



Photo courtesy of Denis Rion.

***Dedouble* and Jeanguy Saintus' Corporeal Gifts**

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Abstract

Choreographer Jeanguy Saintus inscribes his dancers' bodies with stories that oppose, resist and trouble audience expectations. Within his practice, he uses movement to chart generative locations for Haitians. In his choreography *Tribulations* (2013), Saintus exhibits contested knowledges about masculinity and sexuality. He foregrounds queer Haitian subjects' struggles. Anchoring my explorations in this work, I propose the Kreyòl term *dedouble*, which invokes imagery of a body desiring to unbind itself from time, place, and socio-cultural conventions to expose and consider what exactly is at stake when Saintus dares to re-imagine Haitianness and sexualities through dancemaking that

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eschews socially sanctioned values or de facto practices. In the process, I illustrate how a body-to-body commitment among choreographers, dancers, spectators, and the general population catalyzes performative-witnessing that in turn extends the possibilities for cultural continuity between Haitians' past, present, and future.

Tribulations (2013)

In a dim pool of blue light, Steven Vilsaint stands on Mackenson Israel Blanchard and Emmanuel Gérard's shoulders. All three men wear brown shorts only. The triangle's apex, Vilsaint's right arm, stretches upward with a clenched fist. In silence, Vilsaint curls his head forward and downward as Blanchard and Gérard flip him slowly to the floor. Seated on his buttocks, a hand behind his head and one covering his mouth, Vilsaint extends and retracts his legs as he exits. Lithe dancer Wenchel Renaudin's body and torso face the upstage wall. His legs are apart, but his face is toward stage left, arms spread up. Another person clings to him: two arms and hands clutch his back. The invisible person nestles against Renaudin. Arms and hands descend along the male dancer's back, caressing his spine, his buttocks, and his legs. Finally Johnnoiry St. Philippe's face peeks out between Renaudin's legs. St. Philippe slithers between Renaudin's legs and lifts his companion. They exit. Two more enter. One man carries another on his back. Face to face, they caress each other's hands.



Figure 1. Left to right: Johnnoiry St. Philippe, Sephora

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Germain, Emmanuel Gérard in *Tribulations* (2013) by Jeanguy Saintus' Ayikodans. Photo Courtesy of Denis Rion.

The sole woman—Sephora Germain—enters and tries to pry a couple apart, but the male dancers give her hard face. She scowls, retreats and scurries away from them in the opposite direction. The men draw closer to one another. Germain returns once again. This time, she climbs on Emmanuel Gérard's shoulders. St. Philippe steadies her by the ankle (fig. 1). She inspects her environs, hovers, before diving onto St. Philippe's back and crawling between his legs. Gérard yanks her up. But she lets go, and then arches back suddenly. He nearly misses her reaching hand. Two men who mirror one another in a split on the floor seem to be glued, while waiting for Germain to finish her solo dance. This section concludes with four men upstage in a straight line. They size up Germain, who writhes on the ground. Then they lift her in their arms, walk in unison and exit.

St. Philippe enters. Pigeon-toed, he breaks the symmetry of his elongated legs by bending his knees and rotating his hip socket inward. Fingers splayed, St. Philippe jerks and twists, falling on the floor fanning his limbs outward. He rebounds constantly. In the end, St. Philippe collapses face down on the floor as lights cut out.

In this exploratory piece about contemporary dance in Haiti, performance is a critical and methodological *kafou*, or crossroads, where Haitian, African diasporic thought, dance, queer studies, and my embodied experiences of cultural practices in Haiti and abroad converge. In three complementary sequences, I describe, interpret, and contextualize Haitian-born choreographer Jeanguy Saintus' *Tribulations* (2013) to widen the scope of his activist practice. Celebrating 26 years as a professional choreographer, Saintus' dance studies began in Haiti with revered traditional dance mistresses Viviane Gauthier, Odette Latour Wiener, and Viviane Denerville, followed by additional training at Kettly Jean-François Durand's, Eileen Herzog-Bazin's, and Régine Montrosier Trouillot's ballet academies.¹ With regard to intensive seminars and performance credits, Saintus names stints in the Caribbean, South America, and the United States as formative (Saintus 2014a).

