

Shamans, Witches, and Magic

Special Research Project

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Part One

What are Heaven's and Harner's thesis (the central message) on Shamanism?

Vodou Shaman, The Haitian Way of Healing and Power peels back the superficial layers of stereotypical ideas about "voodoo." Ross Heaven discusses, in depth, how to heal the body, mind, and spirit through non-conventional, non-traditional means. Much attention is paid to intention in his and other books on the subject this semester. His focus is to help the Western World learn to commune and be "one with nature." Through empiricism, he recognizes the human sustenance to be found in the environment, in trees, plants, water, and rocks and he shares those attributes with us. This very life not only supports human existence physically, mentally, and spiritually on this earth, but promotes what is known as *Tutu* in Vodou; the balance among all three facets of being and ensures the survival of human as well as other species. Further, Heaven emphasizes the truth and brings to mind Western Civilization's huge misconceptions of the word "Voodoo." This, he points out, is not even the correct spelling. (Heaven: ix)

"Truth will always dispel fear because fear feeds on ignorance and starves on a diet of fact." (Heaven: 1) Heaven's thesis is based on a detailed explanation of the many elements that comprise the topic of Vodou Shamanism. Westerners, otherwise civilized, have demonized the Vodou Religion. However, Heaven takes the strong stance that through the essence of Vodou, we may open our minds and selves to new spiritual realities. How? Through the use of significant rituals, carefully orchestrated

altars, and the ability to keep an open mind to receive guidance from the deities, referred to as loa in Vodou, Ocha in Obeah. Similarly, educating the Western World of shamanic practices is of great importance in Michael Harner's *The Way of the Shaman*.

As an example of the depth of knowledge that is yet to be discovered in Vodou by those of us who are novices, he views his book as an introductory guide to the shamanic methodology for healing. (Harner: xxiii) He explains, in the language of the Tungus people in Siberia, the word *SHAH-man* is synonymous with the terms "witch," "witch doctor," "medicine man," "sorcerer," "wizard," "magic man," "magician," and "seer." (Harner: 20) Certainly it would then stand to reason that anthropologists would adopt the term because of the lack of dogma attached to it.

The Shaman, with his or her own consent¹, enters an altered state, or trance. With a specific intended purpose, he contacts a normally hidden reality² in order to gain knowledge, power, and to help others. In this so-called Shaman State of Consciousness (SSC), he can either ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld. It is important to recognize that, while in this state of awareness, he is working to heal a person by restoring his vital power, or extracting the damaging power that caused his illness in the first place. Harner makes it clear that while others may have ulterior motives for practicing shamanism, he offers his knowledge to the end of human healing and well-being. He also presents a compelling argument about the existence of shamanic knowledge as well as the importance of taking an empirical position on the subject. He deems it necessary to wash away the weight of restrictions and stereotypes

associated with Vodou to get to its origin. Like Heaven, Harner has achieved status as a Houngan, or Vodou Priest.

Compare and contrast each tradition in the following areas:

Initiations

Intended Houngans enter the religion as *Vodouissants*. They are uninitiated at this point, but attend ceremonies and have involvement with rituals. This is when they learn the ways of Vodou from the outside in. They receive healings and ceremonies in the same manner as their future clients and congregation will undergo the rituals. In Obeah, the initiate is the *iyawó*³. (Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert: 51) The *Hounsi Bossale* is considered the novice initiate. While the Houngan-to-be may be chosen by the spirits, the candidate must first learn how to partner spirits with the appropriate ritual practice in order for the loa to manifest themselves here. The Haitian term “cooked” refers to the amount of knowledge the Priesthood requires he attain before he is ready to work in this capacity. Further, that knowledge is gained through grades which are explained in further detail later on in this paper.

In Obeah, it is the *babalocha* (father) and *iyalocha* (mother) who have passed the novitiate process and become priests, sometimes *santero* and *santera*. (Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert: 52) An *oriaté* (the head “ori”) is a highly trained diviner and ritual specialist in Obeah. The *Babalao* is the High Priest and the ultimate authority in Divination in Obeah and of the Orula or Ifá cult. In fact, the Obeah only allow males to become priests.

