperate peasants but usually, things are easier to be said than done. For Preval, it is something that can be done because the earth is the root of power. But how much land is an important question to consider. Haiti is characterized by an essentially agricultural economy where two-thirds of the population lives in the provinces. There is a very high population density in rural areas. Trying to distribute some plots of land to peasants doesn't really solve their problems. One does not break the vicious cycle (for instance, most peasants when having a death in their family have to sell some of their plots of land in order to pay for the expenses of the funeral. Candidates to buy land usually take advantage of a death situation by offering their financial help to the family of the dead. Another big problem is that the heirs where some people who are members of the immediate family may inherit these plots of land. By quickly selling the land without consultation and agreement of all the heirs may result in long fights among relatives which can give birth to all kinds of problems such as long term fighting, becoming enemies for life and death in some cases. To avoid such a complex problem (trying to identify land owners and distribute plots of land to the landless), it would be better and wiser to identify the land belonging to the state, those plots that have been sized illegally (particularly during the Duvalier's regime) and then employ peasants to work on it. These landless peasants also sell their labor to the state and the latter in return could provide them with decent housing, schools, for their children, a social security, and health care to better their fragile social and economic situation. Just having the idea of giving out some small plots of land to some people in need does not solve the problem (no irrigation, no machines to work it and once they have a death, they will have to sell it). I could go on and on supporting my argument (“Agriculture should be the #1 target for Haiti's development”) but, I guess many thoughtful people would take into consideration the points I lay out.

The lavalas regime during their 10 years in power had enough time and some money (e.g., aid received after Aristide went back to Haiti from exile, money collected from taxes) to try their best to come with some solutions for this critical problem. They most certainly were aware of its acute form. The Preval administration should have had better ideas for the functioning of INARA and its real purpose. Aristide alone spent more than \$90 million yearly for his own security for a period of ten year. One fourth of that money or money used just for lobbying folks in Washington would have made great changes in developing agriculture.

“Haiti’s government, while controlled by president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his party, spent \$7.3 million between 1997 and 2002 lobbying the U.S government as more than 80% of the country was impoverished... Haiti’s island neighbor, The Dominican Republic – with a problem of 8.4 million compared with Haiti’s 7 million – spent \$1.18 million on lobbying for the same period, according to the most recent records required to be filed with the justice Department by foreign agents... Most of lobbying money, \$5.38 million in that period went to the Florida law firm of Kurzban, Weinger & Tezeli, which served as Haiti’s general counsel in the United States... During Haiti’s lobbying efforts, U.S aid dwindled, from more than \$200 million a year in the mid 1990s to around \$100 million in 1998, to \$52 with expenditure of \$361 million... Mr. Aristide was paying between \$6 million and \$9 million annually for 60 or so bodyguards provided by an American security firm, The Steele Foundation.” (Steve Miller, Washington Times, 2004-03-06; Haiti Democracy Project web page, item #1853).

How some people view the development of Haitian agriculture —

“State land can be used to develop production that would fight malnutrition. This production would feed the cafeteria system that was going to be opened for both private and public sectors (with a managerial system that could be mixed...). This agricultural production would allow the creation of jobs for people such as farmers, those who raise animals, those in dairy products (such as milking cows), and people who work in the transportation sector. At the same time, this cafeteria would function in giving out jobs to both parents and students, jobs such as cooking, dish washing, handling of materials and so on. This is a vision we could start with to help to develop agriculture.

In a broader vision, we first believe that a choice of production is to be made. These questions we can ask are as follow: Is it production for internal market first? Is it production to satisfy self-sufficient nutriment first? These questions deal with politics because there are great interests hidden behind some of these options. My choice is focusing on basic needs first. The question is not whether we should, but rather what agricultural strategy is good for Haiti... (Luc Rémy).

Elaboration on Rémy's ideas (based on an interview with him), the issue is something political that requires a qualitative and quantitative change in the agricultural system in Haiti (political leadership would have to direct the sartorial or global change that would happen with a sound strategy with the best people for either choice). Politically speaking, it is something that is clear. The full engagement will be a sensitive and challenging commitment for powerful change to redo the country's agricultural system. This project according to him, should be centered on a strong politics that is first going to develop a *cadastral plan** for them to really know who are the owners of the land, how much land belongs to the state, how much belong to the private sector, and which ones had no owners. Second, he suggests that they come up with good laws that govern working the land, tax on agricultural products and tools to work the land. Those who are causing problems ought to be punished. Stealing land by those tough guys who always want to get everything should be prohibited. Third, define and put in place forms of energy that can allow us to ensure conversation of the products for commercialization and distribution purposes. He is aware that at the moment they can take place because there can not be good agriculture without energy; there can not be agricultural products to reach all sectors of the population and all the time. We must create good techniques to preserve perishable products (such as mangos, soursops, oranges, grapefruits, pigeon peas, green corn, bananas, etc. Fourth, he sees the creation of a special agricultural production. Fifth, prepare technicians. Sixth, develop a politics for agricultural production (by providing low credit loans, scholarships for peasants' children to study in agricultural schools which will prepare them for agricultural aspects such as: dairy products production, raising animals, production of animal skin, etc). Seventh, fight the invasion of *pèpè* or cheap imports agricultural products coming from abroad with a politics that deals with appropriate custom regulation, importation quotas, sanitation standards and other criteria not based on tax. Strategies and knowledge are important so the public and private sectors can understand clearly and subtly World Trade Organization rules. This becomes crucial because of the need for

agricultural protectionism. We must be ready for the WTO negative consequences (e.g., possible sanctions). Eighth, organize constantly a series of fairs to promote our products. Ninth, change people's perception and language used in school, and the media on how they approach and dialogue about agriculture and peasants. This can be done by valorizing news on agricultural performance, by publicizing these achievements on television and in newspapers. Tenth, modernize the subject by updating our books for clarity of writing, featuring new effective techniques, questions and answers about different present agricultural programs, always emphasizing concretely our agricultural system, its role in the economy, production networks and how capitals flow through it; that is: do it in a way to work informally our agriculture by teaching the children and the whole country how to think and respect an agricultural economy in new positive ways.

Rémy also touches on a “policulture system”. For him, this is not something bad for the land. Specialists always say that diversification of production is a way to avoid the land waste and rot (*usure du sol*) and prevent a monoculture (e.g., coffee, sugar cane, cocoa...) from taking all of our resources, killing all the good land and thus placing us again further in a dependence of international market price that is always making a lot of money (great fluctuation of prices) for agricultural products... This reflection is also important to prevent us from falling in line with the rigid rules of this internal market that likes to isolate a country from its specialization in a product (according to economists David Ricardo and Adam Smith – what they call cooperative advantage that the neoliberal system likes) so that it can spend money in importing other products needed.

Some American missionaries have been working in the Dominican Republic (D.R) and Haiti for many years. A significant sector works with an eye, always, look for a permanent solution to end the misery endured by the Haitian people. For instance, some have been working in D.R. with Pastor Jean Luc Phanord until his death in a plane crash (November 2001). Some worked in the bateys serving Haitian sugarcane cutters and their families by bringing them physical aid and spiritual comfort. After Rev. Phanord's death, some joined with Pastor Laroche of the First Haitian Baptist Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts. They worked with his group in Caesse, North Haiti in an effort to find a solution to the pain and suffering of the Haitian people.

“Two years ago we were introduced to a project ongoing in China whereby bio-gas separated from human and animal waste is used to provide electricity, cooking gas, pure drinking water, high-grade fertilizer and job opportunity to an entire rural community lighting the entire community up one giant step, one gets left out, using this step up as a solid, positive platform from which the community can begin to advance and grow. We have been in touch with the man, Mr. John Spears, developing the China Project and he assures us, given the proper situation, a community that would be willing to work together to replicate a project designed to suite their situation and train others from surrounding communities so they could return to their communities to replicate what they had learned, he would travel to Haiti for expenses and develop a role model for the Haitian people in rural Haiti. Since animals are the key to this projects success they thought is to bring dairy cows to Haiti to anchor the ‘Farm Unit’ and by doing so provide the community with milk, cream, cheese and butter.” (Jim & Martha McGuy: A simple plan to re-build rural Haiti).

Such a program would be beneficial for Haiti in the production of electricity, something so crucial in building the country’s infrastructure. Animal waste has been destroyed throughout the country and as mentioned in the above quote, something that would be very useful for fertilizer. This project would create jobs for many people in rural Haiti and we can guess that they don’t cost a lot to have them. So, there is a great focus on animals (that produce waste); we see a great source of protein through a future dairy products for the whole country, not just some rural communities.