How Saintus utilizes his dance knowledge is a discussion previewed in the second section. Here, I propose that Saintus exercises a dual performance with what he terms a new direction in Haitian dance. I organize this essay around the relationship between the Haitian Kreyòl vernacular *dedouble* and *Tribulations'* queer focus. I assert that his choreography destabilizes what Haitian author Edwidge Danticat conceives as Haitians' cultivation of "communal and historical amnesia, continually repeating cycles that we never see coming until we are reliving similar horrors" (Danticat 2011, 63-64) by disrupting

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spectators' expectations of a normative body with an intimate dance about coping with one's legacies and passionate kinship for another.

With each scripted movement, my aim is to magnify Saintus' *engagement du citoyen*, the civic commitment incorporated into his dance company's embodiment of an off-kilter Haitianness. Previewed in Pétion-Ville, Haiti, in fall 2013 and premiered at West Palm Beach, Florida's Kravis Center for the Performing Arts on 14 and 15 December 2013, Saintus' *Tribulations* illustrates Haitian lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) persons' labor. Below, I introduce the concept of dedouble and consider its interplay with the *Tribulations* performance to interpret cast members' ambivalence regarding portraying bodies deemed deviant. To conclude, I place the choreography within a broader socio-cultural context that has historically trivialized the Haitian gay man, known locally as *masisi*.² To do so, I utilize musical artist Sweet Micky's (current Haitian President Michel Joseph Martelly) 2004 concert, available on YouTube.

I. Dedouble

At a *dans* or Vodou ceremony, I overheard one man compliment another: "Fi a telman danse, li dedouble sou moun" (Girlfriend danced so much, she dedouble on us). My field collaborator Jean-Wesler Louis-Jean further elaborates: one partakes in dedouble when he or she appears to metamorphose in a moment of ecstasy (like the embodied elation the two men expressed above) or under duress (Louis-Jean 2014). For example, a refined professor of Haitian descent, so peeved by a peer's comment, lets out a loud *chipe* (teeth sucking) and a *twaze* (eye roll). His or her African-American counterpart, tight-lipped and eyes ablaze, rolls his or her neck, snaps fingers, and launches into a "now looka here..." scolding. Louis-Jean continues: "Gen de fwa se komsa ou wè lot pesonalite moun la." (Sometimes it's as if you see a person's other personalities.) "Kó w rete la. Nanm ou ale on lòt kote." (The body stays here still while the soul travels) (Louis-Jean 2014). For Francophones, the Larousse dictionary defines *dédoubler* as "to split or to divide into two." The verb is often accompanied with the reflexive particle "Se" to signify the ability to self-double, to be outside or in proximity of oneself. Anglophone readers will appreciate that "de-double" might stand for undoing any doubling or dualism. Most of my interviewees laugh quite taken aback by my inquiry. "Se on bagay dwòl" (It's a weird thing), "Kesyon an dwòl" (What a weird question), "Ou dwòl" (You're weird) preface or punctuate their hurried explanations. *Dwòl* is a Kreyòl word that connotes something abnormal. There is no Kreyòl for queer, but *dwòl* is a close approximation that points to deviancy from how locals and Diasporic Haitians imagine the Haitian body as the embodiment of societal norms. The epithet signifies the assertion of a "good taste/bad taste" distinction that invites close examination of who and what enforce these binaries and how such delineations empower their instigators (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 259-260), as I illustrate in the third section.

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I theorize dedouble as the Haitian body desiring to unbind itself from prescriptions (fixed time, place, and socio-cultural conventions). It embraces a way of remembering what is *mistik*, *dwòl*, hidden or suppressed, that which is not easily categorized and thrives in the rich messiness of the quotidian. In that sense, I am inspired by the late Black Feminist scholar Barbara Christian's seminal assertion of narrative analysis's significance in "The Race for Theory":

For people of color have always theorized—but in forms quite different from the Western abstract logic. And I am inclined to say that our theorizing (and I intentionally use the verb rather than noun) is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, because dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking. (Christian 1988, 68)

I interpret Christian's affirmation to signify that Diasporic Africans' polyvalent and fluid theorizing practices engage in dedouble. As such, I deploy the concept here precisely because it narrates embodied ways that Haitian societal norms can be subverted, transgressed, and enriched. *Tribulations* allows me to demonstrate how dedouble defies spatio-temporal and socio-cultural constraints by "giving body" to trivialized modes of Haitian expression. Before performances of the dance in West Palm Beach, Saintus' male dancers embark on an amusing ritual. They shed warm-up clothes to display shirtless torsos and skin-tight low cut shorts over muscular legs. Some re-tuck themselves, grunt, swagger, and hold their crotch offstage. Some do jumping jacks, push-ups, abdominals series, and flex their arms. A few smear baby oil on themselves to make their muscles and chiseled abdominals pop. Following a good look at a mirror, they head backstage. I asked dancer Johnnoiry St. Philippe about the preening. "I give body," he answered in English. As men inhabiting the stark aesthetics of (Haitian) contemporary dance, they prepare to make a spectacle of themselves, as performance scholar Judith Hamera might submit (Hamera 2007, 123).