Only those who seriously desire to take on the knowledge of Vodou should be initiated. Secrets of the healing powers are passed on only to initiates. Initiation in Vodou takes place behind the tombs in a white building in a room called the *djevo*. It is white washed with a dirt floor and the candidates, or initiates, will spend five nights and four days there in seclusion. However, in Obeah, the initiate experiences a 7-day ceremony called *asiento*. (Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert: 51)

While there, they sleep with the spirits and learn their secrets. The walls are painted with images of the angels who will watch over them. The initiates are blindfolded. This serves as a way to discard everything one knows in their soon-to-be “former” life, to open up to their new life through rebirth, which is about to take place over the course of the days spent in the *djevo*. It is also to avoid any distractions from the outside world. Initiates are kept in a room together during this period while their respective Houngans keep a protective watch over them. Naturally, it means that when it comes time to use a potty, someone retrieves a bucket for them and guides them. They do so in one room. Indeed, this more than any other, would be a time in which they are happy, if not grateful, to be blindfolded.

One emerges reborn. “...this peristyle is your mother, and the *djevo* is the womb that will give you birth.” (Heaven: 17) It is then that the initiate can be a Priest.⁴ It is also then that they may practice healing and work with the loa. The *brule zen* ceremony, the final test of the initiate, seems to be the most arduous challenge. Pots of boiling oil are set up with a wafer of corn on the bottom. The initiate must put his hand inside the pot, grab the corn, and show it to the people, proving he is capable of going

into the SSC, consequently, not to feel the pain. If he is successful, he can feel the heat but will not be burned. Of course, this proves to the initiate as well as the community that they are being watched over and protected.

Being initiated as a Priest⁵ is another level of commitment for life. The responsibility is enormous. The Priest must travel and attend rituals in Cuba, Africa, the United States, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Brazil, and the Northwest. It requires self-discipline and dedication. In *Creole Religions of the Caribbean, An Introduction from Vodou and Santería to Obeah and Espiritismo*, initiations are categorically similar except for the offering of animal sacrifices and there being no central authority figure. (Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert: 50) The Babalao is the ultimate authority in Divination.

Healing rituals and ceremonies:

Among the Jívaro Indians of the Ecuadorian Andes, the guardian spirit, and tutelary spirit retrieval method has the shaman bringing back the Power Animal by first blowing it into the chest of the patient. The Power Animal will make itself known to the shaman at least four different times in different angles. (Harner 81) Although its power may be felt throughout the body, this is where the spirit rests. This belief is common across the traditions. (Harner 72) Naturally, the guardian spirit is an important aspect of rituals that will be covered later on in this paper.

During a ceremony, darkness alone is inadequate for a shaman to connect with the spirits. He must also go into the SSC. The art of physical, mental, and spiritual healing is common across all traditions. In Vodou, if one becomes ill, the shaman works to find the root of the problem. It is usually believed that the cause is spiritual, even in a

child, manifested through spiritual problems.

In the Palo tradition, there is a practice performed in healing a person known as “switching lives.” A Congo belief, the intention is to trick death by controlling a person’s life spirit. The palero⁶ consults with the *nganga*, or his spirit of the dead. The palero will sit on the floor next to the patient and give him a concoction for “extracting the witchcraft.” The patient drinks the mixture and vomits feathers, stones, and hair. At that moment the sorcerer “switches lives,” known as *cambia vida*. He uses chalk, twine, a doll, or the stump of a plantain tree. He measures the patient and ties the doll to the stump with seven knots. With this procedure the evil that attacks the patient is transferred by the *curandero*⁷ onto the doll or stump, which is given the sick person’s name. Thus, death is tricked into believing that the buried stump or doll is the patient’s cadaver...A doll properly baptized is placed to sleep beside the sick person in his bed.

The following day it is placed in a box, as if dead, and buried. The patient is cleansed three times with a rooster that is passed over the entire body. The rooster dies because it has absorbed the illness and is taken to a crossroad. The patient then rests and undergoes a treatment of infusions. (Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert: 100)

Afro-Cuban ethnomedical therapeutics is essentially plant-based. Decoctions, infusions, aromatics, and/or baths are prescriptions to cleanse evil spell—*bilongos*, *wembas*, and *murumbas*—or attract healing spirits. These spells are extremely powerful. So much so, in fact, that another sorcerer cannot undo the spell without substantial risk to his own life. (Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert: 97)