Jim & Martha McGuy comment on how part of funds transfer to Haiti can help with its development *“... A way for Haitians in the Diaspora to rebuild Haiti by coming together to support and take part in a common goal, a goal they already shared but with a simple change in tactics could provide enough funds to help rebuild Haiti. We are referring to a change in the way funds are transferred to families and loved ones living in Haiti. Presently, except for \$5.5 million, annually, funds being transferred to Haiti are transferred through companies like Western Union that charge fees between 10% to 25%. It is estimated between \$800 million and &1 billion in funds are transferred to Haiti from the Diaspora, annually, a lost due to these high transfer fees of between \$80 million and \$250 million. Last year, the \$5.5 million mentioned was transferred through FONKOZE, Haiti’s Bank for the Poor, at an one time charge of \$10 on funds transferred up to \$1000. Their \$10 charge is used to covert a small administration cost and the remainder*

is used to provide small business loans for Haiti's poor insuring all funds transferred benefit the Haitian people one way or the other... Doing this could serve as a way to unite the Haitian people in the Diaspora in a common goal and, also, serve as a way to bring together to support projects like the 'Farm Unit' (Jim & Martha McGuy, May 2004).

To conclude, developing agriculture throughout Haiti would be the first step forward for the country's development. It would be the best way to stop the flow of Haitians immigration. For example, it would diminish the great number of Haitian peasants from crossing the border to the Dominican Republic (illegally or legally; thereby, supporting the black market behind this trade) and would be one of the most important steps in changing Haiti's face. This development would create jobs activities for 80% of the population of Port-au-Prince to look for jobs, staying in line for hours in front of a factory just to kiss someone's boots for a job that does not even pay \$4 a day. They would go back to their native town to work. Nor would they need to keep on risking their lives on the high seas to reach the Bahamas or Miami in order to live a better life.

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**Path to the most ever published bibliography research on Haiti's
language:**

*An annotated bibliography on Haitian Creole:
a review of publication from colonial times to 2000*
(October 2007)

1.1 *Abstract* —

Documents have been published in Haiti since colonial times*, but it is not easy to find traces of since there has not been an established formal or uniform system to protect them. This stimulated me to work on this research. Furthermore, Haitians (both in Haiti and in Diaspora) are facing serious challenges dealing with “documentation”. Every single researcher and writer should think of how they can find a solution to this challenge or how they can collaborate to improve the situation.

Looking at the progress made in the Haitian language at the lexical level, it is a remarkable testament to the language and the people. As of now, there have been more than twenty bilingual dictionaries published on the language the last three decades. It is necessary to have as many types of tools as possible to promote linguistic research in different areas of the rapid developing study of Haitian Creole (HC). But since documentation has been one of Haiti's key challenges, many people were unaware of the impressive publishing ventures on our native language. *An annotated bibliography on Haitian Creole* can also be seen as an inventory of publications, documenting publications covering a wide-range of subject areas as detailed in its Table of Contents (*A Bibliography of periodicals with publication on Creole [268 entries]; Agriculture, Flora & Fauna [61 entries]; Bibliographies [12 entries]; Dictionaries, glossaries and related sources [130 entries], Education, Literacy and Teaching materials [334 entries]; Folklores, Folk tales & Stories [230 entries]; General subjects [445 entries]; Geography & History [63 entries]; Grammar [72 entries]; Health & Hygiene [52 entries]; Historical linguistics [88 entries]; Novels & Short stories [108 entries]; Orthography [112 entries]; Plays including related*

works [87 entries]; poetry [204 entries]; Proverbs [54 entries]; Religious writings [45 entries]; Sociolinguistics [116 entries]; Teaching materials for learners of Creole [41 entries]; Theoretical linguistics [325 entries]; Theses & Dissertation related to Creole [75 entries]; Interviews with some Haitian creolists, Journalists & Authors [13 entries]; Appendix [Part I, II & II, Part II: Theses & Dissertations related to Haiti, 308 entries]

OUTLINE

- A. Bibliographical overview of prior research.
- B. Early observation as young teacher, teaching in the Haitian Bilingual Program in Boston.
- C. From observation to publication (problem posing vs. problem solving).
- D. More publications within a specific time frame (8 books released in 1994).
- E. My first radio talk show “Chache konnen ak Védrine” and how I would use some data from it later in my bibliographic research.
- F. Having a solid bibliographic base to move on with the research.
- G. A bibliographic itinerary (including Haiti, the United States and Canada).
- H. Is this a complete bibliography?
- I. Choice of language to write the bibliographic research (respecting the three main languages in which comments /critiques on these documents were primarily written, also three main languages that have been used with Haiti (French, Creole and English).

1.2. *Bibliographical overview of prior research* —

Some critics would certainly argue that people never start out without anything from scratch. This is quite true in a sense. The well-known dean of Creole Studies, the late John Reinecke, attempted to publish a bibliography covering different based creoles. His death in 1972 was a great loss to creolists around the globe, but the seed he planted continued to germinate

when later, some other creolists try to continue his studies in the spirit of his work. Covering Haitian Creole in his research, as part of a bigger Atlantic branch, Albert Valdman et al. (1983) – a well-known researcher on Haitian Creole, have tried to revive Reinecke’s dream with the publication of *Bibliographie des études creoles, langues et literatures**. But since bibliography is never a complete research, his is also limited in the sense of not conducting a thorough research that would include publications covering all aspects of the Haitian language from colonial times up to the early 80’s, the date of its publication.

An annotated bibliography on Haitian Creole A review of publications from colonial times to 2000, my latest book published in 2003, is an important document in my quest of trying to give Haitian Creole the dignity it deserves. It is also a document that reminds me of the long path I have walked in order to become a writer and researcher, focusing mostly on developing teaching materials related to Haitian Creole that can be adapted to serve multiple functions of its speakers (be it in Haiti or the greater Haitian Diaspora).

1.3. Early observation as young teacher, teaching in the Haitian Bilingual Program in Boston —

I was hired to teach in a Haitian Bilingual Program*. It was quite a challenge for me back then when I started observing teachers and student’s needs in the program, a challenge to start doing something positive to help remedy the situation. There was really no materials available in the students’ native language or bilingual materials suitable to their environment.

Culturally speaking, most Haitians would do more talking than acting. In the case of the Haitian Bilingual Program, they would talk over and over its problems but never try to find some concrete ways of solving some of them. In my observation, for instance, there were two generations of Haitian teachers within the school system (first and second generation), and each would address these problems their own way.

a) In the classification of the “first generation”, we would put teachers who were mostly in their 50’s and up) who were educated in Haiti, graduated from the state university and then were hired by UNESCO in the 60’s to teach (mostly) in the new independent French speaking countries of Africa. Those teachers, who were educated in French and who were never exposed

to any program or seminar dealing with Applied Linguistics would misinterpret the real mission of a bilingual program and the students native language as its linguistic backbone. For instance, most thought that mastering the French language would be a success for students and forget about using materials in their own native language. Creole (the language spoken at home and with their peers, the one in which they can express themselves better and the one they best understood).

b) The “second generation” would be teachers (mostly from their 20’s and up). Some had completed secondary school in Haiti or in the United States and worked their way to graduate from American universities where they have also been in some teachers’ programs in order to become certified in their subject area. Among their required courses, they have taken courses dealing with applied linguistics where they would become aware of theories related to Bilingual Education. First and Second Language Acquisition and the role of the native language in education for success. They would, therefore, be more open to use Creole in the classroom (though most of them would expect their students to do their very best to write in English). Right here, they not only made it easier for Haitians students (at the oral level), but also the latter took pride in class participation in their native language despite the fact that all of this took place at the “oral level” since nobody in the system came up with the idea of developing appropriate bilingual teaching materials (during that time) that would fit into the students’ environment (be it in French, English or Creole) in order to help them making the transition faster.

In my class, I had tried my very best to help students. For instance, I would lecture in Creole (when most of my students were taking the first level of ESL (English as a Second Language), but at the same time, the school system expected us to help students master the English language. So, since all the textbooks were only in English, I would also summarize in Creole chapters covered in class, by giving them summary handouts, including vocabulary lists with explanations in the native language. I would have them read in English in class and explain how much they understood from what was being read. I would do any helpful exercise with them. During tests, students had the choice of writing in English, French or Creole. So, not only I tried to make everyone at ease, but there was no excuse at all for not participating in class activities because what mattered to me the most was getting them to understand the kernel of the subject being taught.

1.4. *From observation to publication (problem posing vs. problem solving) –*

—
From my two years of teaching in the Haitian Bilingual Program at high school level (1987-89). I've seen it all (in the sense of “gaps” needed to be filled up). Trying to go back to the primary source of the problem, my very first response in writing was the publication of an article touching on the problem of schools in Haiti, entitled “Lekòl an Ayiti, yon pwoblèm total-kapital” (Schools in Haiti, a real problem) published in the newspaper *Haiti Courrier* (Vol. I. April 1992. Boston, MA), of which I have extended into a book of essays, *Yon koudèy sou pwoblèm lekòl Ayiti* (A look at the problem of schools in Haiti) published in 1994. It is mostly a book used as guide for teachers in Haiti where most of them never had a chance to attend any particular teaching program. Looking at their problem which is shown somehow through the students' performance in the Bilingual Program), I was first thinking of a way to help conducting seminars for them by going to Haiti during the summer months, but because of the unstable political situation of the country, it became more and more difficult to achieve the goal of helping those in need. So, many free copies of this publication were giving to teachers in Haiti as well as those in the Diaspora and as I could meet them and made sure some samples went directly to Port-au-Prince's Public Library and part of these essays, as I've learned from some members of l'UNNOH*, have been used in the baccalaureate exams. My first novel, *Sezon sechrès Ayiti** is also used in some secondary schools in Haiti as textbook.