On and off stage, in Haiti and in its diasporic spaces, Saintus' dancers know they are projecting a Haitianness that counters accepted embodied practices. Their dancing bodies catalyze discussions of Haiti's brand of gender and sexual norms as performances in-progress. Not only do the dancers give sensual bodies to transgress normative performances and establish Haitian subjectivity as unfinished and evolving, but, based on my company management work with Saintus' troupe, they also "give body" to devise profound stories and rewarding destinations for this Haitian form. These Haitian artists propel their bodies towards a future in which they will be received, suspended of expectations, and (re)interpreted by its counterparts and interlocutors.

II. Saintus' Dedouble

"Almost any choreographer could create *Tribulations*," Saintus remarked casually (Saintus 2014a). By this, he meant that the piece is somewhat more universal than

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his other Vodou-themed works that highlight and combine elements from an extensive index of movements. These include: the *yanvalou* or bodily undulations to represent snakes' and water's devastating power; *parigol's* (step of the streams) intricate leg weaving forward to front; *nago's* arms and legs that strike and jab; the speedy footwork of the *mahi*; and the hunchback *zarenyen* (spider) with clawed fingers. In this work, culturally literate spectators see that Saintus dedoubles between Europeans' elongated outward movements and African polyrhythm and polycentrism. Along with a straight torso, arms that arch and span out, elongated legs and pointed feet that evolve into multiple pirouettes, *Tribulations* owes much of its vocabulary not only to some of the aforementioned Haitian dances but also to Guadeloupean Léna Blou's³ *Techni'Ka*. Based on Guadeloupe's embodied arts, this technique emphasizes improvisation; off-beat movement and rhythms; curves of the spine; heavy and percussive use of the lower body; inward rotation of the thighs, knees, and feet; open hands and splayed fingers.

The light brightens on a pyramid of male strength. Vilsaint's raised power fist is a (Black) transcultural symbol of solidarity and resistance. Composer Ludovico Einaudi's soft piano evokes a locale unlike the percussive drums and chaotic prayers that saturate visions of Haiti since the 2010 earthquake. Vilsaint's movements—the asymmetrical ways in which he contorts his hypermobile body, the manner in which he looms larger than his feline frame, squats slowly down to the ground, and then compresses and expands his body—are downright *dwòl*. Therein lies demonstrations of the queerness inherent in traveling between genres.

As Vilsaint exits, St. Philippe and Renaudin's intertwined bodies fade in upstage. Having fastened Renaudin on his back by holding his legs, St. Philippe balances now and then on one foot, as he steps slowly forward and extends a leg high on the side into a *développé* with his foot turned inward. He too breaks the symmetry of the classical dance movement as he bends both knees and adds a hint of *gouyad*, or gyrations, when he lowers Renaudin into an inverted split. The recorded moans that follow never fail to release giggles from spectators. They fluctuate between orgasms, echoes, calls, interjections, and questions.

The musical compositions' allusions are made explicit by the dancers, who dedouble verbally through the title's connotations of duress. The artists clarify the choreography's images of adversity and responses that such moments conjure. "There are many things you keep hidden, that you endure," explains Germain, the female dancer. "It's a disagreeable recall. And you're like: 'Oh lord, what tribulations!'" (Germain 2013). According to Vilsaint:

[*Tribulations*] places me in a situation to express what I've endured. Because when you're walking around, with your sagging jeans and people keep saying: "Oh, this guy is masisi." And others say: "You think so? This guy is such a ladies' man." Like. Who can really know who you are? You're the only who knows. You have to know for yourself. That's what I want to project.

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That's what I want to communicate. I want to prove that I'm Steven Vilsaint [...] You're projecting an image. A dancer's body speaks every thing he needs to say. You decided that I'm masisi, I'll show you images of masisi. I'll do it with my body. (Vilsaint 2013)

In this interview excerpt, I translate Vilsaint's Kreyòl indeterminate pronoun *ou*—Haiti's version of the French *on*—as a proverbial “you.” His oral play functions as a literary dedouble, especially as he externalizes his discomfort with masisi issues by indicating a general “dancer's body.” Indeed, Vilsaint's “me but not me” speech marks how he wrestles with the choreography's subtext about closely bonded men, potentially losing his credibility as a “ladies' man” on and off stage. To illustrate this tension, deeply felt both by Haitian queer men and the male dancers, Saintus strategically casts a sole female dancer.



