Masters of the Dew - Introduction

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

Masters of the Dew, Jacques Roumain (1946)
Questions for discussion on Chapters 2 & 3

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

Masters of the Dew, Chapters 4-5

Provide details:

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

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

*Masters of the Dew*, chapters 6-7

1. Describe Anna and Manuel’s meeting.
2. What do we learn about Anna?
3. How does Anna see Manuel? [‘Galanteries’
4. How does Anna see herself? [“Malheureuse” > malerèz
5. How does Manuel see Vodou? [foolishness
6. How does Anna see Vodou? [respect the old Guinea
7. Why did Manuel dance at the Vodou ceremony?
8. How does Manuel want to change Fonds-Rouge?
9. If he succeeds, what will Fonds-Rouge need?
10. What are some key notions in Manuel’s [The proletariat, the strike
‘political science’? solidarity among workers

11. How does Manuel see Anna in his scheme?
12. How does this reveal gender roles?
13. Who is Gervilen?
14. How is he described? What kind of person is he? And in literary terms, what’s his role/function? [Villain]
15. Why is Gervilen so concerned about Anna?
16. What does Gervilen promise at the end of the chapter? Why does he promise that? [Anna will bite her fists to the bone]

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

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

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

Nine
1. Explain Manuel’s statement: “it’s work that he accomplished and that’s what brings existence to life across the centuries: the usefulness of man [and woman] on this earth”.

4
2. Describe the link between nature and sexuality in this chapter.
3. Why does Anna say she’ll be at “Manuel’s service...” and that “I’ll be the servant of your desires”.
4. The sex-scene is described in what terms?

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

**Master of the Dew, Chapter 10 questions for discussion:**

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

**Masters of the Dew, chapter 11 questions for discussion**

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

_Masters of the Dew_, Questions for chapter 12

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

Arthur, 228-245
Emmanuel Constant
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPI1QIbylDM

Part I
1. What did the U.S. want to do in Haiti under its ‘neo-liberal’ plan. What do Haitian industrialists offer?
2. Describe the activities of Christian mission groups in Haiti. How would these groups feel about Vodouist or Islamic mission organizations working in the U.S. saying: “Americans Christians are caught in Satan’s grip”?

3. According to Thomson, what is unethical and immoral about U.S. Christian missionary work in Haiti?

4. What is the republic of NGOs? How have NGOs been criticized after the earthquake?

5. Describe the CIA’s involvement in Haiti VS. the Clinton administration. Why would the CIA want to destabilize Haiti?

6. Who was Emmanuel Constant? What do we learn about U.S. ties to FRAPH (Front pour l'Avancement et le Progrès Haïtien)

Part II

7. According to Haitian grassroots organizations, who really holds the power in Haiti?

8. What were the mixed feelings Haitians held when the U.S. returned President Aristide in 1994? (p. 240)

9. What is “Business as usual” about? What did the elite expect from Aristide in 1994-5?

10. Describe the disarmament the U.S. military was charged with in Haiti post-1994. How did it go?

11. How do foreign culture & goods impact an economy? Do Haiti and the U.S. share anything in common? What is the impact of U.S. culture (TV, movies, music) in Haiti?
I. Turnbull, VIRTUES AND VICES: Interpret & Explain

1. Lie to save a man but not to put him in jail.
2. Behind the back is in Guinea.
3. Doing well knows not the past.
4. Without tolerance there are no thieves.
5. Speak the truth, but leave right away.
6. The stupid man is the horse of the evil spirit.
7. It’s good that’s rare.
8. The goat’s skin isn’t enough to cover a drum; Bouki is asking for a piece to roast.
9. This man is dead; he just has not begun to stink.
10. When you eat the tiger’s cub, you don’t sleep well.

II. Social Comparisons in Haiti, 233-253

Social status: Wealth, education
Language: Haitian Creole (100%) versus French (5%)
Race: Black (95%) versus Mulatto (3-5%)

1. A big name kills the puppy. (233)
2. Speaking French doesn’t mean intelligence. (234)
3. From your collar I see your regiment. (235)
4. Boils don’t respect the rich man’s behind. (236)
5. Even if it carries a relic, the donkey is a still a donkey. (236)
6. Haiti owes France. (237)
7. Speaking French doesn’t send to the market. (242)
8. People don’t trust each other since Guinea. (242)
9. The captain of the zombie is a man, too. (243)
III. Finish the problem: be creative!
1. It’s when you have that... ...your friends know you.
2. Prison is made... ...for everyone.
3. The baby chick doesn’t ask
   for feathers... ...it asks for life.
4. What the poor say has no ...the nonsense of the
   value... wealthy is wisdom.
(248)
5. The Vodou priest never heals the... ....his own sore
6. Tiger piss is... ...not beer
7. When you discover a bone ...remember that flesh
   on the highway,... once covered it. (253)
8. When the cat is full, ...it says the rat’s tail is bitter.