1.5. *More publications within a specific time frame —*

I was blessed to be able to publish eight books(27) in 1994 to help the Haitian Bilingual Program. Inspired, in a way, by Thomas Madiou's idea (28) to write the first Haitian history book since he could not find himself one to read, while in school in Spain back in 1995, I worked intensively at the same time on the draft of *Gramè Kreyòl Védrine**. In the Spring of 1996, the manuscript was completed, and since I've announced a month before the launching of *Védrine Creole Project First Creole Seminar**, that manuscript was first used as manual along with other teaching materials in that seminar for the first time before its publication in the summer of that year.

1.6. *My first radio talk show (“Chache konnen ak Védrine”) and how I would use some data from it later in my bibliography research —*

Encouraged by a Haitian journalist, David Cangé, in 1996 to produce a thirty minute radio talk show through his radio program in Boston (“Haiti Diaspo Inter”), despite the fact that I was extremely busy researching. I finally accepted the offer and did a show based on literary critiques for a year. During that radio talk show, I had the opportunity to conduct interviews with some key writers and journalists involving with Haitian Creole. Among them: Féquière Vilsaint (Educa Vision), Jan Mapou (Libreri Mapou), Kesler Brézault (Edisyon Lagomatik), Roody Barthelemy (Kreyòl Connection). Prior to start the show, off and on I was interviewed by members of the Haitian Media Network of Massachusetts (Charlot Lucien [*Tele Kreyòl*], David Cangé [Haiti Diaspo Inter, *Tele Diaspora*], Eddy Le Phare [Lèt ak Kilti], Emmanuel René [Ayiti Fokis], Fritz Alvarez [Inspiration Ministry], Gerathel Théodore [*Ayiti Fokis*], Jako [*Ayiti Fokis*], Pè Ati [*Tandèm Pawoli Kreyòl*], Orèsjozèf [*Tele Kreyòl, Vizyon 2004, Orèsjozèf Publications*], Roro Jean [*Paj Istwa d Ayiti*], Serge Claude Valmé [*Radyo Vwa Lakay*], Widneer Jean-Michel [*Radyo Choukoun Inivèsèl*], and Yvon Lamour [*Radyo Liberasyon, Anba Tonèl Lakay*]). Many of these interviews, that I could track down, have become an integral part of my annotated bibliography and an important corpus of lexical data for future dictionaries related to the Creole language.

1.7. *Having a solid bibliographic base to move on with the research* —

All these prior research and publications, together with an educational fieldtrip to Haiti in 1996, were going to serve as an important and a solid base to build on my bibliography research. I mentioned my trip here to Haiti where we, some teachers of the Boston Public Schools and some active members of the Haitian Community of Boston, under the leadership of Joel Theodat (at that time, House Master and Head of the Bilingual Program at West Roxbury High Schools), organized an educational fieldtrip, taking some twenty high school students to Haiti. Most of them were youngsters who have left Haiti when they were very young and who grew up in the Boston area. In a sense, they would know more about the United States than their own native country, Haiti. Influence by the American media’s usual portrayal of the negative parts of Haiti, they would of course know more about the negative than the positive accomplishments of Haiti in history as the “Old Pearl of the Antilles”. In deed, it was extremely important to undertake such a trip so that these youngsters could see through their own eyes the Haitian Reality.

I had the opportunity to conduct some interviews while in Cape Haitian and in Port-au-Prince also in order to enrich my lexical research, a corpus for further research on regional dialects of the Creole language. Data collected from Port-au-Prince's Public Library was quite little since the small number of libraries that exist in Haiti don't keep tract of records dealing with publications released to the language. Here, we can see clearly the problem of "documentation" in terms how ill-equipped centers for documentations are in Port-au-Prince and what some of us who are conscious of these problems, can do to help.

1.8. *A bibliography itinerary* —

Once, I've put an end to my radio talk show in the summer of 1997, and after completing a leadership program the same year at University of Massachusetts-Boston (College of Public and Community Service). I was invited in Miami by *Libreri Mapou**, to lecture on the history of Creole. I also took the opportunity to stay in that city for a week in order to search that library since they hold some documents on Haiti, through which I could locate certain references dealing with Creole. Jan Mapou, the founder and manager, was quite helpful and made these documents available to be searched.

Upon returning from Miami, I was ready to travel to Indiana to search the Indiana University Creole Institute where I would find more documents on Creole than any other place, traces of documents published since colonial times. Arriving in Indiana for the first, I did not waste time to meet professor Albert Valdman for the first time despite of being familiar with each other's work on Creole. He quickly gave me access to search documents at the Creole Institute. His secretary, Mrs. Deborah Piston, made them available to be reviewed during my allotted research time. Prof. Valdman is also the first linguist (in the field of Creole Studies) who, after the publication of my first dictionary (*Dictionary of Haitian Creole Verbs With Phrases And Idioms*), invited me (via a letter in Spring of 1993) to start contributing to his research, of which I have first reviewed a big chunk of *A learners' Dictionary of Haitian Creole* (1996) he was working on that time, and later contributed to the Indiana's University's most extensive trilingual Haitian Creole-English* dictionary project soon to be published.

Needed to see badly my late mother, Elenise Zama Védrine, in a nursing home in Boston (1997), I could not spend another semester in Indiana to go

on with the research though I had an offer to teach a course in the Spring of 1998. From all the notes taken and copies of documents that I have made, I was ready to travel back to Boston to start writing the first draft of the research while still thinking of other places that I must visit in order to search for further documents. I then traveled to Cambria Heights, New York where I spent few days searching the center of “Haitiana Publications” (a Haitian book publisher, distributor and resource center) run by Ms. Patricia Reicher. There, I could review documents and teaching materials on Creole. Well-known authors like Féquière Vilsaint (Educa Vision, Florida), Maude Heurtelou (Educa Vision, Florida) and Kesler Brézault (Edisyon Lagomatik, Montreal) have contributed a lot in developing educational materials in Creole, and in Creole – English have provided me with some documents for review.

1.9. Is this a complete bibliography? —

One of the questions some critics might ask when first see this book: is this all that has been published on Creole? The answer would be “no”. A bibliographic research is never complete, and this one is no exception. This type of research is endless since people are writing and publishing constantly. One can always find some documents that are not listed in any bibliography. Since this type of seminal work is not one whose second edition can be quickly published, through my participation in different online forums (since 1998) dealing with Haiti, I found that it is crucial, instead of publishing a “supplementary bibliography” after this first edition, it would be wiser to keep on tracking down missing information on titles that did not appear in the first edition and information I intend to receive from researchers and from people who would like to bring their collaboration. These new data are, instead, being added to largest online Haiti directory web site (“Haiti’s Super Web Directory”) that I have created in order to help filling up some gaps related to the problem of documentation in Haiti. In this sense, I also encourage the creation of different electronic databases that would cover a wide range of subjects as I have done with this directory is a model.

This first edition of my bibliography research, attempting to cover publications from colonial times to the end of the year 2000, is a preliminary stage of a longer work which I hope to enrich with further documentation. This bibliography is a project that opens its doors to everyone who wants to collaborate in the advancement of Creole in the 21st century. I hope that this

research stimulates everyone who reads it to think about the issue of “documentation” in all areas and how they can help Haiti solve this problem.

2.0. *Choice of language to write the bibliographic research* —

This bibliographic research appears in three languages (English, French, and Creole). As of now, they are the three important languages in Haiti and also in Haitian Studies (though English does not have official status, its use in certain cases is significant).

The “language issue” has always been an interesting one to me. As the Haitian poet, Kesler Brézault, mentions, when a Haitian is writing in French or in another language, the message that the author is trying to send is like white sugar. One can guess that there is a chemical process taking place to convert brown sugar into white sugar. Many of the vitamins have been lost through the process. In other words, the message an author is trying to convey (when not writing in the native language) always appears as a translation and often in translating, there are elements lost from the original text. At the same time, I do respect the fact that a Haitian writer may choose to write in a language other than Creole. Many Haitian authors growing up in an environment other than Haiti will write in the dominant language of that environments when people are talking about “the major languages in Haiti”, they refer directly to French and Creole that are two separate languages. Most documents published in Haiti appear in French since most Haitian authors write in French and there are still many foreigners who think that Haiti is a French-speaking country; the implication is that most Haitians if not all speak French while in reality about 20% of the population does so and with varying mastery.