Figure 2. Left to right: Sephora Germain, Wenchel Renaudin, and Steven Vilsaint in *Tribulations* (2013) by Jeanguy Saintus' Ayikodans. Photo courtesy of Denis Rion.



Figure 3. Left to right: Emmanuel Gérard and Sephora Germain in *Tribulations* (2013) by Jeanguy Saintus' Ayikodans. Photo courtesy of Denis Rion.

When Germain enters, the moans stop. Moving to the droning music of Japanese-German duo Fujita and Jelinek, her presence cools the five men as they gather. She demands that they lavish attention on her: she writhes on Renaudin, who caresses her curiously before another male dancer catches his attention. “I take it as somebody sees me with a girl and thinks that I'm in love with her, but it could also happen that a man interests me,” said Renaudin (2013)

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(fig.2) . The choreography's careful same-sex partnering explores the limits of physical boundaries between men and the efforts they must exert to trespass them. Lifts involving Germain place her body at risk. She climbs on Gérard's chest to squat on his shoulders as she peers down, teetering forward. She crawls between his legs and then lunges backward. At every performance Germain throws her body back with such force that she risks falling if Gérard's timing is imperfect (fig. 3) . After she weaves through four men dancing in pairs with one's head on the other's torso, she crumples on the ground. Germain ponders her presence in the dance: "In and of itself, the piece could have been done without a woman." She elaborates, "But the role of the woman is...How can I say this?...She's sort of an intermediary. She's a cover. In spite of everything, when you remove the cover, there's something left inside, there's something in the vessel, whether it's a man, or a group of men" (Germain 2013).

Beyond being a "cover," Germain is right to view herself as an intermediary. Her female body is the gauge against which locally sanctioned desire is assessed. Within *Tribulations'* story, male proxies for same-sex couples flaunt a woman's attraction to them as a public shield against physical and psychological violence. In our interview, Gérard, for one, considered the ways that St. Philippe carried Renaudin like "a cross on his back." He states, "The second movement is really about temptations. There are contacts with Sephora that are sensual[...]. At times you are tempted to do certain things, you don't want to do it or you're told not to do it but you really want to do it" (Gérard 2013). Germain's body, which protects the men's explorations, is a shield from the trouble that might befall them. LGBT rights activist Kenji Yoshino asserts that this form of covering aids in "ton[ing] down a disfavored identity to fit into the mainstream" (Yoshino 2006, ix). The choreography also instructs that, as *dedouble* is a temporary state, covers slip easily. No matter how much Germain accepts or resists her body as another's armor, the men's gaze and bodies gravitate toward one another. In the end, she is always discarded. The men accept or must face the dire consequences of loving queerly.

When Saintus began to create *Tribulations* in May 2013, the piece did not begin with a male pyramid or a male duet. Neither did it end in a gut-wrenching male solo. These additions to the dance's original "everyperson's suffering" theme were due to the death of one of St. Philippe's friends:

You live in a world where a homosexual gets beaten just by walking through a neighborhood, and the victim doesn't have a place to lodge a complaint. I'll give an example...which relates to my solo: [A friend] was in a car[...]. Police officers beat him up a lot. He started to run. He didn't have a place to sleep. He got an infection and died as a result of being severely beaten. (St. Philippe 2013)⁴

In our interview, Saintus deepened St. Philippe's explanation:

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John's solo is a homage to this young man, probably a *dereyal*,⁵ who has never worked with me and whom I never knew. It's also a tribute to many others who've lived this sort of thing: (Saintus roughens his voice and scowls, as he impersonates aggressors) "Ah se on masisi misye ye, man! Ou pa kenbe misye ou konyen misye?" (Ah, he's a masisi, man! Why not grab him and fuck him?). (Saintus 2014a)

In addition to Saintus' vocalizing the corrective rapes of masisis, my conversations with the dancers about the choreography's homosexual subtext always circled back to violations of LGBT rights. Oftentimes, without citing names, they would hint in a nuanced manner that they are physicalizing a need to counter memories similar to those President Michel Joseph Martelly's stage persona Sweet Micky relayed not long ago to adoring audiences.