Arthur 255-276

1. Why was Vodou a “common social and cultural system”?
2. Explain: “inspirational qualities of Vodou in the war against
   the white, Christian slave-owners.”
3. Why did Vodou trouble Toussaint Louverture and Jean-
   Jacques Dessalines?
4. How is Vodou tradition maintained over generations?
5. Explain Vodouist views of *Bondye* (God) and *lwa* (spirits).
6. What is an *oungan*, a *manbo* and a *bòkò*?
7. Are the *lwa* perfect? What is anthropomorphism?
8. What are some of the ways in which the *lwa* communicate to humans?

9. Explain the concepts *wanga* and *zonbi*.
10. What do foreigners and non-Vodouists in Haiti tend to say about Vodou? Why?
11. What religion is stereotyped and vilified in U.S. society today? Why?
12. What was the role of the Vodou secret societies like *Chanpwèl*?
13. Describe the intersection of Vodou and politics in the late 20th century.
14. How has Vodou influenced Christianity in Haiti?
15. Has Vodou ever been codified in writing?
16. Describe the attributes of Azaka, Agwe, Simbi, Gede, Gran Bwa, Ogou, Danbala, Ezili Dantò, Legba…
17. What is a *chwal* ‘horse’ in Vodou.
18. What is the audiences role during spirit possession?
19. How have some Haitians criticized Vodou?
Arthur 277-288
1. What is rara? What associations does it have?
2. How does Katherine Dunham analyze dancing in Haiti? Where do dances take place in Haiti? What are the different varieties of dance?
3. Who was Manno Sanon? What was Duvalier’s link to the Haitian team? What happened to Manno after the big event?
4. You have just arrived at a cock-fight (gage), what do you see?
5. What is borlette? How does it work? What kind of people get involved in it in Haiti and the U.S.?
6. What are some of the forms of Haitian oral tradition? What is the purpose of oral tradition? What forms of oral tradition are alive with your family and friends?

Manno Sanon:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8c61tsbtN4g&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNBI_7G0Bxs

289-299 Literature & language

1. Who was Boisrond Tonnerre?
2. What is the poem Choucoune about?
3. What is nationalism and why are some Haitians nationalistic?
4. What was indigenisme?
5. What is noirisme? What does it focus upon?
6. What was the political triumph of négritude/noirisme?
7. What is racial mystification?
8. What is spiralism? Who is its greatest proponent?

Arthur, pp. 300-315: Haitian literature

Folk literature (Price Mars, So Spoke the Uncle 1938)

- “Oraliture”
- Tales, legends, riddles, songs, proverbs and beliefs
- Bouki and Ti Malis
- Talking animals who represent human traits
- Magical orange trees
- Flying lougawou, madmen, monsters, ghouls, devils (dyab), Bondye (God)

Literature and ideology (Carl Brouard, 1938)

“The most ignorant peasant feels which vaudou temple is more artistic than another... he will obey a dictatorship that works for order... people only gradually attain, step by step, liberalism... Pétion’s liberalism sank into despotism...”
Echos of the “Black legend.”

The peasant novel (Jacques Roumain 1944)

- Land conflict, conflict between families
- Shortages of water and resources
- Collectivism, socialism & egalitarianism as the solution

“So then we’ll call a general assembly of the Masters of the Dew, a great big coumbite of farmers, and we’ll clear out poverty and plant a new life”

Spiralism and experimental writing (Frankétienne’s Dezafí, 1975)

One of the first high quality Haitian Creole novels: spiralism

Dezafí

Sentil – oungan
Siltàna – his daughter
Zofè – second in charge
Klodònis / Mako

- The revolution of the zombies against the evil oungan Sentil
- Exploiting Vodou for a profit (“Exoticism”)
- Jeneral Lenglensou

Violence in Haitian writing:

1. Murder and torture in Chauvet 1968
2. Killing President Duvalier in Phelps 1976
3. The culture of the Tonton Makout in Depestre 1979
4. The Tonton Makout/torturer in Danticat 1994
5. Haiti as more difficult than Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnai, Ollivier 1995

MARXIST (COMMUNIST) HAITI

1. Etienne Charlier, 1950s (“Mulatto marxist”)
   - Haiti in 1950s is a semi-colonial society in which class distinctions are associated with color (201).

2. Emmanuel C. Paul criticized him, arguing that
   - Economic status, not color determines class structure (202).
   - Accused Charlier of under-emphasizing the nèg mawon and overemphasizing the afranchi

...The Black and the Mulatto Legends are re-written every generation...
...Haitian authors have the propensity to spin the competing historical racial legends in their interpretation of the present...