The native language, Creole, has always played important role in the Haitian society: it is the backbone of our culture and the trademark of our ethnicity. It is clear that the 1987 Constitution stipulates only one language unite all Haitians – it is the Creole language. The same Constitution recognizes Creole as another official language on par with French.

2.1. *Conclusion* —

Again, a bibliography research is never complete and *An annotated bibliography on Haitian Creole* is not exception to the rule. I welcome suggestions from readers and help from people who want to collaborate to in finding new documents to enrich the research and advance Creole in the 21st

century. I hope that published research work on Haiti's native language can serve its users for different purposes, seeing its contents and keywords sampling out a variety of aspects (*Atlantic Creoles, Caribbean languages, Caribbean literature, Creole bibliographies, Creole corpus, Creole description, Creole genesis, Creole grammar, Creole lexicon, Creole status, Creole teaching, Creole linguistics, Creole Studies, French-based creoles, Haitian Bilingual Programs, Haitian Creole (Kreyòl), Haitian Culture, Haitian history, Haitian language, Haitian linguistics, Haitian literature,, Pidgin and Creole languages, Theses and Dissertations on Haitian Creole and on Haiti*) as in invaluable tool for research dealing with the Haitian language.

Haiti and the destruction of nature

(June 1999)

One of the differences between Haiti and the Dominican Republic lies in the ecological color of the two republics. Haiti is brown, the Dominican Republic is green.

“Has anyone documented the rate of extinction of our bird species?”, asks Guy Antoine (webmaster of Windows on Haiti) in one of his discussions on the ecological concerns of Haiti. Most of the birds in Haiti have migrated to the Dominican Republic. The Haitian peasants cross the border; so do the birds. Why? Deforestation, no vegetation, and poor agriculture.

My novel, *Sezon sechrès Ayiti* (Season of drought in Haiti) covers part of the ecological problem where peasants cut down trees to make charcoal (for cash) because of the absence of other cash-crops. Charcoal constitutes 80% of energy use in Port-au-Prince. We have had a lack of electricity in the capital city for many decades, an example of a problem that has not been solved in spite of the fact that we have engineers and technicians in Haiti. So, people rely on the burning of charcoal for their energy needs, not only in Port-au-Prince, but also throughout the country.

Dr. Gerald Murray, a well-known scholar and anthropologist who lived in Tomazo, Haiti for ten years, has addressed the ecological problems of Haiti in some of his published papers. With some foreign organizations, he participated in the planting of 1 million trees in Haiti almost two decades

ago. Yet, in a lecture at the University of Massachusetts-Boston in the early 1980's, he mentioned that it is a sad fact that people later cut down some of those very trees to make charcoal -- even those which were fruit-bearing. Why did they do so? Because they didn't have a choice; they could no longer rely on agriculture; it's so poor, no irrigation, most of them don't have land to work, no machinery.

Is this crucial problem just an ecological one or does it also have something to do with politics? Mentioning the word “politics” has become part of the culture in Haiti. Most Haitians say “*Mwen pa nan politik*” or to make it funny, “*Mwen pa nan polutik*” (I am not in politics, I don't do politics), part of the legacy of the 30-year Duvalier regime.

I have read about the ‘plastic bottle’ problem on an on-line Haitian forum. I am not saying that it is not an important issue (recycling is important), but I would urge any forums on Haiti to comment on some of the deeper problems that Haiti has been facing (such as ecology, erosion, agriculture, anything destroying the nature of Haiti).

I was born and grew up in a small village in southern Haiti. I thought I was living in a paradise when I was young. Although there were no angels flying around, I could see many different types of birds, within just a one-minute walk from my house I could see three flowing rivers, the mountains were green and the people had enough food to eat. I could enjoy nature as a part of my surroundings. We had some dogs (giving us security on a 24-hour basis), goats, pigs, chickens and other domestic animals in our back yard. I considered them to be my friends and, although they could not talk to me; they would look at me, come over to smell me, etc. In a way, I felt a sort of communication between us. And I would cry when they were sold or killed some of them.

When I visited my village in 1980 (the last time), it was all brown. No vegetation. Most of the trees I used to see as a boy had been cut down. The birds had left the village. No place to build their nests or for them to rest. No rainfall. The rivers were almost all dried out. My neighbors had moved to other areas. Some had gone to Port-au-Prince for a better life; many people I knew (young and old) had died. My village is like a desert and I believe this same dynamic has occurred in many other places in Haiti.

If the Haitian government does not soon take these problems seriously (ecology and agriculture), it won't matter how many beautiful ideas we suggest for the development of Haiti (such as emphasizing the tourist industry, investment, better schools, free schools, literacy, roads, so on and so forth); it will be too late. In fact, these are all great ideas for the country's future. But if we leave 'agriculture' and 'ecology' behind, Haiti won't budge a step forward.

Agricultural development should be a #1 priority for advancement of Haiti's prospects. One does not need to be an economist to understand the importance of agriculture. Let 'recycling' come later. People in Haiti can't eat bottles or cans when they are hungry. Haitian peasants need land to work, they need water to irrigate their plots of land, they need to grow whatever they can to eat and to support their family, using money from the sale of their excess produce to purchase other necessities of life.

To conclude, developing agriculture throughout Haiti would be one of the best answers to stop Haitian peasants from crossing the border to the Dominican Republic (illegally or legally; thereby, supporting the black market behind this trade) and would be one of the most important steps in changing Haiti's face. Our peasants would then not need to migrate to the pollution of Port-au-Prince to look for jobs, staying in line for hours in front of a factory just to kiss someone's boots for a job that does not even pay them \$4 a day. Nor would they need to keep on risking their lives on the high seas to reach the Bahamas or Miami in order to live a better life.

I would urge every single Haitian who reads this essay to take a moment to think about their village, town, city or community in Haiti. Support organizations (like the Pandiassou model we read about on the Bob Corbett Haiti List) which are involved in development projects in Haiti. Think of how you can do something for your community with people from the same place in Haiti who now live in the diaspora. Get together, discuss the problem of the people in your native community in Haiti and what you can do to help.

Are you a doctor, teacher, nurse, engineer, businessman, educator, teacher, whatever...? Who are you? What can you do to help your own town, city, or village in Haiti? Does your village, town, or city have one of the following: a clinic, a hospital, a library, an elementary school, a high school, a library, a funeral home, a bank, a church, a bakery...? What can you name that it does

not have? How many kids there go to school? Those who don't go to school, find out why they can't and how you could help some of them. Visit your native city, village, or town when you visit Haiti. Don't just enjoy going to the beach or to the clubs. Show the people of your community that you are with them, that you are part of them, that you are connected with them in spirit, show them a sort of solidarity, ask them what they need, what they would like to have in their community (even if you can't provide all that they need). Take notes, take a tape recorder with you to record whatever they say and share these recordings with friends, people who are willing to help your community. I have hope that Haitians abroad together with those at home can save Haiti in the 21st century. They just have to believe in the potential of what they can do (no matter how little it may be in their eyes or in the eyes of others, but they should be proud of their accomplishment) to change the face of *Ayiti Cheri* (Haiti my darling).

NOTES

(1) Radio Metropole. (an article entitled “Coopération entre le Brésil et le Canada pour la reforestation d’Haïti”). French - English translation: E. W. Védrine.

(2). Dalencour, Eveline. (“Haitian Politics”, on-line forum – Feb.2007). French - English translation: E. W. Védrine.

(3). Steve Miller, Washington Times, 2004-03-06; Haiti Democracy Project web page, item #1853).

(4). *Article 32: The State guarantees the right to education. It sees to the physical, intellectual, moral, professional, social and civic training of the population.*

Article 32-1: Education is the responsibility of the State and its territorial divisions. They must make schooling available to all, free of charge, and ensure that public and private sector teachers are properly trained.

Article 32-2: The first responsibility of the State and its territorial divisions is education of the masses, which is the only way the country can be developed. The States shall encourage and facilitate private enterprise in this field.

Article 32-3: Primary schooling is compulsory under penalties to be prescribed by law. Classroom facilities and teaching materials shall be provided by the State to elementary school students free of charge.

Article 32-9: The State and its territorial divisions have the duty to make all necessary provisions to intensify the literacy campaign for the masses. They encourage all initiatives to that end.

Article 32-10: Teachers are entitled to a fair salary.

Article 33: There shall be freedom of education at all levels. This freedom shall be exercised under the control of the State.

(5). **Caudillo.** Spanish word; *caudilho* in Portuguese. The term is usually used to designate “a political-military leader at the head of an authoritative power.” In English, “leader” or “chief” or, more pejoratively, “dictator” or “strongman”. The term is also used to refer to charismatic populist leaders among the people. (re: wikipedia.org/wiki/Caudillo)

(6). One of the most bloodiest coup in Haiti's history (on September 30, 1991) orchestrated by general Cedras and colonel Michel François.