In Vodou, there is a spiritual universe, the home of God, or *Bondye*, where

unseen forces reach out to us and can influence the affairs of our lives in both positive and negative ways. In addition to the domain of Bondye, the Upper, Middle, and Lower Worlds, the Marketplace, Nature, and Gine, another domain which exists within the mapping of this unseen world is known as the Abysmal Waters. Considered part of the Lower World at the bottom of the circle of this universe, water is the place where reckoning and review transpire; a place where connections to the physical world are let go between lives. Now, this is where the dead go at the moment they leave the mortal world to become ancestral spirits. (Heaven: 63)

A Houngan can call the dead out of the water in the ceremony of *retire mo nan dlo*⁸. The dead will return to the community through a vessel in the water and the Houngan will ritually set them in a *govi*, or clay pot kept in the temple, or *peristyle*. From this point, the voice of the dead may be heard giving advice or imparting wisdom. Hence, such wisdom is priceless to the community since the deceased was once a part of the physical world, but is now considered having experienced the presence of God.

There are three rituals toward Priesthood in Vodou termed as *grades*. *Hounsi Kango* is the first grade. This refers to the time an initiate must spend in the *djevo* sleeping with the loa. *Su Pwen* (the “p” is silent) is the second grade, and when the person is “on the point,” or ready to enter into a reciprocal relationship with his or her patron loa. *Asogwe* (“one who is kissed by a spirit”) is the final and highest grade. The *Asogwe* is the final authority on rituals, deferring only to a loa who may manifest himself during the ceremony. (Heaven: 58) Women seemed to have the power in urban areas while males had the power in rural areas. Because she is a woman/nurturer, a female

understands some of the problems the Priestess will face. In traditional Africa, there are rituals to become warriors, also. One must pass certain tests of manhood and womanhood in areas of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strength and courage.

In Vodou and Shamanism, it is believed that the Western World is not as adequately equipped to handle illness as they present to us in the present day. They believe that Western medicine is cold and impersonal. Accordingly, many doctors turn to shamans for help with illnesses they cannot cope with using common practices.

Shamans will turn to the source of the problem, rather than examining the mere superficial. The whole person is considered whether they present with symptoms of a headache or breast cancer. Still, there are no rituals in Obeah. Obeah, like Vodou, holds masses which are seen as very important. A mass will follow and Ocha ceremony. The "Mass of the dead" is dedicated to people who received Ocha. A table is dedicated in white with food offerings, spiritual icons, water, and candles, the light that will lead the spirits into the physical world. It is during the mass that the spirit will reveal his message, thereby making this ceremony very important.

In Santería, a Babalao cleanses the head of a person to keep his mind sharp. The head is wrapped all night. When the wrapping is removed, the head is shampooed. Through this process known as rogation, the person's recall is now amazing. Spiritual herbs are used in a spiritual bath. The blessed rinse removes negativity. As referred to earlier, the power of the guardian spirit is believed to make one resistant to illness. A patient can resist the intrusion (disease) of any external forces as long as he has his guardian spirit. In Vodou, a Power-full body will keep out intrusions, and harmful

energies with the help of guardian and tutelary spirits. (Heaven 94) Certainly, it is better to be lying down when indulging in hallucinogens like Ayahuasca.

A Yaralde Australian tribesman says "if you get up...you will not see scenes." (Harner 72) (Heaven 118) Spirit intrusions can indicate when people think badly of you in this way. (Heaven 199) A person's mindset, their reality, how they view their healthy selves, is important to their healing. Their personal definition of their illness is what helps determine their outcome. For instance, if they're given a diagnosis that they only have a short time to live, how they react to that is internalized.

By law, a Western doctor must tell the patient what the diagnosis and prognosis are. Among the people who practice Vodou, this is unnecessary. Their belief is that one should live their life to the fullest, live well and avoid the negative. In comparison, Harner speaks of tapping into the human mind and self-sacrifice. One has to care about oneself enough to heal. Most practicing shamans and their patients share the opinion that Western Medicine is cold and impersonal, and inadequate and that they must look for remedies through other means.

Personal Power is used to help others. This is similar across the board in those traditions that practice shamanism and not witchcraft. Another anthropological belief system is ethnocentricity. This is an assumption that one's own life group values systems are superior to those of others. Anthropologists' commit to open the minds of people stuck in this system with the thought that all systems of belief are inherently equal.