MARXISTS NOVELS & THEIR CRITIQUES

1. Jacques Stéphen Alexis (in the tradition of Roumain)
   - Vodou as an opium... “it paralyzed men, alienated their courage...” houngan trap people in despair and resignation
• Dejan’s (2006) critique of the representation of learning, how could an illiterate student learn to read and write French in such a short span?
• “We see in, in the ideas of the people who are at the head of the Haitian communist movement, French retains its place in discussions about schools and education” (Dejan 2006: 79)

**DUVALIER’S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN**

- Magloire departs into exile in 1956.
- Toned down anti-clericalism and *noirisme* (pro-African, pro-Vodou).
- Praised the Church for its zeal in evangelization.
- Paid tribute to the anti-Vodou campaigns of the south.
- Argued for a Haiti without the distinction of color.
- Praised the army for liberating the country from ‘a system of slavery’ instituted by Magloire.
- Landslide victory (209).

**The view from abroad, 315 -330.**

**Discuss these questions with your partner.**

1. How were books like Graham Greene’s *The Comedians* damaging to Haiti? How did it promote “The Myth of Haitian barbarism”? Discuss the relativity of “barbarism,” e.g. Haitian dictator versus the U.S. war machine in Vietnam... Iraq... etc.
2. Who is Wade Davis? What images of Haiti did his writing perpetuate?
3. What does Saint-Méry (who wrote in the early 1800s) say about “Juida” [Wida] and “Ardra” [Arada/Alada]? Although this Frenchman is very negative, what do we learn about Vodou from this very early description?

4. Seabrook compares Vodou to which non-Haitian cultures and practices?

5. What aspect of Haiti does Langston Hughes’ passage capture? How is his text different from Seabrook, Davis, Saint-Méry?

6. What does Zora Neale Hurston complain about in her passage?

7. How does Pierre Mabille capture the realities of the farmer in Haiti? What stands out in the reading.

8. Under what conditions did King Henri Christophe commit suicide in 1820.

**The view from abroad.** Arthur 315-30

“Haiti challenges the prevailing view that blacks were incapable of revolutionary insurrection” (Arthur & Dash)

How foreigners (mis)perceive Haiti

**18th century**
Moreau de Saint-Méry (c. 1789) – one of the earliest examinations of Vodou

Juida | Wida
Ardra | Rada

- “Affect Vodou in public” (321)
- Vodou is “a school where those easily influenced give themselves up to a domination which a thousand circumstances renders tragic”
- “Nothing is more dangerous, according to all the accounts...”
19th century
- Crippling indemnity (1825)

Spencer St. John, *Hayti or the Black Republic* (1886)

20th century
John Houston Craige, *Black Baghdad* (U.S. occupation)
Faustin Wirkus, *Cannibal Cousins* (U.S. occupation)

William Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (1929)
Haiti as given over to Vodou and ritual sacrifice

“Blood maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened…”
“It seemed to me magnificent and not devoid of a certain beauty”

- Collective ecstasy VS. soulless robots
- Vodou dances VS. our fashionable nightclubs
- “a mysterious something super-added... the gods magnificently descended” (324)

Langston Hughes, *White Shadows in a Black Land* (1932)

- Cracker English in little cafes owned by blacks...
- Black bank tellers, white comptroller
- Larger stores owned by French, Germans and Syrians (“Assyrian Jews”)
- Military dictatorship backed by American guns

Recent works
“demonic head of state and malevolent Tontons Macoutes”
Bernard Diederich, *Papa Doc and the Tonton Macoutes*
“Duvalier’s reign of terror...”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0PRk4qG53s
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-jj0VMaI24

**Duvalier and the Catholic Church, 1957 - 1971**

*Griots* “The church is an ideological instrument for a small movement francophone elite and the church enables its hegemony.”

Janvier: The church is a body within the state owing allegiance to a foreign power.

Duvalier expected the clergy to pray for him and the Haitian State (222)

**Purges**

- Priests expelled (Mgr Robert because of his involvement in the anti-superstition campaigns of 1941)
- “Communist” educators, school teachers fired
- Newspapers closed, raided
- House arrest of Anglican priest who asked for mercy for political prisoners (225)

-- Duvalier broke the foreign control of the Roman Catholic Church
-- Insisted on an **indigenous hierarchy** (226); Pope Paul VI agrees in 1966
-- The Church is seen as a “vassal to the Haitian state”

Nationalist (Black) vs. Liberal (Mulatto) [Haiti is also ‘bipartisan’]

**Noiriste theme and legend under Duvalier. Noiriste heroes:**
• The marron inconnu, nèg mawon, ‘the unknown runaway’ 1968
• Goman and Acaau
• Dessalines
• Pierrot
• Soulouque
• Antoine Simon
• Salomon

The challenge from Price Mars (230)

“You cannot reduce the social question in Haiti to the color question. There have always been poor mulattoes and rich blacks.”