(7). “As long the head is not cut off, there is still hope that it can wear a hat”. The original proverb in Creole is: *Depi tèt pa koupe, li gen espwa met chapo.*

(8). **Inquisition.** “The Spanish Inquisition was the Inquisition acting in Spain under the control of the Kings of Spain. This Inquisition was the result of the reconquest of Spain from the Muslims and the policy of converting Spanish Jews and Muslims to Christianity. The Inquisition was an important tool in enforcing the “limpieza de sangre” (Blood Cleansing) against descendants of converted Jews or Muslims.”

(9). “The commandment ‘thou shall not kill’ (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17), is better understood to mean ‘you shall not murder,’ most modern translations of the Bible rendered it this way. According to the Bible not all killing, the taking of a life, is murder. Murder is the unlawfully taking of human life. The command not to murder applies to human beings, not to killing animals or plant life for food. God gave animals to mankind for his use (Genesis 1:26-30; 9:1-4). But, this does not mean that humans have the right mistreat animals and the environment (Genesis 2:15; Deuteronomy 22:6-7; 25:4; Proverbs 12:10).”

(10). “Peasant”. In Creole, *peyizan*. In certain cases, the term may be used pejoratively. Therefore, we must be careful when using it in order not to hurt anyone. When used pejoratively in Creole, it has the sense of “nèg fèy” or “gwo soulye” (rough, rude, from the country).

(11). “Two bulls don’t run in the same prairie”. Translated from Creole (*De towo pa bat nan yon sèl savann*). Haitian proverb.

(12) “Donkeys were working hard for horses to run freely”. paraphrasing from Haitian Creole: “*Bourik t ap travay pou chwal garyonnen*”.

(13). “In 1801, Napoleon Bonaparte dispatched General Leclerc, along with thousands of troops to arrest Toussaint, reinstate slavery, and restore French rule. Toussaint was deceived into capture and sent to France, where he perished in prison in 1803. Jean-Jacques Dessalines, one of Toussaint's high ranking officers and a former slave, led the final battle that defeated Napoleon's forces. On January 1, 1804, Dessalines declared the nation independent, under its indigenous given name of Haiti, thus, making it the first black republic in the world and the first independent nation in Latin America.”

(re: www.albany.edu/~js3980/haitian-revolution.html;
www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n08/farm01_.html)“

(14). “... The 1957 election was the first supposedly held with universal suffrage. However, the vote count was falsified by army chief General Antonio Kebreau and other pro-Duvalier army officers (author interview with Franck Laraque, December 1988; Laraque had been in the cavalry unit of the Dessalines Barracks at the time of the election but stated that he had reliable contacts in the army's general headquarters)”, Henry F. Carey. (re: <http://www.haitipolicy.org/archives/Archives/1998/carey.htm>)

(15). “...On November 28, in the provincial capital of Gonaïves, soldiers chased demonstrators into a schoolyard and shot and killed three schoolboys (Jean-Robert Cius, Daniel Israel, and Mackenson Michel) who were not involved in the protest”.(re: www.law.emory.edu/EILR/volumes/fall95/alevin.html;
www.uhhp.com/haiti/important_dates/important_dates14.html)

(17). “... On April 1-2, 1989 the Avril government experienced its second coup attempt. At the end of March the Army High Command had discharged four high-ranking officers reportedly for drug-trafficking. In addition, in connection with the discharges, a number of other officers were transferred to other military departments. Once Gen. Avril regained control he attempted to expel Leopard Corps commander Col. Himmler Rebu and also Col. Philippe Biamby, the former commander of the Presidential Guard, who were the alleged instigators of the attempted coup, but a group of some 300 antigovernment demonstrators set up flaming barricades all along the Delmas Road, and soldiers occupied the international airport to prevent Col. Rebu, their popular commander, from being expelled. Tanks and armored vehicles from the Dessalines Barracks appeared at Delmas and there was an exchange of heavy gunfire. --- The Leopards took over the government television and radio stations and made three demands over the independent radio station Haiti-Inter. They said that they wanted Lt. Col. Himmler Rebu released, a civilian government to replace Avril and the complete restoration of the 1987 Constitution. Cols. Rebu and Biamby and also Lt. Col. Leonce Qualo of the general garrison, however, were expelled by land to the Dominican Republic on Monday night, April 3, 1989. From the Dominican Republic they were sent to New York, via Miami, and in New York they were arrested by INS agents and held in detention for several months, allegedly without charges, until they were permitted to leave for Venezuela.” (re: *Annual Report Of The Inter-American Commission On Human Rights 1988-1989*)

(18). **The Governor Island Accord.** “... In July 1993, Aristide was made to sign the Governor's Island Accord, a US-backed "peace accord" with the illegal military junta that terrorized Haiti for three years. The Accord forbade Aristide from running for re-election once he was restored to power, and gave amnesty to the death-squad terrorists of the junta. The junta then refused to abide by the accord, prompting President Clinton to send in troops in September 1994.”

(re: U.S.-Sponsored Regime Change in Haiti)

(19). “The person who wears the shoe is the one who knows where it's being ripped off”. The original proverb in Creole: *Moun ki mete chosèt, se li ki konnen kote l chire.*

(20). “Money makes the dog dance”. Haitian proverb (*Lajan fè chen danse*).

(21). In reference to an article by Adeline Magloire-Chancy (former State Secretary of Literacy, entitled “Plaidoyer pour une politique linguistique nationale”, Rencontre #19, août 2004). Quoted from that that article, Chancy declares: “On may 21, 1996, tree month

after my nomination, the Prime Minister Rosny Smarth addressed a letter to the Secretary of State for Literacy (I was in function since two month, March 1996) to ask the Secretary to prepare a bill on the use of Creole in the Public Administration, with the objective to facilitate communication with the citizen and to help them participate fully in affairs concerning the State. The Primer Minister's letter, written in Creole, specifying the points that should be in the law: The use of Creole in school from Kindergarten up to the official exams, in all Civil State's Acts and other documents, in the Justice: trials, reports and with the obligation that all state employees be able to read and write Creole. – Of course, the Secretary responded immediately and the Bureau of Language started to work. The project was officially deposited at the Prime Minister's Bureau on September 5, 1996, the ever of the Literacy International Day. On September 8, on the occasion of the International Day, the Prime Minister made the announcement and informed that an immediate follow-up would be done by his ministers to whom he sent a copy accompanied a circular letter also written in Creole. In this letter, dated September 9, 1996, he says: 'I have always thought that literacy represents a door that should be opened with two flaps in order to give access to all citizen to learn how to read and write so that everyone has the chance to participate fully in the vast site of the society's change. At the same time, this works require that all Haitian citizen have full scope to use it everywhere, in school, in public administration, in all economic activities, the national language that connect the nation, as it is stipulated in the Constitution...".

(22). **"It's Creole I speak"**. (English translation of "*Se kreyòl mwen pale*")

Tank you God for making Creole my native language

What a beautiful language it is!

I say whatever I think in it without scratching my head

No verb to conjugate,

No use of subjunctive

No forcing the lips to pronounce some words like in French

To fool the natives of country

Thank you Father for making me able to think in Creole

Thanks for my birth on the land of Haiti

Where this language is born

Language a bunch of great Heroes spoke:

Toussaint,

Dessalines,

Capois Lamort,

(King) Henri Christophe,

Charlemagne Peralte...

They all spoke Creole

It was in this language they communicated

To give me freedom

A language that did not come from overseas

One that the colonizers would love to destroy

But I am not gonna swap my language

For others that came from other continents

I am not swapping it for any reason

*For those who like to remain in bondage, they'll decide
That's the language I must speak
The one in which I must dream
The one I like the most
It's my blood
Creole is my soul
Any Haitian who'd look down on it
Is not a true Creole
Not a true native of Haiti
But rather a puppet of other countries
A puppet with no homeland to live
One who is always waiting for leftovers
Someone with no dignity,
Someone with no roots.*

(23). **Ayiti.** (Ayiti). The word Haiti came from the Indian language who were inhabiting the territory in the past. This word means: highlands, and beautiful lands. The Indians were the first inhabitants of Haiti. -- The Spaniards were the first Europeans who lived in Haiti. They seized that land and claimed it as theirs. Christopher Columbus was one of the first Europeans who set foot in Haiti. Columbus was born in Italy in a city called Genoa. He landed in Haiti on October 5, 1493. Sometimes when reading the history of Haiti, we are told that it was this man who “discovered” Haiti. Today, there are many clarifications needed to be made in what people are writing, specially on issues related to history. -- Columbus landed in Haiti by accident in search of the best routes to India. He got lost and ended up there. Haiti soon became a Spanish colony. Columbus and the other Spanish teams that accompanied him, soon claimed that land for Spain.

