What is Vodou? Basic elements of a Vodou ceremony:

The Vodou priestess (*manbo*) shakes the sacred rattle (*ason*) and bells (*klochèt*) to salute the main stations in the Vodou temple, direct the drummers, and call forth the lwa.

Photograph on left by Jérôme Soimaud
The altar (*pe*) on the left: for the *lwa* Èzili Dantò. The altar displays the symbols of the *lwa*. Èzili Dantò’s heart-shaped diagram (*vèvè*) has been traced in front of the altar to consecrate the space. Oungan Marcenat’s altar on right.

*Urban altar (Miami, U.S.A.)*  
*Rural altar (Belle-Rivière, Haiti)*

Photograph by Jérôme Soimaud  
Photograph by Ben Hebblethwaite
--The drummers (*ountò*): in a ceremony they provide the rhythmic foundation for ritual, dancing, and possession.

--Drumming insistently calls the lwa and it drives the lwa into the head of the lwa’s horse (the one possessed).

Vodun drumming in Benin (Rouget 2001). Three drums (Rada); sacrificial blood is splashed on the drum because it has a sacred status in Vodun (a *vodun* dwells within it).

Fon/Haitian Creole: *gan* = ogan; *agida* = agida
Rada  Kongo-Petwo
Foula: the oungan consecrates the drums (potomitan, worshipers, audience) with pulverized rum and creates an intense religious atmosphere.
The centerpost (*potomitan*): the symbolic tree around which all Vodou worship circles. The lwa rise and descend through this channel that links the three domains of the lwa: the sky, the earth, and the water (center photograph by Jérôme Soimaud)

Above: Vodouists at a found altar Souvnans near Gonaives
A Vodou priest (oungan) traces a diagram (vêvê) to honor the lwa and consecrate the place of the ceremony (photographs by Jérôme Soimaud)
Salutation: the Vodou priestess (*manbo*) shakes the sacred rattle and bells as she salutes the main stations of the Vodou ceremony: the altar, the drums, the centerpost, the *vèvè*, the Vodouists present (photograph by Jérôme Soimaud)
Two Vodouists greet each other during a ceremony (photograph by Jérôme Soimaud).
Questions about the last part of the introduction

1. How do drums and percussion instruments have “mystical secrets withing them?” How are they a “theological addition” in Vodou?
2. What is langaj in Vodou songs? Why is it so valuable?
3. How/why is kinship terminology important in Vodou?
4. What are the functions of Vodou songs in ceremonies?
5. Describe and explain: songs of preparation, songs of invocation, songs of response and prayer, songs of leave taking
6. What are “boom” songs?
7. What are some symbolic Vodou dances? They are symbolic of what?
8. How are songs transmitted in Vodou?
9. Is Vodou a religion of the book? How has knowledge been transmitted in Vodou traditionally? How and why does this contrast to the transmission in Christianity or Buddhism?
10. Why did we make Vodou Songs in Haitian Creole and English? What are our goals?
Lapriyè Boukmann
Bondje ki fè solèy
ki klere nou anwo,
kli souleve lanmè,
kli fè gwonde loray.
Bondje la, zòt tande,
kache nan yon nyay,
e la a, li gade nou,
li wè tou sa blan an fè.
Bondje blan an mande krim e pa nou vle byenfè.
Men Dje pa nou an ki si bon òdonnen nou vanjans.
Li va kondui bra nou,
Li va ban n asistans.
Jete pòtre Dje blan an ki swaf dlo nan je nou.
Koute lalibète
ki pale nan kè nou tout.
(Beauvoir 2008a: 44)

Boukmann’s Prayer
God who created the sun
that shines on us from above,
who raises the sea,
who makes thunder rumble.
God is there, you hear,
hidden in a cloud,
and there, he looks at us,
he sees all that the whites do.
The white God asks for crimes
and ours wants good deeds.
But our God who is so good
commands us to seek vengeance.
He will lead our arms,
He will give us assistance.
Th row away the image of the white God
who is thirsty for our tears.
Listen to the freedom
that speaks in all of our hearts.
Questions from Milo Marcelin, 73-86

1. What is Legba asked to do?
2. How is Legba described?
3. What powers does Legba have?
4. Say something about:
   Ayizan Velekete, Loko Atisou, Danbala Wèdo, Ayida Wèdo
5. What is important about the order of songs in the Milo Marcelin chapter?
Atibon Legba: Stylized vèvè by Turnier Ferere

Attributes: keeper of keys, guardian of roads and gates; protector of the home.