The challenge from Depestre (231) – exiled to Cuba in 1960

“Human nature does not differ significantly between races”
(231)

Duvalier’s propaganda mixes Catholicism, Haitian historical legend, Vodou and military imagery (233)

LEGACIES

• Rhetoric of populism, empowered peasantry.
• National scale of the VSN.
• Maintained good relations with the peasantry and black middle class.
• Welcomed Vodou leaders into the presidential palace.
• Haitianized the church.
Political violence, political prisoners, torture and murder

Failure to enact lasting educational reform and literacy.

**Hurbon 1972**
+ Vodou as the preservation of African identity.
+ Christians should respect Vodou as they respect the other big religions.
+ Vodou in Haiti; Islam in Algeria = resistance to cultural domination (Frantz Fanon 1963)

The linguistic complexity of Haitian Creole in Haiti (Dejean 1993: 81-2)

**HAITIAN CREOLE**

**MONOLINGUALS** = SPEAK THE ‘BASILECT’
- South (regional variety of HC)
- Central (regional of HC = Standard HC used in *Bib la*; urban HC)
  (n.b. many migrants to P-au-P end up knowing 2 varieties).
- Northern (regional variety of HC)

**TRADITIONAL ‘BILINGUALS’** = SPEAK THE MESOLECT
1. HC mesolect (variety spoken by bilinguals, i.e. there is French influence and there are unique HC mesolectal features)
2. French

**NON-TRADITIONAL BILINGUALS FROM THE DIASPORA**
- HC + English
- HC + Québécois French
- HC + Dominican Spanish

**FRENCH**
- The traditional French of Haiti (bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie)
- French full of *Créolismes* (not spoken at home and used for meetings, television, radio, ceremonies, solemn occasions, etc.)
- This group also speaks the HC mesolect in # 2.

**SAMPLE OF RURAL VARIANTS** (left) vs. **URBAN VARIANTS** (right)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Variants</th>
<th>Urban Variants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. anvan (*) /avan</td>
<td>11. dibout /debou</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. asizonnen /asizone</td>
<td>12. dirèktè /direktè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. bïje /oblîje</td>
<td>13. dôktè /doktè</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. chimèn /chimèn</td>
<td>14. douvanjou /Avanjou</td>
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<td>5. chimiz /chimiz</td>
<td>15. fènmaël /fènmaël</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. chôdyè /chôdyè</td>
<td>16. fènwe (*) /fènwa</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. chonje /sonje</td>
<td>17. fiyòl /fiyèl</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. chwal /cheval</td>
<td>18. fouye dife /fiye dife</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. denmen /demen</td>
<td>19. gouvèlman /gouvènman</td>
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<td>10. denpi /depi</td>
<td>20. had /râd</td>
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<td>21. hâdi /râdi</td>
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<td>22. hâdiyès /râdiyès</td>
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<td>23. hale /rale</td>
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<td>24. ganyen /genyen</td>
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<td>25. hou /wou (zouti)</td>
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<td>26. jouk ki lè /jis ki lè</td>
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<td>27. kôman /kôman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>28. koumanse /kômanse /konmanse</td>
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<td></td>
<td>29. Lanmè (*) /lanmè</td>
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<td>30. Lârivè /livè</td>
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<td>31. lò /lè</td>
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<td>32. lòt jou /lotrejou</td>
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<td>33. panyen /panye</td>
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<td>34. pemèt /pèmèt</td>
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<td>35. pwoson /pwason</td>
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<td>36. pwezonnen /pważonnen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>37. sanmdí /samdi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38. senmenn /semèn</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39. swate /swete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40. swedizan /swadizan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. before. 2. to season (meat, etc.). 3. to be obliged. 4. road, way. 5. shirt. 6. pan. 7. to remember, to recall. 8. horse. 9. tomorrow. 10. since. 11. up (standing up). 12. director. 13. doctor. 14. dawn, early in the morning. 15. female (animal) 16. darkness. 17. godchild. 18. fire place. 19. govern ment. 20. cloth. 21. disrespectful 22. disrespect 23. to pull 24. have 25. until when 26. how 28. to begin, to start. 29. sea. 30. river. 31. when. 32. the other day. 33. basket. 34. to allow. 35. fish. 36. to poison. 37. Saturday. 38. week. 39. to wish. 40. so-called.