III. A Presidential Dedouble

On a YouTube video of a 2004 concert near Les Cayes,⁶ Sweet Micky pulls a man onstage. As they danced, they simulated sodomy on one another. A microphone in hand, Sweet Micky asks the man if he has ever done masisi. The man laughed that he has not but "si w vle na fè!" (we could do it if you want!). To which Sweet Micky laughed and replied: "I'd need a plumper man, let me see your ass! Too bony, too bony! Offstage!" Festival spectators reveled in his buffoonery. Later, the video shows the ways Sweet Micky dances wearing only a cross, black briefs, and sneakers. His back to the audience, he shapes the briefs into thongs. Buttocks protruding, he sashays with his arms fluttering. Then he poses, both wrists broken on his hips, bats his eyes, and squeezes his nipples as the master of ceremony chastises him: "What the hell is this? You know that's why we're not friends, right?" Sweet Micky runs off, breaking out of the persona.

Until his election in 2010, followers of Haitian politics knew that President Michel Joseph Martelly was a successful musical artist—the self-proclaimed President of konpa⁷—better known as "Sweet Micky." His election and subsequent transformation as the nation's leader proved shocking. A 20 March 2011 *Christian Science Monitor* article details that he was "once best known for his outrageous lyrics and occasionally perform[ed] in drag." On 5 April 2011, the newspaper describes Haiti's current President as "an improbable savior. Just a decade ago, he was donning skirts and wigs, cursing, and drinking like a sailor while performing his flamboyant act." Sweet Micky's popularity was, in part, due to his parody of masisis.

Sweet Micky has dedouble-d into his Excellency the President of Haiti, who not only speaks pristine French and fluent English, but has also held court with leaders across the globe. He has retired his stage persona. This disavowal can be read as a burial of masisis, especially considering that Martelly's administration (like that of his predecessors) has not overtly acknowledged continued violence toward same-sex love. Generally, Sweet Micky has been portrayed as an equal opportunity strategist who

poked fun at Haitian society's marginalized bodies in order to generate laughter, popularity, and revenue.⁸ Indeed, the mocking of masisi as the local go-to scapegoats was his artistic career's comedic gold. As the bulk of his act was limited to devaluing the non-heterosexual underdog, rarely teasing Haiti's powerful elite, with whom he was associated, he clearly did not aspire to educate and to heal, as laughter and parody do for Mikhail Bakhtin (1983) in his study of certain societies' villains and grotesque. But to downplay his masisi obsession, Sweet Micky's supporters position him as a happily married man with a large brood. In an extended version of this essay, an argument could be made about Sweet Micky's appropriation of modes of embodiment termed "gay," in that he normalized his mockery of masisi to the point that a straight man can be revered for performing gay, while it is unacceptable for a gay man to assert himself publicly.

Returning to Sweet Micky's topsy-turvy act, the masisi did not get to laugh and to ridicule. Through circulating recordings of his performances, the masisi remains forever demonized. A "wiser" Sweet Micky slips out during Mardi Gras season only to poke fun at his former antics. Gone are his drag performances. For the president, masisis are now *chawonj* (foul) news that are unworthy of any kind of acknowledgment. Along with many of its Caribbean counterparts, the Haitian government has long obstructed community-based and human rights organizations' efforts to establish state policies fostering a nurturing environment for LGBTs.⁹ Perhaps the current administration has turned a deaf ear to both LGBT groups' 2013 televised demand for equal rights and ensuing homophobic outcries from a consortium of religious and moral leaders in order to keep Sweet Micky's closet closed—a strategy that Martelly himself employs in his role as President and "former" performer.

For Haiti's LGBT communities and their allies, the sentiment that some men's lives were extinguished senselessly because of ingrained Haitian societal fears pervades. Saintus' *Tribulations* gives body to their tales in order to remember them through time, as well carve a space for their stories to instruct. Like Gina Athena Ulysse (2010), who warned her mother, "I am telling. I am going to tell, and I need to tell you that no one can stop me from telling this tale. I will pay the price, whatever it may be" (177), Saintus utilizes *Tribulations* as a *m'ap di* (I am telling) that advances witnessing to what is belittled as a necessary act of retaliation. The price Saintus is ready to pay when he presents the choreography in Haiti is his spectators' and funders' possible rejection of his artistic values and his company. This is a story to be followed.