Main rites: Danwonmen, Kongò, Nago, Petro, Zandò, and particularly Rada.


Favorite color: black.

From his origin, Legba is a Nago Lwa, but traditionally, under his Atibon cognomen, he is honored in Haiti as Rada. He is the most important and one of the most ancient Lwas. He must always be the first one to be invoked at the very beginning of all ceremonies, to ask him to open the mystical gates of the sanctuary whose keys he holds. He is the powerful intermediary between the Lwas and men. All Milokans must include his Vèvè. During theomorphosis, Legba Atibon takes the form of a weak old man who must be provided with crutches. Effectively, these can be seen in his Vèvè. But this is a false appearance: Legba Atibon is not weak, and his follower in trance is endowed with the Lwa's extraordinary strength.

Salutation Legba 1: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sd-vFtC7ODI
Salutation Legba 2: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCWhM19fN3o
Meet Èzili Dantò

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ep15xG8mM1w&feature=related
Lines about Atibon Legba

1. Atibon Legba, open the gate for me, ago e! Papa Legba, open the gate for me, so that I can pass through. When I return I’ll greet the lwa!

2. [...] Atibon Legba, arrives at the gate, you are so old! Papa Legba is in the crossroads, don’t you see how old you are, phew!

3. Alegba, get walking already! We’re carrying Atibon Legba, we’re carrying the center post! Alegba, get walking already!
4. 
Oh old bones! Oh old bones! Papa Legba! 
Don’t you see we’re without bones!

6. [...] 
Alegba Papa is in my temple! 
It’s you who bears the flag in Ginen!

7. 
Alegba stops, he’s looking at me, 
we don’t see him, he sees us; 
look we don’t see him. 
All those who speak well, 
he’s there, he’s listening. 
All those who speak badly, 
he’s there, he’s listening.

11. 
You ate the chicken, 
you did not give me any. 
Th is chicken here, 
Alegba’s chicken.
Legba Kalfou
Stylized vèvè by Turnier Ferere
Attributes: keeper of keys, guardian of roads and gates; protector of the home.
Main rites: Kongo, Nago, and particularly Petro.
Pictorial icons: Saint Peter, Saint Anthony.
Favorite color: black.

All Legbas share many of the same characteristics, but Kalfou invoked as Petro Lwa, contrary to old Rada Atibon, appears as a vigorous young man. His theomorphosis can be violent. In spite of being somehow severe, he still recognizes the weaknesses of human condition, and helps his devotees deal with the difficulties of life. Since his name, Kalfou, means 'crossroads' in Creole, no surprise that his ceremonies generally take place in the middle of crossroads. At the center of his Vèvè, there is a street intersection. While Atibon controls sunlight, Kalfou who likes to jest with bad spirits prefers the darkness of the night and the rays of the moon, his symbol.
Danbala and Ayida
Papa Loko

Benin
Loko Atisou

- Lwa of medicinal plants and leaves associated with healing.
- The *doktè fèy* (herbalist) exerts his or her practice under Loko’s patronage.
- In the Fon language,
  - *Lòkó Àtínsú* is the tree that dominates all others in the forest.
- Loko is connected to the *iroko* tree.
- **Salutation Loko:** drums > potomitan > altar > audience
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHmkh3qug5E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHmkh3qug5E)
Explain these lyrics:

26.
Here is Yanva Loko!
They hate my Vodou priest.
They love his magic charms!
Where are Loko’s servants?
Come to greet him!
Yanvalou, where are Loko’s servants?
Come to greet him!
What’s in a name? Onomasiology 101

Marasa; Marasa Blan; Marasa Bwa; Marasa Elou; Marasa Kafou; Marasa Lafrik; Marasa Ginen; Marasa Jimo; Marasa Kreyòl; Marasa Lafrik Ginen; Marasa Kay; Marasa Kongo; Marasa Dosou, Dosa, Dogwe; Zensou, Zens; Marasa Mezon; Marasa Zandò; Masa

Loko Atisou; Loko Atisou Gwe; Loko Atisougwè; Loko Azanblou Gidi; Loko Aziblokidi; Loko Basiye; Loko Dan Yiso; Loko Dawomen; Loko De; Loko Dewaze; Loko Djandjan; Loko Kilindja; Loko Kisigwè; Loko Lweba; Loko Pilipili; Loko Sendjo; Loko-si; Loko Yay; Azagon Loko; Danyiso Loko; Papa Loko; Ibo Loko; Santayi Loko