(24). **Colonial times.** Here, it refers to the historical periods before Haiti's Independence (1804).

(25). **Seychelles.** According to the constitution (as adopted on 8 June 1993), the national languages are: English, Creole and French. Literacy rate: 62% to 80%. “Creole, the mother tongue of 94 percent of the nation in 1990, was adopted as the first official language of the nation in 1981. English is the second language and French the third, all of them officially recognized. The increased emphasis on Creole is designed to facilitate the teaching of reading to primary-level students and to help establish a distinct culture and heritage... More than one-third of Seychellois can use English, and the great majority of younger Seychellois can read English, which is the language of government and commerce. It is the language of the People's Assembly, although speakers may also use Creole or French. The principal journals carry articles in all three languages.” (Source: U.S. Library of Congress (online info.)

(27). **Funding for the following publications:** *Di yon vèb tire yon kont* (From a verb to a riddle), *Ide pou kreye yon High School Ayisyen prive nan Boston* (Ideas to found a private Haitian High School in Boston), *Materyèl Edikatif pou Bileng Ayisyen* (Teaching Materials for Haitian Bilingual), *Poetry in Haitian Creole*, *Sezon sechrès Ayiti* (*Season of drought in Haiti* – novel), *Ti istwa kreyòl: Short stories in Haitian Creole*, *Un stylo international* (An international pen, poetry), *Yon koudèy sou pwoblèm lekòl Ayiti* (A look at the problem of schools in Haiti, essays) was taken from my student from Harvard

University. Funding for this five year bibliography research has been provided by my sister Jésula Védrine, to whom I express my warmest gratitude, a person with such a great heart who is always ready to help those in need. My philosophy of supporting the Creole Project by not begging for grants from anywhere is one that deals with dignity in the sense that the energy we need is also within us, in other words, many of us have the potential to do great things (without counting 100% on outside help). That has been a big problem for Haiti's development: most Haitians think the real help Haiti needs is coming from outside (in the sense that others will come to do the basic things that we need or we have to count on them all the time by not thinking of our potential as human resources). In my naked eyes, that is a challenge to meet.

(28). Thomas Madiou. (1814-1844), in his own word stated that he was desperately looking for a Haitian history book to read and could not find any (after coming back from his studies in France) and told his father that he was going to work on one. His voluminous research on the subject had later, inspired many Haitians historians.

Anakawona. "...One of the first people murdered on our land was a queen. Her name was Anacaona and she was an Arawak Indian. She was a poet, dancer, and even a painter. She ruled over the western part of an island so lush and green that the Arawaks called it Ayiti land of high. When the Spaniards came from across the sea to look for gold, Anacaona was one of their first victims. She was raped and killed and her village pillaged in a tradition of ongoing cruelty and atrocity. Anacaona's land is now the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, a place of continuous political unrest.", Edwidge Danticat (www.htfhaiti.org/wereugly.html).

André Vilaire Chéry. André Vilaire Chery. Author of: Dictionnaire De L'évolution Du Vocabulaire Français En Haïti dans le discours politique, économique et social du 7 février 1986 à nos jours (Tome I (A-L) & II (M-Z), editor of Dictionnaire de l'écolier haïtien and Le chien comme métaphore en Haïti (analyse d'un corpus de proverbes et de textes littéraires).

Attaché (atache). Secret police (mostly) under the administration of Prosper Avril.

Aya bombé! Aya bombé: die free instead of being a slave.

Bahoruco: name of a mountain.

Bèlè, Boston, Kafou, Kafoufèy, Matisan, Site Katon, Site Solèy, Solino, Soudal. Very populated areas of Port-au-Prince with shantytowns.

Bibliographie des études créoles, langues et littératures. 1983. Albert Valdman, Robert Chaudenson, Marie-Christine Hazaël-Massieux. Indiana University-Bloomington.

Bookman. "...In August 1791, a massive slave uprising erupted in the French colony Saint-Domingue, now known as Haiti. The rebellion was ignited by a Voodoo service organized by Boukman, a Voodoo houngan (High Priest). Historians stamp this revolt as the most celebrated event that launched the 13-year revolution which culminated in the independence of Haiti in 1804." (re: www.albany.edu/~js3980/haitian-revolution.html).

Bossal negroes (nèg bosal). Slaves born in Africa.

Buccaneers: "...By 1630, French and British buccaneers had set a foot hold on the island of Tortuga (or *Île de la Tortue*) and by 1644 had established a settlement near Port-de-Paix on the North shore of Haiti (Hispaniola). These pirates would raid Spanish ships returning from the 'New World' with treasures stolen from the Aztec and Inca empires. The seizure of land by the buccaneers and their constant raiding of Spanish ships

eventually led the Crown of Spain to cede the Western third of the island to France through the treaty of Ryswick (1697). This portion of the island was renamed Saint Domingue and later became 'La République d'Haiti.'" (re: www.pasture.ecn.purdue.edu/~agenhtml/agenmc/haiti/history.html)

Butios. Priest and doctor.

Bwa Kayiman (Bois Caiman) "... A man named Boukman, another houngan, organized on August 14, 1791, a meeting with the slaves in the mountains of the North. This meeting took the form of a Voodoo ceremony in **the** Bois Caiman in the northern mountains of the island. It was raining and the sky was raging with clouds; the slaves then started confessing their resentment of their condition. A woman started dancing languorously in the crowd, taken by the spirits of the *loas*. With a knife in her hand, she cut the throat of a pig and distributed the blood to all the participants of the meeting who swore to kill all the whites on the island. On August 22, 1791, the blacks of the North entered into a rebellion, killing all the whites they met and setting the plantations of the colony on fire. However, the French quickly captured the leader of the slaves, Boukman, and beheaded him, bringing the rebellion under control. Just like Mackandal, Boukman had managed to instill in the blacks the idea that he was invincible. Thus, the French exposed his head on Cap's square to convince the slaves that their leader was really dead" (re: www.discoverhaiti.com/history_summary.htm)

Cadastral plan. According to Luc Rémy, a "cadastral plan" for Haiti would be an operation for the state to put information in its archives concerning all land: the history of their purchasing, their size or superficies, which land belongs to who, which one belongs to the state, which one does not have owners, which one is good to be cultivated, what type of agriculture, on which land should people build houses and so on. Brief, it is just a document (an archive), a map, a representation that avoids anarchy, the fights among peasants for land, abuse, thief and that facilitate decisions making that are to be taken for the good management of the land.

Cancellation of the 1987 presidential elections. "1987 ...A new Constitution is overwhelmingly approved by the population in March. General elections in November are aborted hours after they begin with dozens of people shot by soldiers and the *tonton makout* in the capital and scores more around the country." (re: Key Dates in Haiti 's History).

Caudillismo. See note #5.

Chemis. a god.

Chimères (*chimè*): a derogatory term for the unemployed that has become synonymous with both 'gangster' and 'Aristide-supporter.' (Lyn Duff).

Civique et morale. Popular text book used at middle school level in Haiti.

Dechoukay. "...a violent movement where people rose up and killed the makout" (re: "Two Haitian Feminists Speak Out" www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti-archive/msg01461.html)

D.P.M –Kanntè. "Dirèk Pou Miyami" or non-stop to Miami), a term that is mostly used by people in the Bombardopolis area in Haiti.

Dr. Jean Price-Mars. (1876-1969). Haitian scholar, diplomat and physician... He is considered to be the master thinker of "Haitianness". He is also well-known for the publication of his masterpiece *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (1928), a book focusing on the historical and folkloric foundation of the Haitian culture.

Ertha Pascal Trouillot. "...In 1989, the United States persuaded the incumbent military ruler, General Prosper Avril, to step down and allow Supreme Court Justice Ertha Pascale Trouillot to serve as interim president. With the support of the military's new commander, General Herard Abraham, she arranged relatively free elections for December 16.[35] To the dismay of the military and Haiti's elite families, Father Aristide was elected president with two-thirds of the total vote."

Filibusters. "... The buccaneers and filibusters landed at Tortuga at night to avoid being seen by the Spaniards. They then climbed the mountain where the Spaniards had taken refuge. They attacked the Spaniards just as the latter were about to attack the French. The Spaniards were caught in surprise. It was a complete defeat! Surviving Spaniards fled hearing the shriek of the others. This victory established the French as the owner of the island of Tortuga whence they would conduct their invasion of the western part of Espanola and create St. Domingue ... The true buccaneers who roamed the woods were reduced to hardly 100 persons. D'Ogeron did not attempt to suppress or absorb the filibusters in the same way for he designed to employ them to further national policy. He was more successful than the English and he had attracted all the French rovers from Port Royal and had concentrated them in his own stronghold of Tortuga. War was imminent and he was thus provided with a ready-made force of privateers to let loose in his own stronghold of Tortuga. (re: www.discoverhaiti.com/history00_8_1.htm)

Fò Dimanch. the most infamous political prison in Haiti under the Duvalier's dictatorship (Father and son) where many thousands of prisoners have been massacred.