Conclusion: A Practice of Social Memoriation

Tribulations male dancers' embodiment stands in sharp contrast to Sweet Micky's effusive characterization of masisi. For example, soloist St. Philippe's own interpretation depicts a man who swaggers cautiously as he explores weighty, circular, and spiraling movements. He demonstrates that the agility, which Sweet Micky belittled, is a form of strength. In his interpretation of the

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dereyal who resisted police officers' attacks before dying, St. Philippe's lower back and his coccyx seem to expand and retreat as he bends his knees and flexes his feet, right before launching into *laviwonndede* (spins). He reaches out imploringly to spectators, his eyes demanding answers before he writhes and collapses. In Saintus' work, the masisi labors pensively and methodically against an onslaught of jeers. In Sweet Micky's world, comments on the YouTube page applaud his rendition and intelligence, and lament that masisis exist.

A dedouble practice, Saintus' pedagogy participates in "social memoration, of remembrance [...] a practice of inquiry and learning in which logos interrelating one's past, present, and future social relations are subject to critique and re-formation" (Simon 2005, 3). For Saintus, dancers must invest time by sharing their experiences and by acknowledging knowledge gaps. He and his ensemble members are bridges between larger social issues, their communities and spectators. Regardless of dancers' sexual politics, they are messengers who must trust one another deeply and cover one another against discriminatory practices. In the end, Jeanguy Saintus' choreographic insistence on moving beyond ethno-national and social boundaries can be termed a queer performance because it signifies a larger, political-artistic goal: to introduce his dancers, artistic collaborators, supporters, local and foreign spectators, and their media interlocutors to polyvalent modes of embodiment and generative ways of thinking, living, and creating.

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Notes

¹ Briefly, in the early 1950s, the Haitian state invited African-American dancer and teacher Lavinia Williams Yarborough for a prolonged residency in order to infuse Vodou-based traditional dances, locally known as "folklore," with ballet's and modern dance's discipline and rigor. Williams' folklore and ballet academy attracted elite girls, some of whom would later found exclusive ballet academies that did not offer *folklore* until very recently, as Williams Yarborough's successors considered traditional dances the masses' art forms. For a more complex analysis of this topic, see Millery Polyné's "To carry the dance of the people beyond': Jean Leon Destiné, Lavinia Williams, and Danse Folklorique Haitienne."

² In the American homosexual lexicon, "faggot" is the closest parallel for masisi; it is a

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“fighting word,” akin to the N-word that only some can use. Local catcalls include *bouzen* (whore) and *de sis kole* (66 or sissy) (Panos 2008, 15-16). Also see McAlister 2002, 75-76.

³ Accessed December 16, 2014: <<http://fr.lenablou.fr/>>.

⁴ Saintus confirmed this story in the 20 December 2013 edition of *Miami NewTimes*.

⁵ According to Ethnologist Frantz Stanley Pierre-Louis, Mambo or Vodou priestess Dereyal’s many effeminate male initiates were christened “dereyal.” The name was later used to describe all effeminate gay men. Dereyal, a Kreyòl adaptation of the French word for “of the kings,” is also the Northern Haitian name for the *twarigòl* (three streams) or *parigòl* (step of the stream) dances. (Fleurant 1996, 25-26).

⁶ Accessed December 16, 2014: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mweU_RAV-pQ>.

⁷ Konpa is a musical genre as well as a dance that originates from Haiti. It involves mostly medium-to-fast tempo beats with an emphasis on electric guitars, synthesizers, and either a solo alto saxophone, a horn section or the synthesizer equivalent. The lyrics are mostly in Kreyòl and it has a slightly slower tempo than the Dominican merengue.

⁸ I draw from my own experiences listening to Sweet Micky’s music and viewing his video clips. Additionally, on 18 November 2010, Contributing Editor of the *Boston Haitian Reporter* Steve Desrosiers detailed the ways in which Michel Martelly’s raunchy and controversial albums garnered him fortune and fame. A 4 April 2011 *Wall Street Journal* article corroborates most of these facts. The website Haitian Diaspora provides a detailed biography and discography of Michel Joseph Martelly. Accessed December 16, 2014: <<http://haitiandiaspora.com/people/michel-sweet-micky-martelly/>>.

⁹ This assessment is based not only on my work as a Men Having Sex with Men Project Manager for an American non-governmental organization in Haiti but also on research presented at a PEPFAR (U.S. President Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief) Latin American and Caribbean regional workshop I attended in Guatemala, October 2013. Also, see: Panos Caraibes (2008). *Homosexualité masculine et VIH/SIDA en Haiti*. Port-au-Prince: Panos Caraibes 16; and, Pan American Health Organization (2010). *Blueprint for the Provision of Comprehensive Care to Gay Men and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) in Latin America and the Caribbean*.

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