Èzili; Èzili Anmin; Èzili Balyang; Èzili Boumba; Èzili Dan Petwo; Èzili Dantò; Èzili Doba/Dowa; Èzili Freda Danwonmen; Èzili Freda Badè; Èzili Imado; Èzili Jewouj; Èzili Kawoulo; Èzili Mabenge; Èzili Makanda; Èzili Makaya; Èzili Mapyang; Èzili Mayonèt; Èzili Nennenn; Èzili Siniga; Èzili Towo; Èzili Wangòl; Grann Èzili; Manbo Èzili; Metrès Èzili
What’s in a name?

Ogou; Ogoun; Ogou Achade; Ogou Baba; Ogou Bakesou; Ogou Bakoule; Ogou Balisaj; Ogou Balote; Ogou Baltaza; Ogou Batala; Ogou Belizè; Ogou Chalode; Ogou Chango; Ogou Djamsan/Yamsen/Yamsan/Yamson; Ogou Dodè/Lodè; Ogou Fè; Ogou Feray; Ogou Galonnen; Ogou Gounnbasa; Ogou Jenizon/Kenizon; Ogou Je Wouj; Ogou Kelendjo; Ogou Koumandja; Ogou Laflanbo; Ogou Lele; Ogou Mileni; Ogou Nago; Ogou Panama; Ogou Pe; Ogou Temerè; Ogou Tonnè; Ogou Ti Mal/Ti Mal Dede; Ogou Yaba; Ogou Yèkè; Ogou Yemenn; Ogou Sabaho; Ogou Velekete Obakesou; Ougon; Chal Ogou; Sen Jak Majè

The tools of onomasiologists:
- the [linguistic atlas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onomasiology)
- the [etymological dictionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onomasiology)
- the dialect dictionary
- thesauri
diachronic [text corpora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onomasiology)

Vodou Terms: 205-215

1. Agasou  a. Lwa of the sea
2. Agida    b. Drum stick with curved tip
3. Agwe     c. Royal iron candle stick
4. Aochè Nago d. Initiation to the priesthood
5. Ati      e. A town in Benin
6. Asen     f. Descends from a panther
7. Asogwe   g. A ritual Vodou cry
8. Alada/Allada h. Honorific titular prefix
Asen from Fon-speaking Benin: How Fon kings memorialize the ancestors
Vodou Terms: 205-215

1. Asòtò  
   a. A farmer spirit

2. Ayizan  
   b. Strips of palm for ritual

3. Ayizan Velekete  
   c. A wicked sorcerer

4. Ayibobo  
   d. A general & ruler of storms

5. Azaka Mede  
   e. God created her first

6. Ayida Wèdo  
   f. Enormous drum & lwa

7. Azètò  
   g. Protector of temples

8. Badè  
   h. Rada ritual acclamation
http://www.galeriebonheur.com/haitian/voodooflags/voodooflags.htm
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAruC6k2XEE (Assotor ceremony at Souvnans)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Io-tDE1riq4&list=UUDP1EPTCUztGe33clPDIVOA&index=2&feature=plcp (Worship at a found altar, Souvnans by the mapou tree)
Worship: the lwa dance in the heads of their servants. Revelation is living and open. The lwa reveal Bondye. Revelation cannot be frozen in books.

All photographs by Jérôme Soimaud
The lwa mount their servants. The Vodouist is a vessel. The individual is temporarily ridden by the lwa; the lwa manifests her or his characteristics.

All photographs by Jérôme Soimaud
Composure and calm are expected of Vodouists. Emotion is reserved for war and possession (Blier 1995: 81).

All photographs by Jérôme Soimaud
Animal sacrifice: feeding the lwa with blood and preparing a feast for the lwa and their servants

Photograph on the right by Jérôme Soimaud
http://www.life.com/gallery/62471/image/ugc1251681/inside-haitian-vodou#index/7

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFXIdtNqwno&list=UUdP1EPtCuztGe33cIPDIVOA&index=7&feature=plcp (Blood rituals at Souvnans)
J.L.’s songs

1. What are some important themes in J.L.’s songs? Can you give several?
2. What are some things you like and dislike about his material?
3. How is it different than other Vodou songs in the book?
4. Who are some of the lwa mentioned in the book?
5. How is Catholicism and Vodou integrated/distinguished in his texts?
6. What evidence is there to classify this as youth literature?