If people are in an abusive situation, part of their soul will leave to protect itself

from the abuse. If something traumatic is about to occur, a part of the soul often leaves so as not to be affected by the force of the accident. When a loved one dies, a part of the soul may leave until the person is ready to grieve. It can return on its own, but only a shaman can determine where it's gone, whether it's safe, and when it may return.

Beliefs concerning deities, ancestors:

Vodou is basically a monotheistic religion recognizing a Supreme Being or Spiritual Entity; *Mawu-Lisa* among the Fon, *Olorun* among the Yoruba, and *Bondye*, or *Gran Met* (the Good God) in Haiti. The *loa*, or *Iwa*, serve as the backbone to these entities. (Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert 105)

Bondye is the “old man in the sky” in Vodou. He is the Supreme Being, the creator of the universe. He is the guarantor of motion, the wind, and waters of the sea. He is the one who initiates our movement from the physical to the spiritual. He is also the guarantor of the continuation of life. He is above all humans, including the deities known as loa. It is through him that we can achieve whatever we want in our lives. He has thousands of eyes and sees all corners of the world, and he is the source of all benefits. Indeed, His will is absolute.

The loa serve a purpose; have a unique food, color, numbers, and initiations. They are not only themselves forces of nature, but they deal with the affairs of nature. When there are spirits in the home, the bad ones possess the ability to turn our lives upside down, figuratively speaking. If there is music playing, they may want you to listen to the words. If the ancestors come to you, it's because they are trying to tell you something or there is something they want you to do.

Possession is critical. A trance state must be achieved and one can maneuver within the trance, but not consciously. To go into a trance, the environment must be right. The purpose for this state is to contact the deity, or ancestor. Specific rhythmic drumming is carried out related to the various deities, and when they descend, they take over a body. A *vévé*, a specific geometric symbol, is drawn at the beginning of a ceremony with cornmeal or chalk to attract the attention of that particular deity.

In Harner's shamanism, initiation depends on the successful achievement of the SSC. The initiate must be able to see and journey during that state and must have and know and be able to use his guardian spirit in that state, successfully helping others.

Besides God and humans, there are many types of other beings inhabiting the earth. The Spirit Chart (Nature, Spirits, and Human Spirits) holds the belief that deities are forces of nature and every aspect of nature cures within nature. Nature encompasses a vast area including the sky, the sun, the moon and stars, rainbows, rain, storms, wind, thunder, and lightning. Spirits are in the Earth, hills, mountains, lagoons, rocks, lakes, trees, ponds, forests, rivers, waterfalls, and rapids. Human Spirits are both the long dead (five or more generations ago) and the recently dead (four or five generations). Seers can see the spirit, but do not recognize it when they are long dead. Although the mission might not readily be known to the parents, when a baby or child passes on, it is believed the spirit is passing through.

It is believed in Vodou that *we*, the living, are suffering and not the spirits. The dead are separated from families, community, friends and time takes care of the feeling of loss. Ancestors settle into their new role and let go of the past to help heal their

sense of loss. Death is not final. There is a belief in Vodou that ancestors must be taken care of. Usually white candles, flowers, and water are strong symbols in religion and used on the altar when calling the spirit.

The ancestors may also answer us in our dreams which lead us down a path for the answer to whatever is at issue. If the ancestor was not good in life, he will not be good in death. The bad ones who show themselves are apparent by being a nuisance. To get rid of them, just tell them "I don't want you here."

In Obeah, the belief is if you can cure it, you can inflict it, as well. They also believe in ancestors.

How does each tradition utilize drums, song, and dance?

In Vodou, drums are made from trees and there is always a ceremony before the tree is cut to ensure the right spirit gets into the drum. The shaman community uses dance and drums to get in touch with the Power Animal. Rattles are used in conjunction with drums to the end of keeping rhythms. In soul retrieval, it begins with the human spirit and the Power Animal being one, "Calling the Beast." Haitians square dance to honor the dead, when planting harvest, or while building a house. The act of dancing and the drum itself have a scientific affect on healing. Anthropologists have noted a change in the brain wave activity of the dancers. At the same time, dance in Africa brings people together in the county.

To the people of the Caribbean, dancing is part of the religion for people of color. Culturally, they are taught dance as a child and to let the body become the beat while dancing. This is a form of possession. It is used as a means of getting outside the

body. This is when healing and empowerment begin. With music, every beat is a “call” to a particular loa. Another important point is the absence of ethnocentrism in singing and dancing. *Tutu* is the equivalent of happiness, harmony, and balance.