Fort-de-Joux. Famous political prison in the mountains of Jura, France where Toussaint was jailed until his death (April 7 , 1803).

FRAP. "...FRAPH... Emmanuel 'Toto' Constant, its leader, is now living as a free man in Queens, New York.) Among the FRAPH's victims was Guy Malary, the justice minister, ambushed and machine-gunned with his bodyguard and a driver. In September 1995, Chamblain was one of seven senior military and FRAPH leaders convicted in absentia and sentenced to forced labor for life for their involvement in the September 1993 execution of Antoine Izméry, a well-known pro-democracy activist. In late 1994 or early 1995, he went into voluntary exile in the Dominican Republic..." (re: Paul Farmer reports from Haiti)

General Henri Namphy. "1986... Widespread protests against "Baby Doc" lead the U.S. to arrange for Duvalier and his family to be exiled to France. Army leader General Henri Namphy heads a new National Governing Council." (www.haiti.org/keydate.htm)

General Prosper Avril. "... 1988 Sep 17, Haitian President Henri Hamphy was ousted in a coup; Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril declared himself president the following day. (AP, 9/17/98) (www.timelines.ws/20thcent/1988.HTML). --- "... Prosper Avril (born December 12, 1937) is a former president of Haiti. He was born in Thomezeau village, near Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince . He served as President from September 17 , 1988 to March 10 , 1990 . He was arrested in 2001, shortly after Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected President, for plotting against the state, but was freed when Aristide was ousted in February 2004." (re: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosper_Avril).

General Raoul Sedras. Head of the Haitian Army at the time of the September 30, 1991 coup that ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. – Read more on the this coup.

Gramè Kreyòl Védrine. (Védrine's Grammar of Haitian Creole (1996, 354 p). First monolingual grammar ever written in Haitian Creole. It covers the basic grammatical

aspects of the language a with a forward and acknowledgement in both English and Creole. --- “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine* may not be an answer to all sociolinguistic questions in the Haitian society; rather, it is a document witnesses the existence of the Creole language as a spoken one, a document that can serve as a guide to the native language of all Haitians... I take all my linguistic freedom together with the authority of the Haitian language to write down these grammatical theories that I advance in this book. They are not inventions but rather observations of the native speakers. As a guide to the Haitian language, I hope that *Gramè Kreyòl Védrine* will serve as a source of inspiration to Haitians writing in Creole and for all those working very hard for the total linguistic liberation of the Creole language.” (E. W. Védrine). --- “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine* is a reference tool for everyone writing and learning Creole... I congratulate Emmanuel Védrine for this work. Little by little, the language will shoot buds.” (Féquièrè Vilsaint). -- “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine* is a rich work filled with a variety of information. Emmanuel Védrine deserves praises for the courage and effort displayed in this great book, which paves the way for the development of our native language. This document answers many challenges that ignorant or so-called educated people used to raise about the language of Haiti. It is an answer to those critics who used to say Creole doesn’t have rules, id doesn’t have grammar. I am confident that the mentality of everyone who reads this book will change toward a particular appreciation for the Creole language that connects all Haitians.” (Jorave Telfort). --- “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine* is a great tool deserving of praise, valuable to everyone working in the Creole language, whether in the scientific or literary area. We have been looking for this great tool a long time. That’s why I want to raise my voice with other experts in Creole everywhere to ring the bell and say bravo! To the linguist, Emmanuel Védrine” (Keslèbrezo). --- “*Gramè Kreyòl Védrine*, another great accomplishment in the history of the Creole language, will help people to better see and understand the reality of their native language. This grammar is a tool that’s going to open the mind. It’s going to play a great role for every Haitian teacher and student” (Serge Claude Valmé).

Grands mangeurs (big eaters). Newly rich who made a fortune under Aristide II.

Group 184.(G-184). A group of 184 Civil Society Organizations. The Group of 184 (G-184), is headed by André (Andy) Apaid, a US citizen of Haitian parents, born in the US. (*Haiti Progrès*). Andy Apaid owns Alpha Industries, one of Haiti's largest cheap labor export assembly lines established during the Duvalier era. His sweatshop factories produce textile products and assemble electronic products for a number of US firms including Sperry/Unisys, IBM, Remington and Honeywell. Apaid is the largest industrial employer in Haiti with a workforce of some 4000 workers. Wages paid in Andy Apaid's factories are as low as 68 cents a day. (Miami Times, 26 Feb 2004). The current minimum wage is of the order of \$1.50 a day:

‘The U.S.-based National Labor Committee, which first revealed the Kathie Lee Gifford sweat shop scandal, reported several years ago that Apaid's factories in Haiti's free trade zone often pay below the minimum wage and that his employees are forced to work 78-hour weeks.’ (Daily News, New York, 24 Feb 2004) .

Apaid was a firm supporter of the 1991 military coup. Both the *Convergence démocratique* and the *G-184* have links to the FLRN (former FRAPH death squadrons) headed by Guy Philippe. The FLRN is also known to receive funding from the Haitian business community.

In other words, there is no watertight division between the civilian opposition, which claims to be non-violent and the FLRN paramilitary. The FLRN is collaborating with the so-called 'Democratic Platform.' (Michel Chossudovsky, "The Destabilization of Haiti", Feb. 29, 2004)

Steve Miller, Washington Times, 2004-03-06; Haiti Democracy Project web page, item #1853).

Steve Miller, Washington Times, 2004-03-06; Haiti Democracy Project web page, item #1853).

Haitian Bilingual Program. That program was a "transitional one". They expected students to master the English language as quickly as possible in order to mainstream. However, it wasn't an easy task for many students, particularly the flow of students coming from Haiti in the late 80's where education in Haiti has become less challenging, due to political unrests, and teachers with less qualifications to teach. People were tired of Jean-Claude Duvalier's dictatorship and started rising against him. From time to time, schools were closing down; students barely completed a full academic year, the quality of education in Haiti started to go down in the early 80's. Among the flow of students who left Haiti, were these students found in the Boston Public Schools. Due to their age, they were placed at high school level. Many of them never even completed the elementary or middle school cycle, and were functioning below grade level. They were neither literate in French nor in Creole therefore many who fell in that category were referred to SPED (Special Education Program). Teachers in the Haitian Bilingual Program felt pressured by the school administration that did not really understand what was really going on since they were conducting regular school business. Some Haitian teachers who really broke the ice, trying to understand the real problem of these students were really patient with them. They tried their best, helping them and some did succeed (at least having a high school diploma).

Haitian Creole-English Dictionary. Indiana University Creole Institute. 2007. 781 + xxxiv pages. "The primary function of the *Haitian Creole-English Bilingual Dictionary* is to assist English speakers to interpret Haitian Creole (Creole) written texts. The dictionary also will help Anglophone learners of Creole to extend their mastery of the language by contributing to the enrichment of their vocabulary. Speakers of Creole may also see this dictionary to improve their oral and written skills in English"

Haiti's Second Independence. Many Haitian believe that Haiti need a 'second independence' to function as a 'real independent country'.

Hispaniola. (little Spain) name given to the twin republics: Haiti and the Dominican Republic by Spaniards during colonial times.

INARA. *Institut National de la Reforme Agraire* (Agricultural Institute).

Jacques Roumain One of Haiti's most renowned writers. He died at the age of thirty seven. His famous novel, *Gouverneur de la rosée*, has been translated to more than 20 languages, including its English translation, *Masters of the Dew*, by the famous American poet of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes.

January 1, 1804. Haiti's Independence.

José Martí. (1853-1895). Well-known leader of the Cuban Independence Movement. Renowned poet and writer. Martí is considered the Cuban people's national hero.

Kamoken. During the Duvaliers' dictatorship... Some groups got together (secretly) to prepare the armed resistance. They were known as 'Kamoken' (English translation: E. W. Védrine). (re: www.rwor.org/a/v19/910-19/915/konpe_s.htm).

Kasik. Creole used as title for an Indian chief. "...

Kasik Anri (Henri). Cacique Henri led a successful rebellion against the Spaniards (in the Bahoruco mountains presently Anse à Pitres Haiti near Jacmel) and forced the Crown of Spain to negotiate, through General Barrio Nuevo, and to recognize his freedom and that of his followers." (re: www.kwabs.com/haiti.html).

Kasik Kawonabo (Caonabo). "...The 400 years of struggle against slavery and oppression started since the unsuccessful resistance of the Cacique Caonabo against the Spanish invasion". (re: www.kwabs.com/haiti.html).

Kiki Wainwright: Haitian poet, artist (dancer, musician) and writer.

Kochon grimèl or "colored pigs" referred to those colored ones from the United States to replace the Creole pigs (black ones).

