
In spite of its title and the somewhat sensational advertisements of the publisher this is as workmanlike and scholarly a study as we have come to expect of its author. Basing himself on his three extensive field trips to Haiti as well as on the available literature, Métraux here gives us a most detailed description of Haitian folk religion. Contrary to several non-anthropological writers on the subject, who have attempted to organize their observations into a systematic theology, Métraux is sufficiently well acquainted with individual, local and regional variations in ritual and belief, to point out that each sanctuary represents, in essence, an independent sect, although some common features of practice and thought are shared, to a greater or less degree, by all. He goes so far as to describe, in considerable detail, the Christmas ritual cycle in two localities: a cult house in Port-au-Prince and a family center in a rural area. This comparison points up very clearly the great range of variation that may exist in the performance of essentially equivalent rites. The greater resources of the urban center, and consequently the greater elaboration of its ceremonial, is also evident, as is the greater professional specialization of the urban priestess and her staff. Having myself witnessed the Christmas ritual cycle of the same rural group, one year after Métraux visit, I might point out that a comparison reveals certain constant features in the behavior patterns of specific participants and their individual roles in the ritual, which a single observation could not reveal. Here and throughout Métraux's study there is plenty of argument to be found in favor of the long-range studies that Vogt recently urged. (E.Z. Vogt, American Anthropologist, 62: p. 29).

In addition to supplying a brief historical note, the author has divided his book into sections concerning cult organization, ritual, magic and sorcery. A final note, prior to the general conclusions, is entitled "Voodoo and Christianity."

It is interesting to note that the author, in spite of his first hand knowledge of related African forms (cf. for example his notes in Verger:}