The reason for singing, drumming, and rattling is to wake up the spirits of anyone who can help the shaman. In Santería, they believe they retrieve the Power Animal from the lower world. Songs and chants are given in a call and response format. The song leader usually knows hundreds of songs that have a correct ritual sequence. Song content is derived from the extreme struggle and hardship of a life of submission portraying conflict, betrayal, slavery, persecution and forced Christianity. In Vodou, singing is believed to manipulate energy and focus the mind.

In the "spirit canoe," one shaman is a leader, and one steers. Singing, beating on drums, and using rattles, the leader will sing his own guardian song and others will join in. The use of air in singing allows one to get in touch with what is going on inside one's inner being. This is a way to connect with other forms of energy. Mothers sing to their young for balance and in preparation for dance. In summary, song has huge power.

What is seen as an accomplished (good) Shaman?

A shaman can do wrong if he wishes by revealing a person's Power Animal. Once revealed, the animal will leave the person rendering him to trouble. On the other hand, a good shaman is responsible; a role model. He has a high degree of knowledge of the cosmic puzzle through many years of shamanic experience.

He can practice navigating between OSC & SSC at will. (Harner: 45)

Articulating his personal experiences is important in knowing exactly where to fit in the problem being experienced by the person he is trying to help. Indeed, a master shaman does not ever expect to complete the puzzle in a mortal lifetime. (Harner: 45)

Initiation is a never-ending process of struggle and joy, and the shaman's level of success is determined by those he has helped. A master shaman will never tell you that what you have experienced was a fantasy. He will also be in awe of the complexity and glory of the universe and of Nature. He also recognizes that in the short span of time we inhabit the earth, we may only touch a small portion of the way in which our universe truly works. A good shaman not only sees in SSC, but hears, feels, and experiences his community, experiences sensations beyond usual senses. The mind can not come back if he does not come out of the state. There is no competitiveness among good shamans. A good shaman will never contest the soundness of another's work. Only those who are less capable might.

How each tradition describes the physical and spiritual worlds?

When shamans refer to spirits, it is their way of speaking within the system. They do not take a scientific approach to what a "spirit" is, what it may represent, or why it works.

In Santería, the Power Animals, or guardians are our spiritual allies who have volunteered to be of service to us. Everyone has one or more Power Animal. They show the shaman where to find lost souls, particulars, and they answer questions.

Harner stressed that they come at birth. They protect us whether we're conscious of it or not. Equally important, they work to protect and give much strength in need.

A person with a "lost soul" means that person lost his "Power Animal" in shamanism. Even if an animal may look fierce, they mean no harm.

In Harner's shamanism, an herb, Ayahuasca, "Spirit Vine of the Soul," is used to help the shaman get into the SSC. This is a hallucinogen that gets cooked in a pot over flames. The stems are pounded and boiled with water like tea. Once a shaman is prepared to take it, someone must be present to monitor him. In case anything goes awry, he must be given an antidote. Drinking Ayahuasca for the first time does not always produce visions. The process takes dedication, discipline, perseverance, and time for the person to receive its full benefits. Amazon Indians use Ayahuasca to heal the mind, body, and spirit, and to explore other realms of existence. Also, this hallucinogen may be found in two Amazon plants known as Banisteriopsis Caapi and Psychotria Viridis.

In Cuba, Obeah is a system of beliefs rooted in Supernatural forces and witchcraft. Spirits manifest themselves as duppies, ghosts, or animals. If a duppy is sent to you, it is recommended that you listen and not walk away. If you see the spirit in lizard, snake, spider, or iguana form, this is not a good sign. If a dying person's breath is captured in a jar, this is said to be "calling a duppy for someone."

In the SSC, one sees spirits telling him important information. He visualizes the experience with the strong eye. There are children who can visualize in this manner. During the shaman's experience, he cannot move. But when he regains his Ordinary

State of Consciousness (OSC) he has full recall.

The best place to acquire a guardian spirit is in a remote place in the wilderness. In order to perform his work, a shaman must have the help of at least one of his guardian spirits. (Harner: 43).

