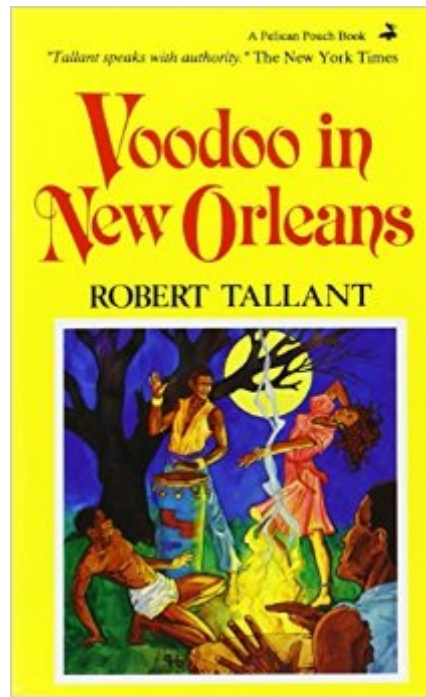


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Voodoo In New Orleans



Synopsis

"Straightforward handling of... voodooism in all its manifestations."--Kirkus ReviewsOriginally published in 1946, this intriguing book examines the rites and beliefs associated with voodoo through the legends of the art--its charms, trances, rituals, and difficult-to-explain occurrences.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you are looking for an in-depth, scholarly work on the religion and practices of Voodoo in New Orleans this is, sadly, not the work for you. While interesting in a voyeuristic, sensationalist sense, Tallant's far-too-obvious biases and penchant for letting his interview subjects give sound bites like "Old Marie Laveau looked just like the devil herself, and she's settin' [sic] on a throne in Hell today," means that the image of Voodoo as a religion and/or money-making practice is frustratingly one-dimensional. Tallant seems content to let his interview subjects discuss the "devil-worshipping" without giving a well-rounded picture of what actually was being worshipped. He quotes newspaper articles with an almost pornographic fervor, and neglects to analyze the exoticism encoded into their language. The book is good as a fun, tabloidesque read, and those people who have studied Voodoo religion will be able to puzzle together rites and loa blithely corrupted due to Tallant's distance from actual services. It is also a fine study in biases of the time, but should never be read without a very LARGE grain of salt.

Any book you see on Voodoo today, is either talking about Santeria or Haitian Vodou. Even the "New Orleans Voodoo Tarot" is mostly Voodoo from OUTSIDE of New Orleans. Here you will find

the most mature research on Marie Laveau, which is worth the modest price of this book, alone. But you also get history that you will not find anywhere else. Tales of an entire lineage of conjure men and root doctors, the real heart of Louisiana Hoodoo. This book introduces you to men like Doctor Koku, Rooster, Papa Melon, Don Pedro and many others. If you want to see both sides of the New Orleans Voodoo coin, this is the only book that pulls back all the curtains of it's history.

I've done anthropological work on Voodoo practices in New Orleans, both the newer Haitian forms and the traditional religion of the faithful. As pointed out by all the scholarly reviews both back then and today, Tallant has collected an interesting set of folklore narratives about Voodoo but no actual information about the religion as it is practiced. Also, some academics have looked through his notes from his interviews and found that he later added elements to the published versions of stories to make them racier and more exciting. Therefore, folklore scholars should be careful. None of the narratives in Tallant's book match up with historical evidence for how Vodou was practiced in the times of slavery, during the time when he did his fieldwork, or in the modern context. In fact, it is so inaccurate that scholars of Vodou (such as myself) often use this book as a litmus test. If someone cites it as an accurate source of information about Vodou then you know their work is pretty much worthless/that they didn't do any fieldwork. Unfortunately, there is very little written about Vodou practices in New Orleans that is worthwhile. Most of what is out there is sensational speculation. Tallant, unfortunately, falls into that category.

I really don't understand the negative reviews of this book at all. Even Anne Rice recommends it and what better recommendation about voodoo history in New Orleans can you get than Anne Rice!?! Yes, the story is old, but it's a fantastic look of the smaller details of a hidden culture. I love New Orleans, and Tallant's book is well researched. Why do you think it's been reprinted since the 1940s. That's staying power, people. The history of Marie Lavaeu is worth the money. This is not a book to tell you how to practice voodoo or to give you a romanticized version of the religion. This is a book which tells the evolution of a special society within a very special city. Now excuse me while I go fetch another praline! Buy it. It's a great read. [From a person who knows and loves New Orleans and hoodoo too!]

I really enjoyed this book although there were no "secrets of voodoo" revealed. Shows a lot of intriguing information about Marie Laveau and Doctor John. I would highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in the history of voodoo.

Disappointed. I don't think this was well researched. I found several factual errors that a simple Internet search or trip to the library could have rectified. I also found it condescending and not respectful of the religion.

Voodoo in New Orleans This is an old classic which, if you are interested in either "Voodoo" or New Orleans, you probably should read. However, you can ignore the old adage of taking what Robert Tallant had to say with a grain of salt; you will need an entire salt lick to handle this slim volume. It is colorful, exciting, and alas, mostly the product of Robert Tallant's fevered imagination. What facts he didn't get wrong, he completely fabricated. Plenty of scholars have already weighed in on the problems presented and alas, also created by this small piece of creative fiction. It's very entertaining, although occasionally offensive. Mostly, it should not be taken seriously. Eoghan Ballard (Ph.D. Folklore. University of Pennsylvania 2005)

"~This is an older book but you will find it's still very informative. There's plenty of stuff about Marie Laveau but they talk about other historical figures, too. The stuff on Dr. John, who you don't hear much about in other books, is particularly interesting."~ focusing on these days.

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