Konze. Traitor; betrayer of Haitian leader, Charlemagne Péralte, who led the Haitian Caco resistance to the 1915 US Marine invasion. Péralte was assassinated by US Marines four years later.

La grenouille et le boeuf. One of La Fontaine's funniest fables in which a frog wanted to be as big as an ox by finally blowing itself up in trying to be big.

Lambi. A conch; a big shell used as horn (to blow in order to signal something).

Lanmou makiye (fake love). Neologism used by the Haitian comedian, Jesifra.

Lavichè. Everything is very expensive (particularly food production).

Legba. Voodoo spirit. Guardian of crossroads, of the barrier between the living and the dead, between the natural and supernatural.

Leopoldo Zea. (1912-2004). Scholar, writer, and most well-known Mexican thinker.

Leslie F. Manigat. "1988 ... Military controlled elections - widely abstained from - result in the installation of Leslie Manigat as President in January. Manigat is ousted by General Namphy four months later and in November General Prosper Avril unseats Namphy." (re: Key Dates in Haiti 's History). --- "...The four principal candidates boycotted this farce and the United States characterized the process as "rigged," but beyond suspending aid did nothing. The military declared that over a million votes had been cast and that their candidate, Dr. Leslie Manigat, had won. Sworn in on February 7, 1988, he would hold office for less than five months. Caught in an internal military feud over power and drug money, he was unceremoniously exiled on June 20. With Manigat's own claim to office flawed and each side of the dispute accusing the other of being involved in narcotics trafficking, Washington could only deplore the continuing violence." (re: www.rand.org/publications/CF/CF129/CF-129.chapter9.html).

Libreri Mapou. Mapou's Bookstore (famous Haitian bookstore in Miami).

Macoute (makout). See *Tonton macoutes*.

Mamona: a goddess.

Marc L. Bazin. Leader of *Mouvement pour l'Instauration de la Démocratie en Haïti* /MIDH (Movement for the Installation of Democracy in Haiti).

Mèt Agwe. God of the sea (in Haitian voodoo).

Michele Bennet. Jean-Claude Duvalier's wife whom he married in 1980.

Nekita Lamour. Haitian educator, essayist, theologian, activist based in the Boston area.

November 18, 1803. “The Haitian Revolution was a remarkable phenomenon, which is of great importance for many people concerned with revolutionary class struggles, colonialism, black history, Latin American and the Caribbean, particularly with the country of Haiti. The year 2004 will commemorate the bicentennial celebration of Haiti's Independence. It is hoped that this pathfinder will be a valuable guide for the anticipated growing number of people who will want to learn about the Haitian Revolution. It is also hoped that it will serve to honor this heroic struggle in world history.” (re: www.albany.edu/~js3980/haitian-revolution.html). --- “...The leadership of Dessalines was consolidated through an alliance with Alexandre Sabès Pétion, a mulatto general born in Port-au Prince from a white father and mulatto woman. The alliance, sealed at a meeting prior to the start of the independence war, united the black and the mulatto generals ...The last victorious battle against the French expeditionary forces was fought on November 18, 1803 at a place called Vertières near (present day) Cap Haitien formerly known as Cap Français. After that battle, General Donatien Marie de Vimeure, Marquis de Rochambeau, who replaced General Leclerc, the husband of Pauline Bonaparte, as the leader of the French Colonial Army, surrendered formally to Dessalines. Thus, the African slaves and their descendants, pure or mixed, became, de facto bello, the owners of the land of the former French colony of St.Domingue.” (re: www.kwabs.com/haiti.html).

Octave Cayard. “...On April 24, 1970, Mr. Octave Cayard, who was at that time a Colonel in the Haitian Armed Forces and a Commander in the Haitian Coast Guard, attempted an unsuccessful up rising against the Haitian Government. When the rebellion failed, Colonel Cayard, his family and 118 other military men who had taken part in the uprising were forced to leave the country. The Government of Haiti seized the property owned in Haiti by Colonel Cayard, his wife, his daughter and some of the 118 other soldiers. On April 24, 1970, according to the complaint, the Tontons macoutes, the State Political Police, ransacked Mr. Cayard's home and a printing works belonging to a commercial company, the “Imprimerie Serge Bissainthe”, in which Mr. Cayard was a share-holder. All the equipment, which was estimated to be worth about US\$150,000, was taken away and the machines transferred to the State Printers...” (re: www.cidh.org/annualrep/82.83eng/Haiti2976.htm)

Paulo Freire. (1921-1997). Renown Brazilian educator and influential theorist of education. Born to middle class parents. Author of the best-seller *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and many other books.

Prizonye latousen. “1989 - President Avril, on a trade mission to Taiwan, returns empty-handed after grassroots-based democratic sectors inform Taiwanese authorities that the Haitian nation will not be responsible for any contracts agreed to by Avril. Avril orders massive repression against political parties, unions, students and democratic organizations.” (Key Dates in Haiti's History).

René Théodore. Former head of Haiti's communist party (Parti Unifié des Communistes Haitiens /PUCH). Théodore died of lung cancer at the age of 62.

Ruelle Vaillant. “...Under the military regimes of Henri Namphy and Prosper Avril, men who found it politically expedient to massacre voters in 1987 on Ruelle Vaillant at Port-au-Prince, and then again in 1988 at the Cathedral St. Jean-Bosco while Aristide, then a practicing Catholic priest, was celebrating Mass.”

(dir.salon.com/news/feature/2000/06/27/haiti/index.html) . --- “It was hardly surprising that the post-Duvalier era was marked by bloody power struggles. Elections scheduled for November 29, 1987, were marred by terrorist attacks, uninhibited by the FADH. Election day was an orgy of violence, leading to the suspension of the process after only three hours.” (re: www.rand.org/publications/CF/CF129/CF-129.chapter9.html).

Ryswick Treaty. “1697... Spanish control over the colony ends with the Treaty of Ryswick, which divided the island into French-controlled St. Domingue and Spanish Santo Domingo.” (re: www.haiti.org/keydate.htm). --- “...By the Treaty of Ryswick, signed in 1697, the western third of Santo-Domingo island was given to France, who made it its most profitable colony within sixty years.” (re: www.haiti.org/general_information/farmer.htm).

Sezon sechrès Ayiti (Season of drought in Haiti). Season of drought in Haiti): One of Haiti’s rare novels embracing the problems of the peasants.

Simbi: One of the three cosmic serpents in Haitian voodoo; the water-snake l w a (spirit).

Sosyete Koukouy. Folkloric and cultural organization that launched the “Creole Movement” of the late 60’s.

Sòyèt, pitit Sòyèt: underprivileged person, deprived or poverty-stricken.

Sylvio C. Claude. Former of the Christian Democrat Party of Haiti (Parti Démocrate Chrétien d’Haïti, PDCH). Assassinated on September 30, 1991.

Tonton macoutes. *Tonton Macoutes* or Duvalier’s thugs and secret police. --- “...The “Macoute,” of course, were the fearsome thugs of the hated Duvalier dictatorship (1957-1986), appropriately named after a bogeyman common to Haitian children’s stories.” (re: www.wright.edu/news_events/community/fall96/haiti.html);

--- “...A term derived from the mythical Haitian bogeyman who captures children by putting them in his bag. In 1958 it became the common name for the armed militia of dictator Francois Duvalier, which terrorized the population” (re: “Two Haitian Feminists Speak Out” www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti-archive/msg01461.html)

Toussaint Louverture. “...One of the most notable leaders of the Haitian Revolution to emerge was Toussaint L’Ouverture, a former slave. Toussaint organized armies of former slaves which defeated the Spanish and British forces. By 1801 he conquered Santo Domingo, present-day Dominican Republic, eradicated slavery, and proclaimed himself as governor-general for life over the whole island.” (re: <http://www.albany.edu/~js3980/haitian-revolution.html>).

UNNOH. *Union Nationale des Normaliens d’Haïti* (Haiti’s National Teachers’ Union).

Urucane. Hurricane.

Védrine Creole Project First Creole Seminar.

Xagua: a plant that grows on the island. The Indians used it to color their skin when going to war.

Yves Dejean. Renown Haitian linguist, educator, author and priest. Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti (1927). From 1974, Dejean has thought in the bilingual education programs of Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York University and Teachers College, Columbia University (N.Y). Member of the *Association Linguistique Internationale*, of the *Société de linguistique Caraïbe*, of *Académie des Sciences de New York*, he is the author of over twenty publications in and on Creole.

Zémès: a god.

Zenglendo: armed thieves, group of armed thieves that appear in Haiti after the collapse of Jean-Claude Duvalier's regime (1986). --- "...According to the Special Reporter on Violence Against Women in January 2000, "the phenomenon of 'zenglendos,' or thugs, breaking into houses at any time, raping and beating the women, started during the Cedras regime as a form of political pressure but has now become a common practice of criminal gangs, terrorizing the entire population." (re: www.womenwarpeace.org/haiti/haiti.htm).