In Spiritism, practiced in the United States, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, the belief is in the human ability to communicate with the dead. For this purpose a Medium is used to channel these spirits via a trance. The channeler or medium is the intermediary who possesses the ability to communicate between the spirits and the living. He also performs the rituals, usually in a small group and usually by trance. Allan Kardec, the father of Spiritism in France, wrote *The Spirits' Book*, published in 1856, which expounded on a "new" theory of human life and destiny. Channeling was considered more a philosophical movement than a religion. However, it has come to incorporate the ideals of Romanticism and the Scientific Revolution in an attempt to close the gap between the material and spiritual worlds.

In reincarnation, a birth represents a re-embodiment of a spirit. The spirit returning appealed to the Christians in Europe. In Myalism (good magic), the "bush men" in the Bahamas practice Myal. In Trinidad, they're called Wanga. All Catholic Church holidays are practiced in Haiti. If they feel the loa have been visiting too long, they pray to get the loa to leave, "You must go." In Santería, there are no women high priests; a Babalao holds that rank instead. The Shamanistic State of Consciousness (SSC) and Ordinary State of Consciousness (OSC) are needed in all.

The Abahua Secret Society in the Cross River region of Cuba, exclusively for Black men, practices magic.

Part Two

What traditions among your readings and discussions deal specifically with witchcraft and magic?

Palo in Santería is magic. Want some form of magic done quickly or for revenge then one would go to Paleros. Paleros have no code of ethics. For instance, if one is going for a job that someone else already has, you might get it, but the person whose place you took will die. In Santería this is done to feed the Orisha. Paleros also reward the spirits of dead people who did not live nice lives. They work in secret to capture a dead spirit. Abahua (ah BACK oo), also known as *nanigos*, is a "Magic Religions Society" among only the Black and Mulatto males in Obeah. They consider themselves as "brothers" engaging in sacred rituals. Slave trade is a mutual aid society. Their beliefs are in Creole and Santería. There is a formal initiation, as in shamanism, with drumming, dancing, and music. In addition, there is a belief in the hierarchy of deities and they have secret signs engaging complex symbolism conveying messages to each other.

Obeah and Myalism. Obeah's beliefs are rooted in the supernatural world and witchcraft, sorcery, magic, spells, and healing practiced in the Caribbean. Obeah is not seen as a religion. It traces back to the Ashanti people. The creole religious systems, of which Obeah is a part, are believed to be associated with witchcraft and sorcery. It is believed that the people who practice Obeah are born with powers that may be passed

down through generations. Also, the children who have these powers can tell you about seeing far beyond their years.

It was dangerous to practice shamanic work in Europe during the Inquisition. In medieval and Renaissance Europe when widows and elderly women became healers, the Inquisition deemed them “witches.” The Jívaro are even accused of being a “bad” or bewitching shaman. (Harner 43)

Do witchcraft and magic differ from Harner’s and Heaven thesis?

Yes, if you consider witchcraft is usually done with negative, hurtful intentions. Magic is more known to be done with healing and helping in mind. There are good loas, those who wish to work to solve peoples’ problems, and dangerous ones, those who mean harm.

Do you see similarities or marked differences?

I see a host of similarities and just a few differences. For instance, across the board and in no particular order I found the following in common. Altars, slaves, statues of the Catholic Saints, water, gourds, chanting, and the essentials found in nature (i.e. tree bark) are used. In some form, all traditions refer to deities (loas, orishas, Ochosi). There are spiritual cauldrons of some sort, purifying baths of white flowers, luck (or *chans*), a Unique Supreme Being, dead ancestors, and supernatural mysterious power. The plants and trees have soul. There are drums, music, dance (in Obeah, with the explanation that sound has the power to transmit action), and rhythms (coded to the identities of the Gods; summoned on ceremonies and rituals). Also, there is an entrance to the lower world, SSC, OSC, Priests and Priestesses, infusion, harmony and

balance, and respect and deference for the respective religion and/or witchcraft.

The few differences I found were in Obeah. They do offer sacrifices, they have no central authority, and they do not allow female priestesses. In the form of Myalism, the good magic, they call spirits, but because some rituals are performed under the ceiba or silk-cotton tree, they are organized differently to prevent duppies from doing harm. It is believed that these trees are a favorite frequent of duppies. (Olsmos & Paravisini-Gebert: 145)

Ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, a strong eye, the use of Ayahuasca, and when a loa possesses a devotee, he does not remember anything, yet in SSC he can recall, are all similar. In contrast, in Heaven's book the loa descend into our world—In Harner's book, the shaman goes to them. In conclusion, Divination may be found in all the traditions.